



Bombs over Bikini: The World's First Nuclear Disaster (Nonfiction - Young Adult)

Connie Goldsmith

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In 1946, as part of the Cold War arms race, the US military launched a program to test nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands of the Pacific Ocean. From 1946 until 1958, the military detonated sixty-seven nuclear bombs over the region's Bikini and Enewetak Atolls. The twelfth bomb, called Bravo, became the world's first nuclear disaster. It sent a toxic cloud of radiation over Rongelap Atoll and other nearby inhabited islands.

The testing was intended to advance scientific knowledge about nuclear bombs and radiation, but it had much more far-reaching effects. Some of the islanders suffered burns, cancers, birth defects, and other medical tragedies as a result of radiation poisoning. Many of the Marshallese were resettled on other Pacific islands or in the United States. They and their descendants cannot yet return to Bikini, which remains contaminated by radiation. And while the United States claims it is now safe to resettle Rongelap, only a few construction workers live there on a temporary basis.

For *Bombs over Bikini*, author Connie Goldsmith researched government documents, military film footage, and other primary source documents to tell the story of the world's first nuclear disaster. You'll meet the people who planned the test operations, the Marshall Islanders who lost their homes and suffered from radiation illnesses, and those who have worked to hold the US government accountable for catastrophically poor planning. Was the new knowledge about nuclear bombs and radiation worth the cost in human suffering? You decide.

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