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AIRMUNITIONS LETTER

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HEADQUARTERS
OGDEN AIR MATERIEL AREA
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Hill Air Force Base, Utah

19 April 1961

OOAMA AIRMUNITIONS LETTER
NO. 136-11-56H

SUBJECT: Advance Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technical Information

TO: SEE DISTRIBUTION

AUTHORITY: This AML is published under the authority of and in compliance with AFR 136-10.

(U) SUMMARY OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS INCIDENTS (AF FORM 1058) AND RELATED PROBLEMS - MARCH 1961

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AIRMUNITIONS LTR 136-11-56H
Page 2 of 18

1. The purpose of this Airmunitions Letter is to present a periodic summary of incidents wherein nuclear weapons were involved, and to provide a resume of the EOD operations conducted at the site(s).
2. This summary includes an incident reported during March 1961 and which will hereafter be referred to as NWI-61-3.

NWI-61-3

1. Location:

Near Yuba City, California

2. Date:

March 1961

3. Type of Incident:

Crash of B-52 aircraft

4. Brief:

a. A B-52 aircraft carrying two [REDACTED] bombs crashed near Yuba City, California. Upon impact, both bombs were torn from the plane and severely damaged.

b. An AMC EOD team was dispatched to the site and arrived there approximately four hours after initial notification. The following preliminary observations and findings were made:

(1) Appropriate security of the impact area had been effected by Beale Air Force Base and the County Sheriff's Office personnel.

(2) Radiation monitoring had been conducted with negative results.

(3) The aircraft disintegrated upon impact and wreckage was strewn over a large area (Figures 1 and 2).

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AIRMUNITIONS LTR 136-11-56H
Page 3 of 18

(4) The Beale Air Force Base EOD Element had searched the area, picked up all scattered HE, and recovered or located all significant weapon components, except one. One tritium bottle, which was located later was monitored with negative results and packaged with the other bottle.

c. To facilitate description, the bombs will be referred to as Bomb A and Bomb B.

(1) Bomb A was not as severely damaged as Bomb B. Figure 2 shows the parachute assembly in the foreground and Figure 3 shows the main case section and primary space chamber after removal from the case. The Primacord had detonated but the reef line cutters were intact.

(2) Bomb B received more damage and had broken into several pieces. Figures 4 and 5 show the secondary. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Figure 8 depicts the main case section, Figures 9 and 10 the front and rear polar cap assemblies, and Figure 11 the parachute assembly. The HE had broken into small pieces and the pit was intact. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As in Bomb A, the Primacord had detonated but the reef line cutters were intact.

d. Rendering Safe Procedures - Bomb A.

(1) Since the tritium bottle had been torn loose upon impact, Beale Air Force Base EOD personnel had crimped the gas tube protruding from the polar cap. Monitoring with the T-290, AMC EOD personnel removed the polar cap. Powdered HE could be observed inside. Interior monitoring with a PDR-27 gave a fluctuation of .1 mr/hr. The entire HE sphere was distorted and apparently shattered inside the plastic space chamber. Ten gallons of engine oil were poured over the HE and satisfactorily acted as a desensitizer and also as a coagulant to facilitate removal of the HE sludge.

(2) The polar cap retaining bolts were removed and the cap assembly detached (Figure 12), revealing the broken and powdered HE. The rear portion of the space chamber had broken away, permitting easy access to the HE. [REDACTED]

