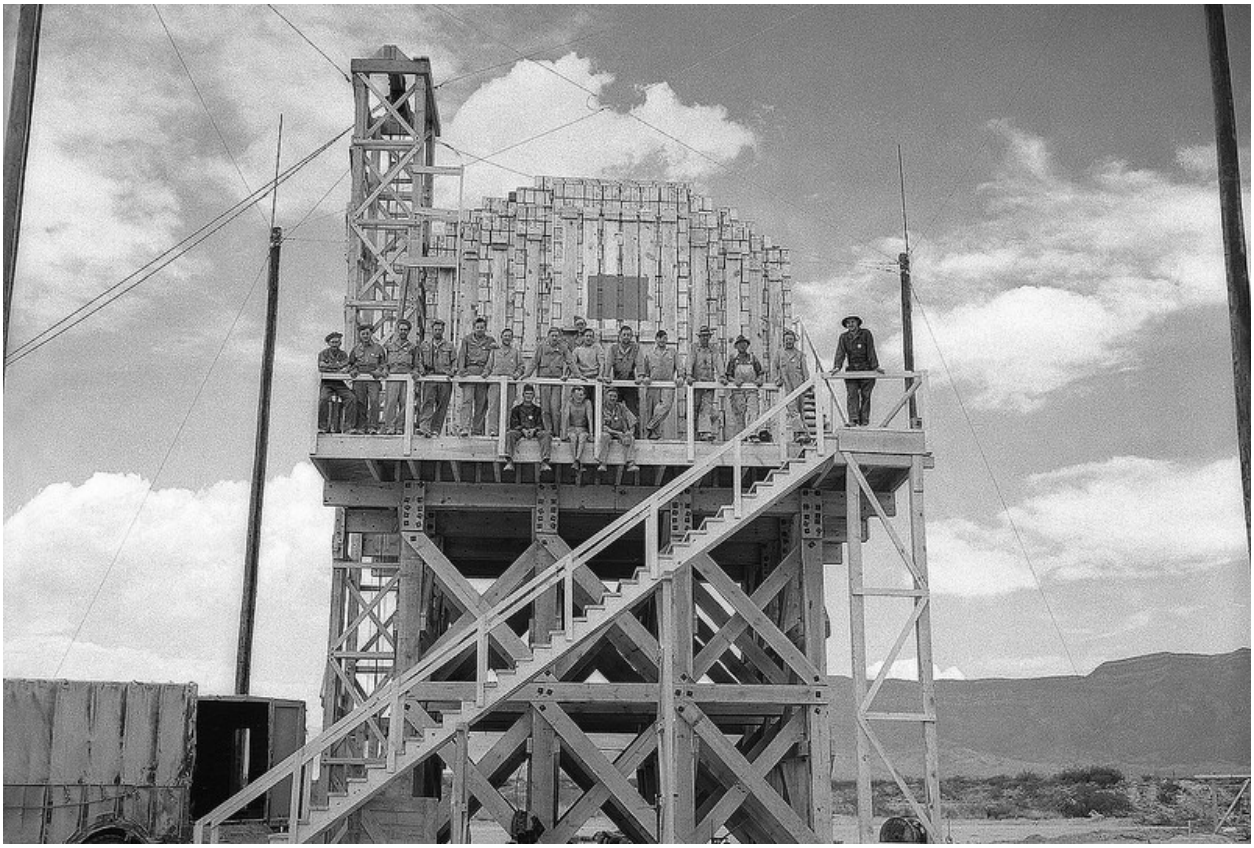
Picture of the Week: The 100-Ton Test

July 9, 2015



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Before the historic Trinity test on July 16th, 1945, Los Alamos scientists conducted a host of other experiments designed to ensure that they would be ready to successfully measure the full force, efficiency, energy release, shock and radiological phenomena of the blast. Kenneth Bainbridge, a Harvard physicist and Director of the Trinity test proposed one such rehearsal to study the effects of the blast and calibrate instruments. This test, called, quite simply, the 100-Ton Test, involved detonating 100 tons of TNT with radioactive material added to it, so scientists could track the airborne debris, in addition to measuring the force of the blast. When the TNT was detonated on May 7, 1945, it was the largest measured blast to that point in time. The explosion to follow on July 16th of that year, would be 200 times as powerful. This photo shows men posing atop the 20-foot tall test tower in front of the 108 long tons (110 tons) of TNT used in the test.

Read more:

History Gallery (images)

Learn more about Trinity to Trinity

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