It was my rare privilege last Tuesday morning to see, hear, and feel the most spectacular and magnificant event of my life - the detonation of an atomic bomb! I want to tell you all I can about it, but, right in the beginning, let me say that I am ~~trying to~~ strictly observing the rules of security. ~~I cannot~~, for instance, indicate how the bomb was delivered, exact distances, size of weapons, time elements, or other factors which would give an enemy a means of measurement. What I can do, without violating any rules of security is to give my own personal, non-technical descriptions impressions of the event. ~~This, I will be glad to do.~~

Perhaps ~~it would be just~~ you like as well for me to begin at the very first and take you on the trip with me.

We left Washington at 7:30 Monday morning in an Air Force Constellation, which flew non-stop 2250 miles to Indian Springs, Nevada, ~~one of~~ the longest non-stop flights I had ever taken, except one or two over the Pacific.

After a brief period for rest and recreation, we had supper with the troops stationed there.

At 8 o'clock, we were admitted to an inner room, which was very closely guarded. There for 3 hours, various officials, scientists and engineers of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Armed Services briefed us upon top secrets of the great event which we were to see the next morning. ~~When~~ The briefing ~~was~~ over, we quickly took to our beds, because revelry was to sound at 3:45 the next morning - and it sounded, too! But, instead of the usual drousiness when aroused at such an hour, I was wide awake with the

excitement of the day. This was to be an outstanding day in my life.

After ~~same~~ breakfast of coffee, bacon and eggs, we were on our way by bus to Yuca Flat, high in the Rocky Mountains. In the darkness, magestic mountain peaks loomed against the darkened sky as huge, black bolders. As we rode, higher + higher. Dawn began to appear, and the~~y~~ nits took on a lighter hue. Shortly before the sun came up, they began to look a dark blue. Just before the sun peeped over the ~~easte~~ mountain, range to the east, we were at the site from which we were to witness the cataclysmic event.

Alighting and looking around, I was enchanted with the panaramic beauty which lay before me. The sun was just emerging above the horizon, causing the sage brush to appear a bright purplish. I then remembered the books I read as a boy by Zane Grey - the beautiful vivid descriptions he gave of the desert in such books as RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE, THE THUNDERING HERD.

~~And~~ There before me was Yuca Flat or Yuca Valley. It appeared to me as the bed of an ancient lake; a smooth valley which appeared to be 12 or 15 miles wide in all directions. This level floor was rimmed and enclosed by precipitous mountain peaks that cut into the sky like teeth from a huge saw. There was the target, too, the spot out in that lonely, quiet valley where the atom bomb would be detonated. That was the spot upon which my gaze was soon to center.

~~With me~~, I had the dark laminated goggles that had been given me with which to view the atomic explosions. We had been advised that the flash would be so blinding that if one undertook to see it with his natural eye, his sight might be forever destroyed. I took ~~them~~ my goggles out of the case and put them on to see how things would appear through them. To my surprise, they closed all vision except when I looked at the sun. They fit about my eyes like suction cups and the plastic visor was so thick and dark that I could not see

my hand before me, even in broad daylight. Only when I looked toward the rising sun could I distinguish anything. Through them, the sun, now climbing well above the mts, appeared as a small, red marble, ~~gradually climbing above the mountainous horizon.~~

The air was sharp, clear and cold, biting at my ears and nose, causing my hands to seek the warmth of pockets, ~~and~~ soon I was stamping the earth to keep circulation in my feet.

Conversation went on in a-hum. Over a loud speaker, instructions were being given for those who were to witness the event. ~~As~~ until the time for detonation approached, then everything became tense. Across the mountains, signal lights could be seen flashing. ~~Instruction~~ Over a huge network of telephone lines ~~and~~ last minute instructions ~~were being~~ hurried. ~~fumbled.~~ at ~~to the~~ Thousands of delicate instruments in various positions surrounding the target ~~were given.~~ were made sensitive. Every man seemed at his place. Over the loud speaker, which had been giving instructions to those privileged to witness this great event came the ominous words, "10 minutes to H time." Then, 9 minutes; 8 minutes, 5 min" the voice said. All became quiet. I forgot that my feet were cold. No longer did I see the beauty of the place. This Enthrallment ~~with it~~ had given way to tense expectation.