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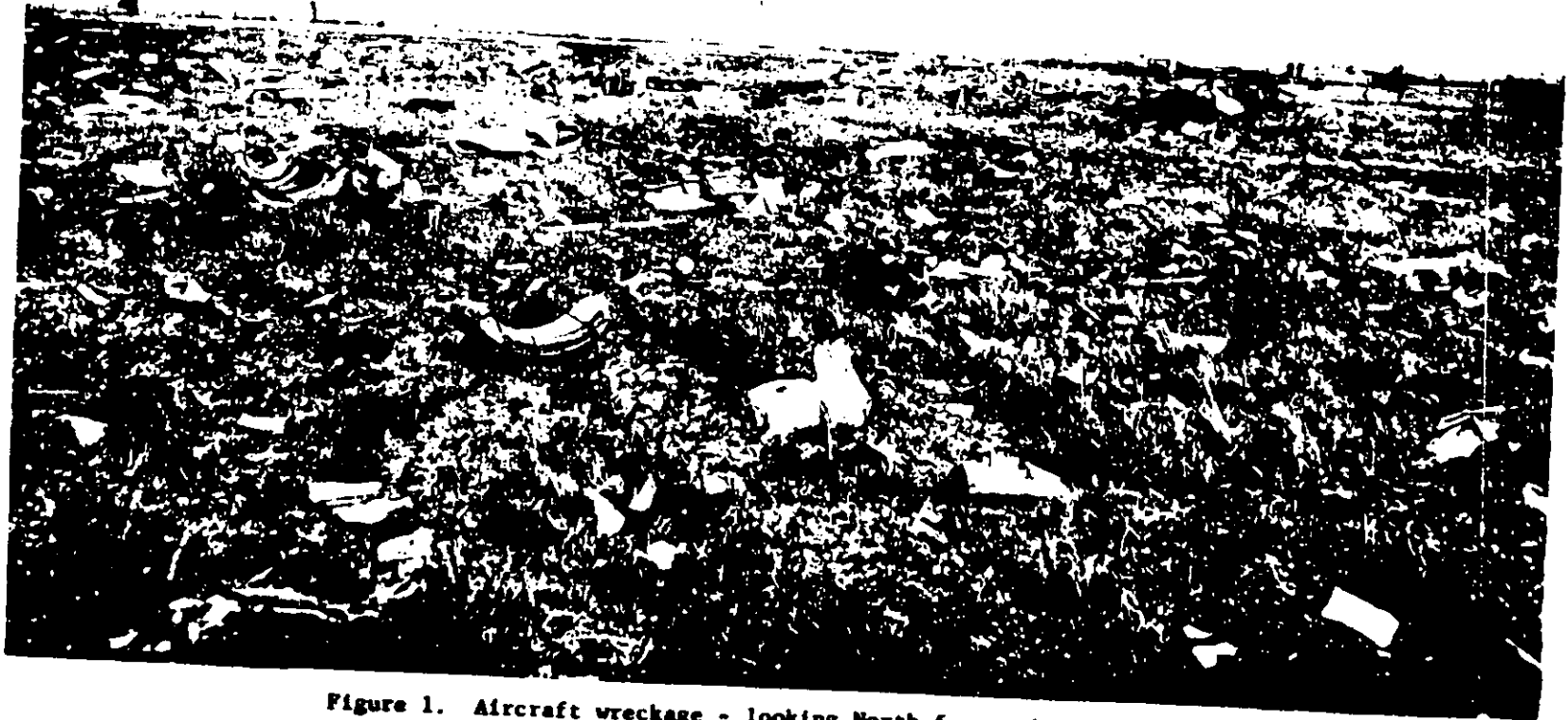


Figure 1. Aircraft wreckage - looking North from point of impact.

