

Misleading Public Perception of Safety and the Goldsboro B-52 Broken Arrow

PowerPoint Presentation

Dr. David Snead

Maggie Mitchell

A B-52G bomber crashed in rural Wayne County just north of Goldsboro on January 24, 1961 that was carrying nuclear weapons. Although there was not a detonation, the public could easily perceive danger and feel threatened from a potential disaster if they were aware of the entire scope of the accident. During the height of the Cold War, a nuclear accident would easily invoke fear in the hearts and minds of the American people. In an attempt to lessen the potential for unrest, many of the news reports of the Goldsboro accident, although mostly truthful, included misleading information to ease the fears of the public. This misleading information included downplaying the risk of radioactivity in the area of the accident site and the state of armament of the nuclear bombs that fell from the jet. Not only were there misleading news reports, but both state and federal, officials declined to issue any statements on the accident. By observing local, state, and national reaction, specifically through government statements and newspaper articles, to the B-52G crash in Goldsboro, it is easy to identify the intended public perception of the accident.