"~~4~~ minutes," the voice said, and there was deathly silence all about me. ~~4 minutes,~~ 3 minutes, 2 minutes," Then the voice said, "put on your goggles ~~and~~ those who do not have goggles turn your backs to the target site."

"1 minute, 45 seconds, 30 seconds, 25, 20, 5, 4, 3, 2" ~~and then~~ there was the flash, a flash + glare which for some seconds outshone the sun. Just as my eyes saw it, my face felt it - a hot flash as if you had suddenly stepped from the shade into the radiant sunlight. The ball of white fire turned red, orange + purple, boiling ~~hot sun.~~ ~~The white hot multicolored afterglow~~ climbing swiftly high

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into the heavens, it was frightening yet magnificent beautiful. Impressive, too, was the surging, rolling cloud of gas, dust and radioactivity that quickly smothered perhaps a 5 mile square area of the Yucca Valley floor as if to provide a firm base to support the gigantic column with its huge seething cap. ~~The~~ Staggering concussion waves hit us and passed on to reverberate among the surrounding majestic Rocky Mountain peaks and gorges, sounding as if a dozen noisy thunder storms approached from all directions. Through it all, my colleagues and I stood speechless. Eventually the cloudy, lethal mushroom drifted off, disintegrating into the sky. What man had created had gone. I had witnessed a symbol of a new age. Whether it will prove the boon or the damnation of mankind, I cannot foretell. ~~But it can now be controlled.~~

Of course, I am not privileged to give the size of the bomb which I saw detonated, but I can say that the explosion was so large that it appeared to me big enough to wipe out an enemy division normally deployed for attack.

I was impressed with the almost total absence of any air of uncertainty among the technicians and officials directing and observing the explosion. I talked to one gentleman who had seen the first atom bomb detonated. He told me how they all wondered if it would go off, what would be the result. This time, instead of a feeling of uncertainty, there was a tenseness growing out of certainty. That illustrates what has happened. ~~in atomic energy.~~ Man is bringing this new power more tightly under his control. The atomic bomb has ceased to be a mystic ~~uncertainty~~ source. It is now specific, accurate and certain. Specific as to type and purpose; accurate to detail to every

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the point of precision; and certain of detonation and devastating result.

The explosion occurred at the exact spot and on the exact second of which we had been previously advised. Every detail was precise and accurate. This and other factors impressed me that we can now use the atomic bomb in a tactical way against enemy troops in the field, such as military attack concentrations in combat areas, supply centers and other vital military targets, without serious risk to our own troops. We are approaching a situation where we will have atomic weapons in almost as complete a variety as conventional ones, and in which we can use them in the same way. Among others, this will include artillery shells, guided missles, torpedos, rockets, and bombs for ground supporting aircraft - little ones for little situations, big ones for big situations. The little ones may be the more important after all. Revolutionary thinking is required. The armed services must face up to the new day and meet the problem of integrating atomic weapons into all combat operations. We must rely on our preponderances. These will not be found in man-to-man combat but in technology and industry.

~~We must learn to live with this thing, adopt it to mankind's purpose and service. Thus free man will survive and go on to heights never yet dreamed.~~

We must re-examine our whole atomic energy program in the light of new circumstances. Just as poison gas was never used in World War II, we may find that never again will an atomic bomb be dropped on the large city. civilian population. Though we must keep and build up a stockpile of strategic atomic bombs, we must place great emphasis immediately upon tactical possibilities. Even greater possibilities lie in the future when it may be possible to contain an aggressor, paralyze his productive capacity and deny him use of enemy occupied cities, ports and industries without indiscriminate destruction of men, women and children as we have witnessed in World Wars I and II and in Korea.

Atomic energy is here to stay. We must learn to live with it, adapt it to mankind's purpose and service. We must learn to live with each other, too. If mankind can but learn to live together in peace and brotherhood, the promise of the future dims all the glories of the past and present. ~~We will move on. Free man will survive and climb to heights never yet dreamed.~~