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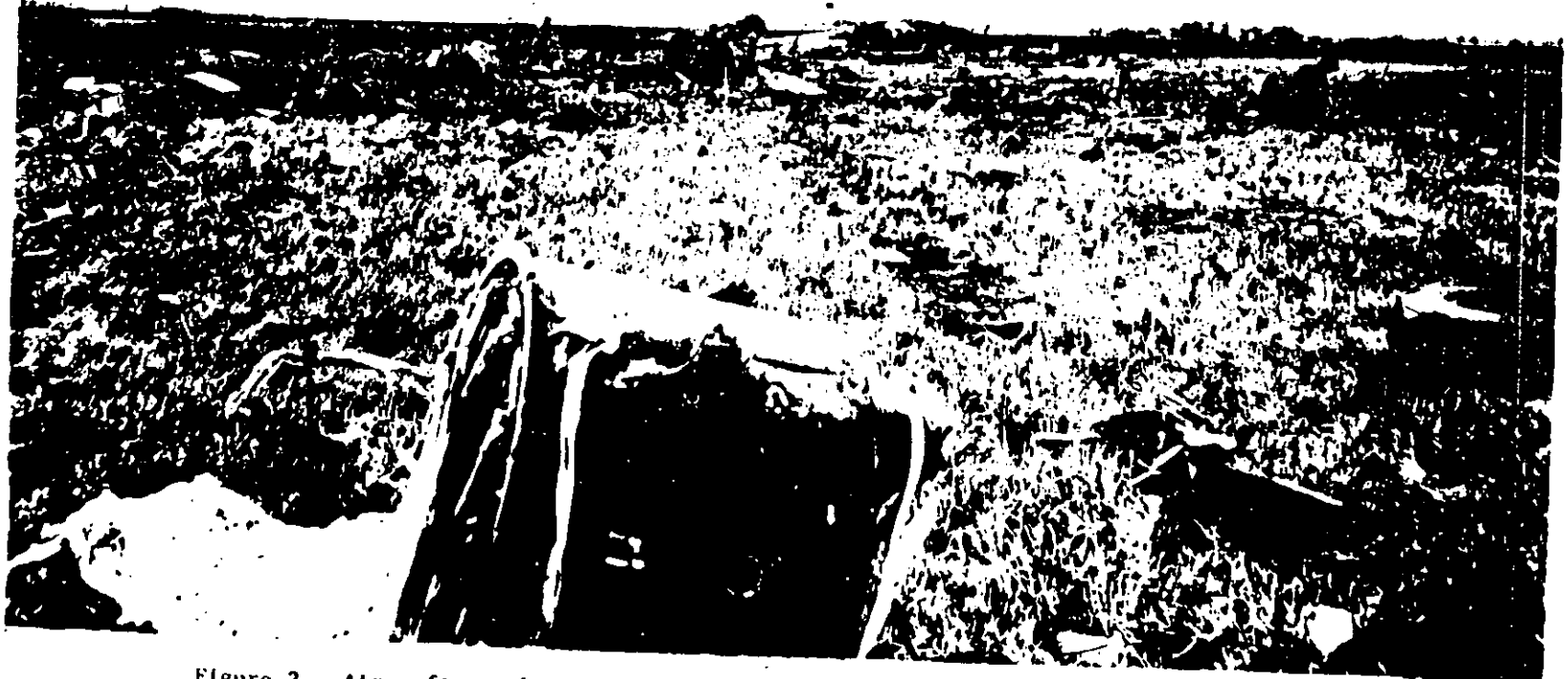


Figure 2. Aircraft wreckage - looking South. Bomb A Parachute assembly in foreground.

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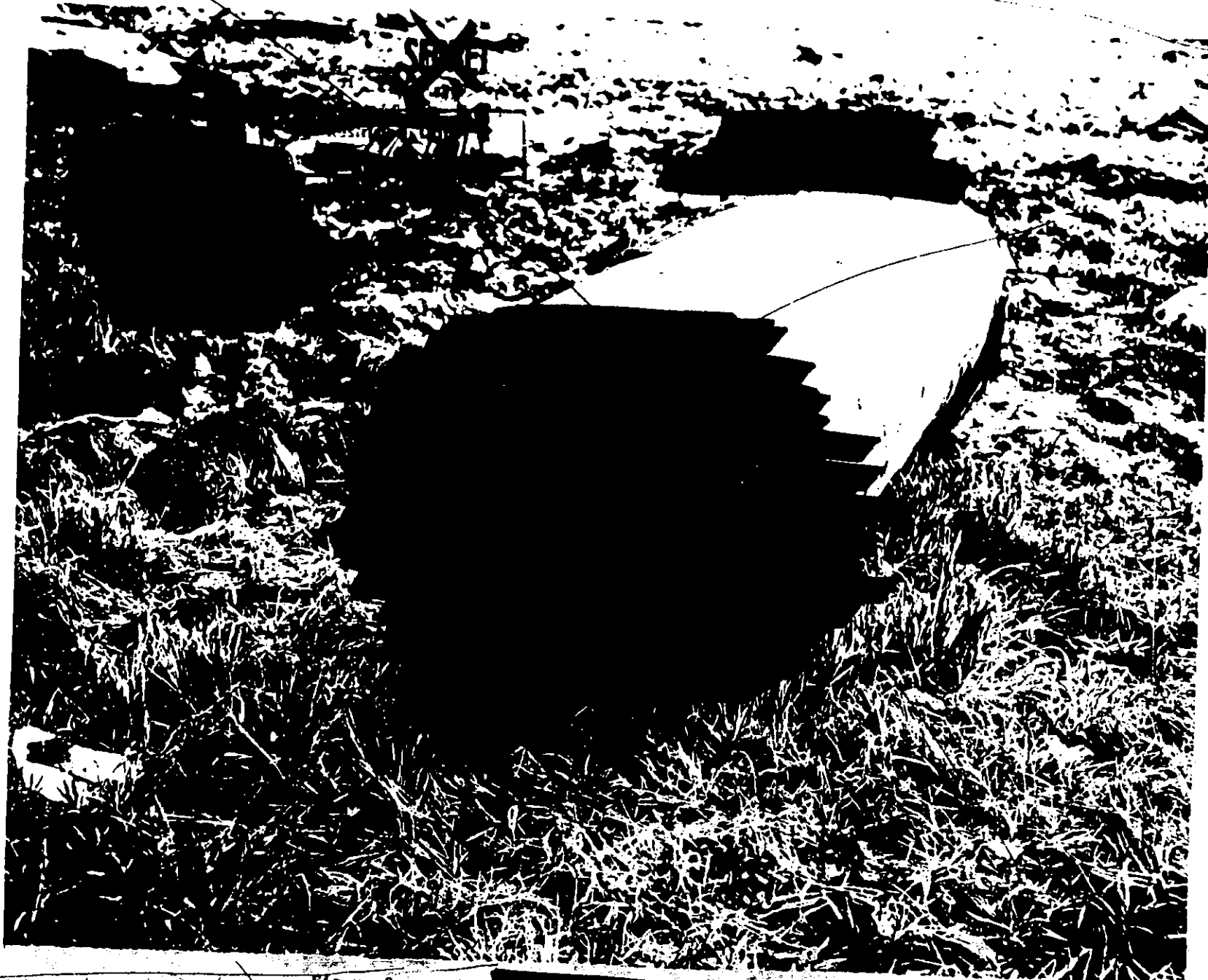


