

When an A-Bomb Misfires

The account of an A-Bomb misfire that Gregg describes his sixth-grade teacher reading in class is probably an article by Robert Cahn in the August 9, 1952 issue of Collier's magazine: "When an A-Bomb Misfires". The following web page has links to a copy of this article; they are at the bottom of the first memoir by Bob Rockwell: www.high-desert-memories.com/mtwhitney.html

Gregg's account:

"The single occasion when a real A-Bomb test became a dramatic learning experience occurred when my sixth grade Language Arts class read aloud an account of an early Nevada test misfire. The story held us tightly in suspense as the man sent to disarm the defective Bomb described how he drove to the test site alone, sharply aware that he might be vaporized without warning, painstakingly climbed the tall pylon tower, entered the cramped Bomb housing and slowly disconnected the trigger mechanism. The severing of the last critical wires climaxed his effort in breathless fashion. After the group reading, the class simply buzzed with animated discussion about the story. None of us could see past the thrilling event to the more important issue of why nuclear devices were being tested and how the acquired knowledge would be used."