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Not Lethal Unless Inhaled

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Radiation Picked Up At Thule Crash Site

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WASHINGTON -- Atomic radiation has been picked up at the B-52 crash site near Thule, Greenland, indicating that at least one of the four hydrogen bombs being carried by the bomber split open when the plane hit the ice Sunday night.

Informed sources emphasized the radiation detected out on the ice of North Star bay was alpha radiation, which is not lethal unless inhaled in large doses.

Just how the alpha rays were found was not immediately certain, though one source suggested it was from the shoes of search teams out on the ice.

The Pentagon insisted last night that search teams had not found the missing plane wreckage or any parts of the four bombs it was carrying. One theory had the bombs tumbling out of the plane and into two-foot snowbanks covering the seven feet of ice that covers all the Arctic this time of year.

The other theory is the wrecked plane, its bombs still inside the bomb bay, had plunged through the ice to the bottom of North Star bay, as much as 900 feet beneath the surface.

While the Pentagon has yet to disclose the number and size of the bombs on board the bomber, it is understood the plane carried four hydrogen bombs of the 1.1 megaton type,

with a total explosive force equal to more than 4.4 million tons of dynamite—a force 300 times greater than that which struck Hiroshima in World War II.

Meanwhile, it was also understood that the one crew member who died in the B-52 crash Sunday was killed when his parachute either failed to open or opened only partially. He was Capt. Leonard Svitenko, 36, of

West Springfield, Mass., the plane's co-pilot.

The six other crew members all bailed out safely from the burning plane and were recovered by dogsled rescue teams.

Whether the missing bombs were in the snow or beneath the ice, the Pentagon continued to emphasize there was "no danger of a nuclear explosion" because the bombs were unarmed.