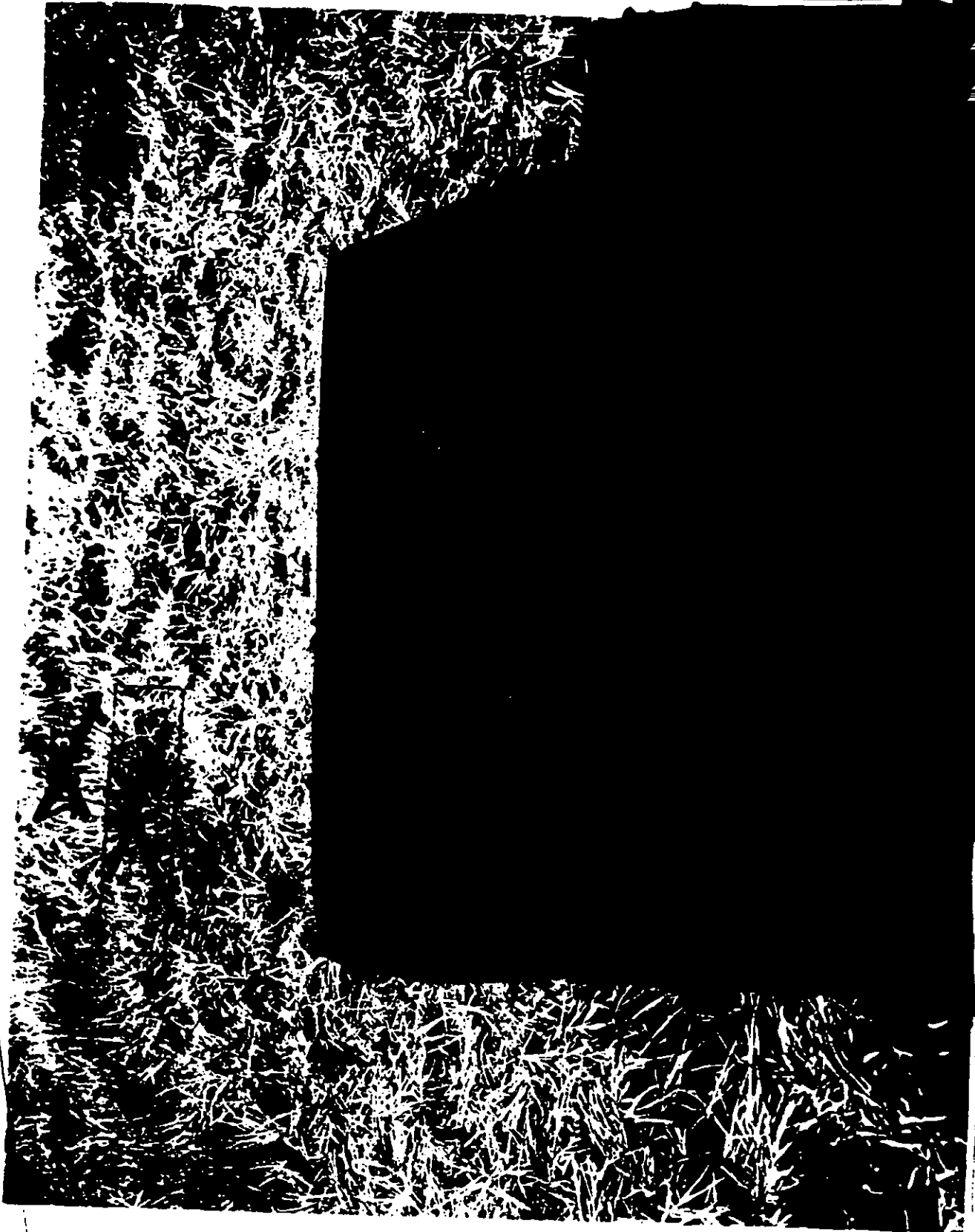
Figure 3. Bomb A

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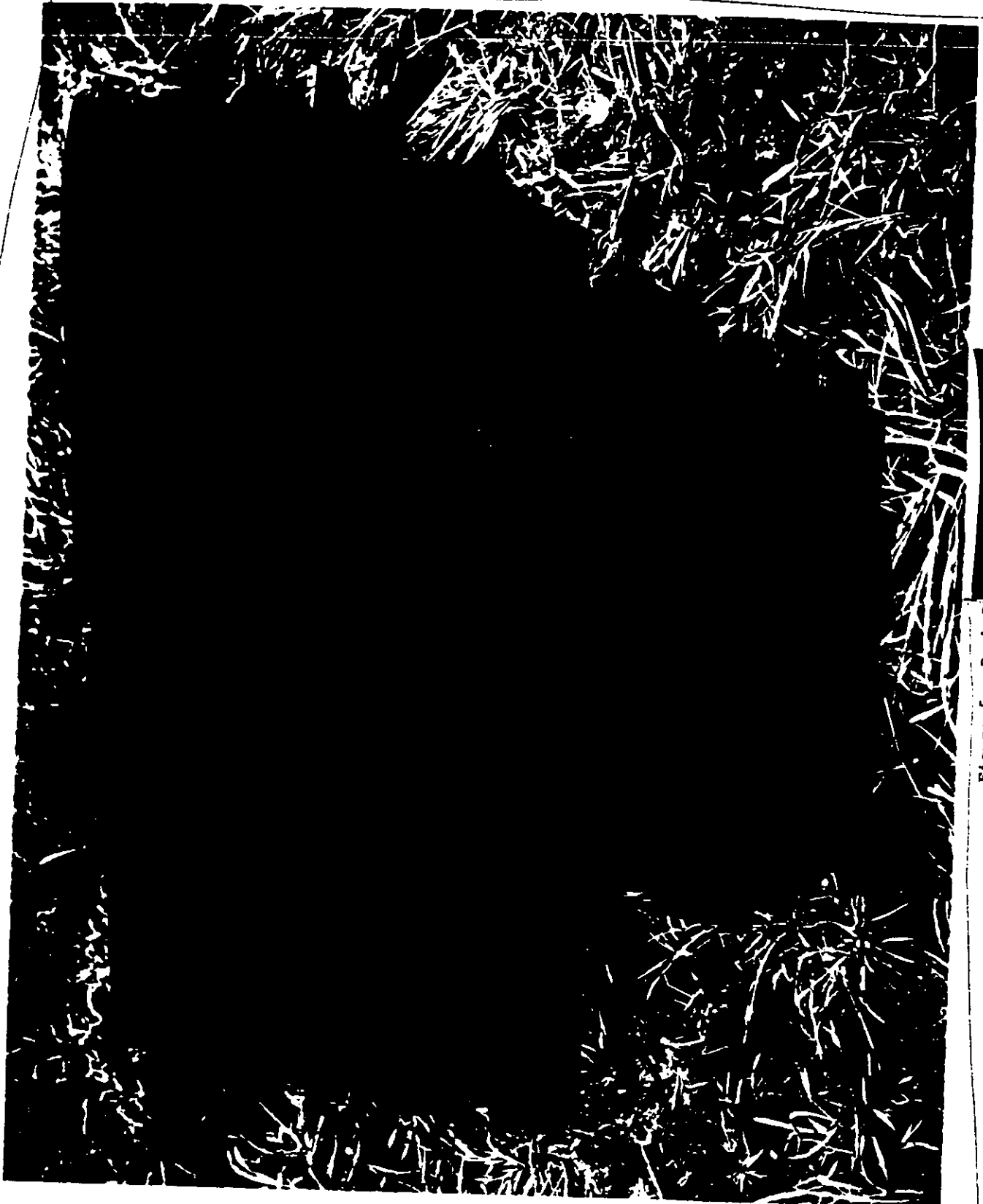


Figure 5. Bomb B

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Figure 7. Bomb B

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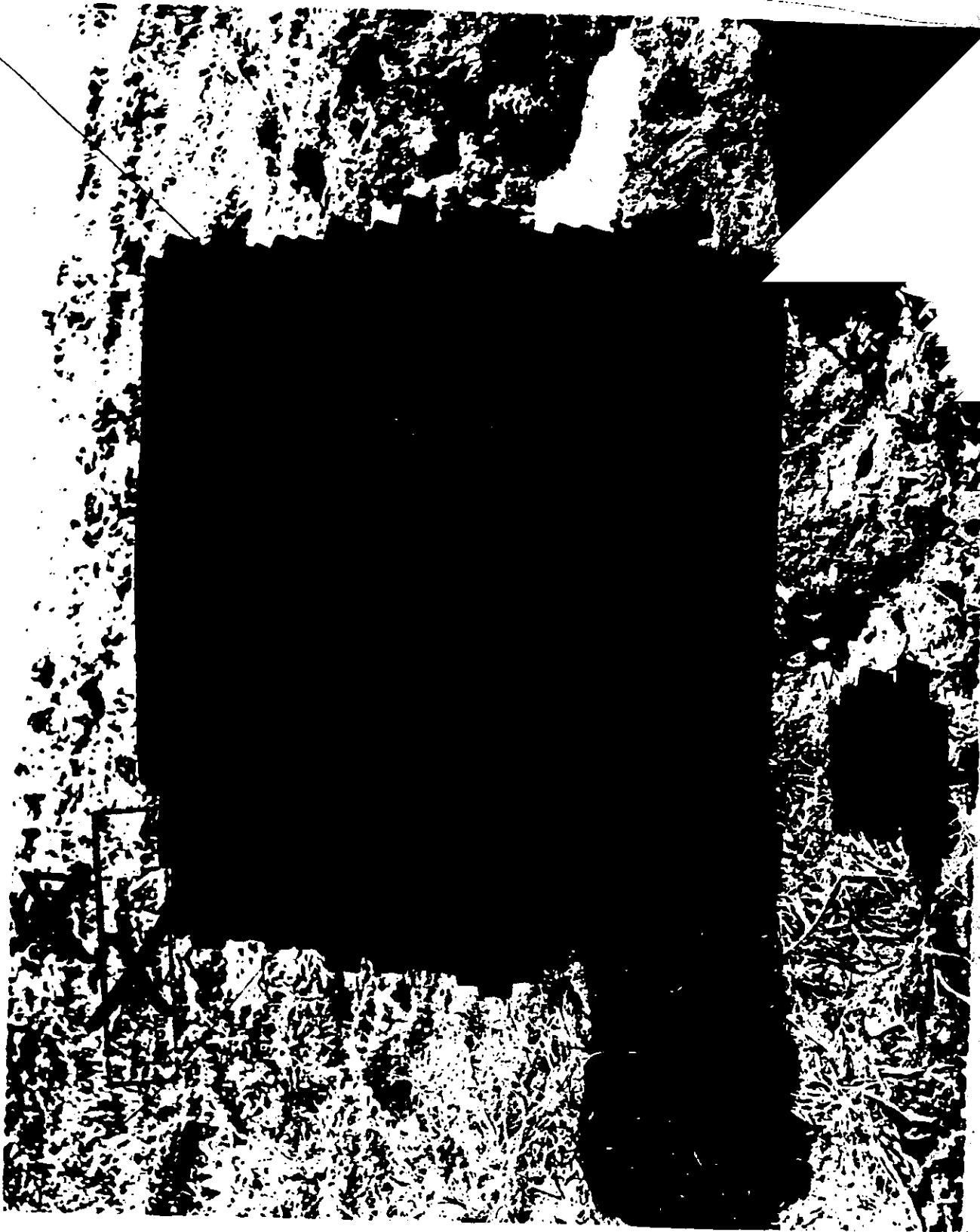


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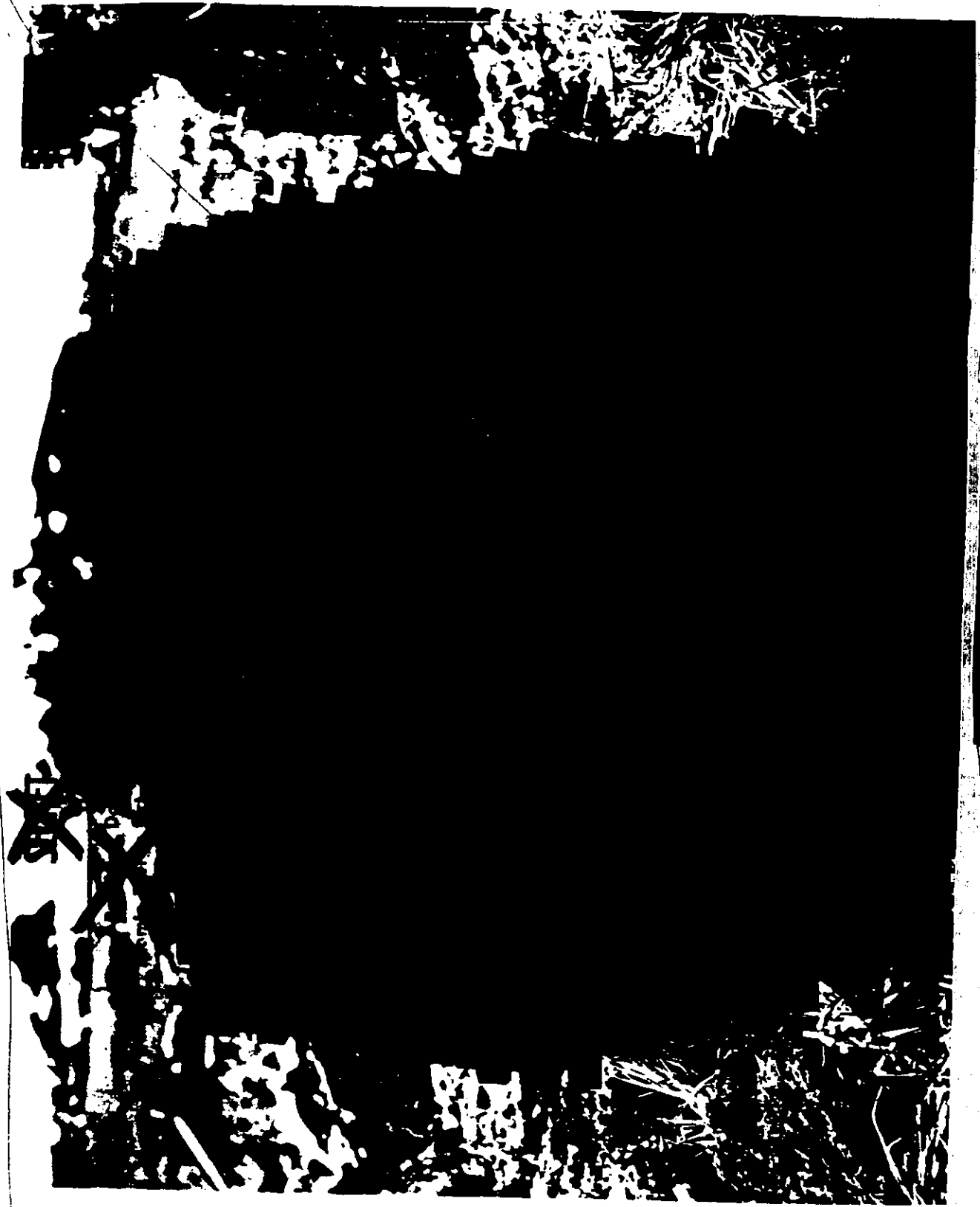
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Bomb A

Figure 13.

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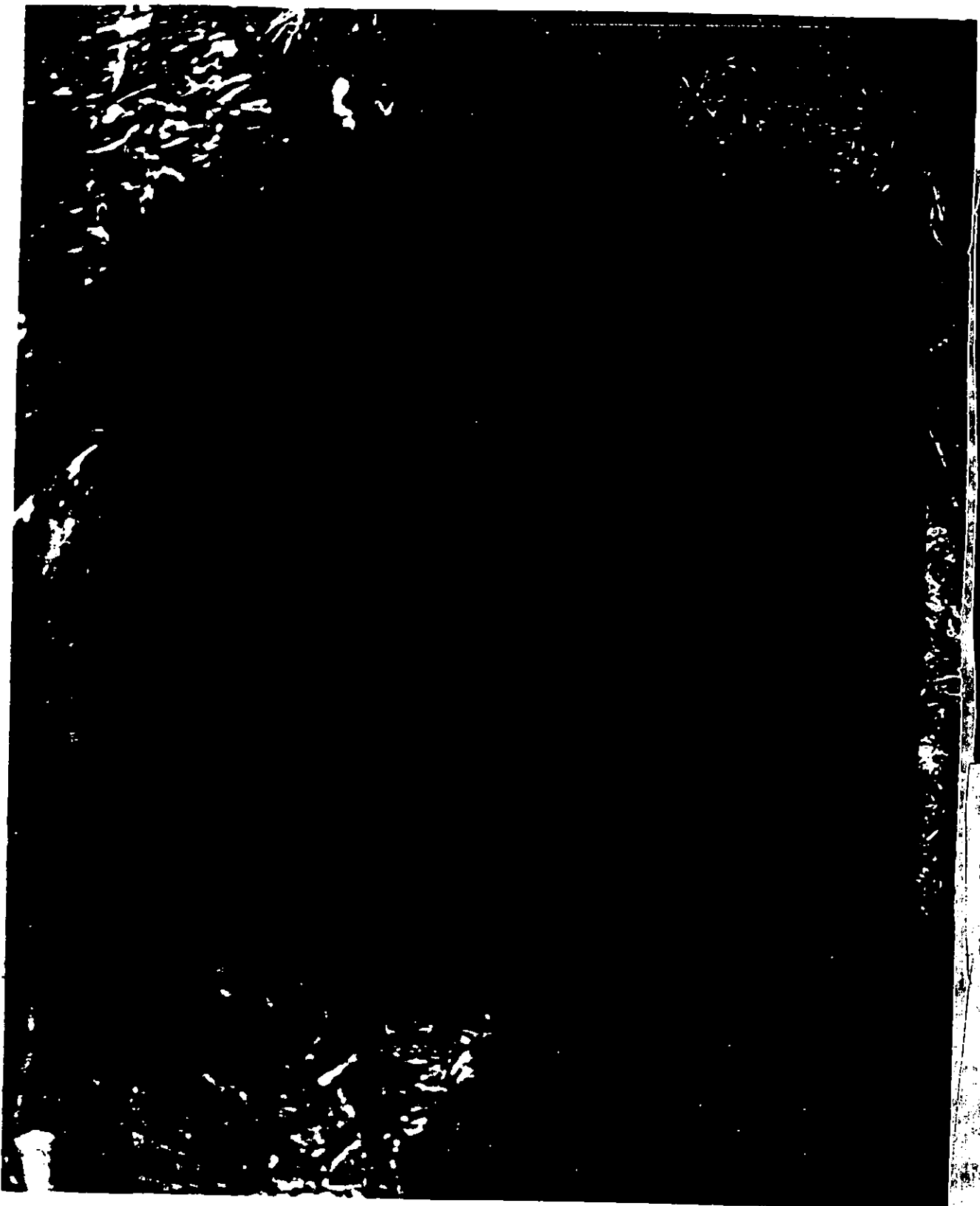


Figure 12. Bomb A

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ALBUQUERQUE LTR 136-11-26H
Page 17 of 18

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Figure 14. View from aft end of Room 4

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AIRMUNITIONS LTR 136-11-56H
Page 18 of 18

e. Rendering Safe Procedures - Bomb B.

(1) The HE sphere had completely shattered, and Beale AF Base EOD personnel had recovered the HE [REDACTED]. The pit was found intact. AMC EOD personnel completed the RSP, which consisted of locating the remaining detonators, locating and identifying remaining weapon components and cleaning up nuclear residue. The RSP was simplified and quickly accomplished due to the broken condition of the bomb.

f. Recovered HE and detonators were burned, and the nuclear components were turned in to the Munitions Maintenance Squadron at Beale Air Force Base.

g. [REDACTED] spare detonators not found during the AMC EOD operation are being recovered by the Beale AF Base EOD Element.

h. Excellent support and cooperation were given all phases of the EOD mission.

5. Unusual problems:

Rain and muddy terrain hampered the operation.

6. Contaminations:

None.

FOR THE COMMANDER

Lt Col A. F. Douglas
for JOE M. WHITFIELD
Colonel, USAF
Commander
2705th Airmunitions Wing

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