

Krakatoa!

[In college, I once attended an evening lecture on Krakatoa. The statistics resulting from the 1883 eruption are truly mind-boggling]

Krakatoa is a volcanic island situated in the Sunda Strait between the islands of Java and Sumatra in the Indonesian province of Lampung. The name is also used for the surrounding island group comprising the remnants of a much larger island of three volcanic peaks which was obliterated in a cataclysmic 1883 eruption, unleashing huge tsunamis (killing more than 36,000 people) and destroying over two-thirds of the island. The explosion is considered to be the loudest sound ever heard in modern history, with reports of it being heard up to 3,000 miles from its point of origin. The shock waves from the explosion were recorded on barographs worldwide. In 1927, a new island, Anak Krakatau, or "Child of Krakatoa", emerged from the caldera formed in 1883 and is the current location of eruptive activity.

The eruption was equivalent to 200 megatons of TNT—about 13,000 times the nuclear yield of the Little Boy bomb that devastated Hiroshima during World War II, and four times the yield of Tsar Bomba, the most powerful nuclear device ever detonated. The 1883 eruption ejected app. 6 cubic miles of rock. The cataclysmic explosion was heard 3,000 mi away in Alice Springs, as well as on the island of Rodrigues near Mauritius, 2,891 mi to the west. According to the official records of the Dutch East Indies colony, 165 villages and towns were destroyed near Krakatoa, and 132 were seriously damaged. At least 36,417 people died, and many more thousands were injured, mostly from the tsunamis that followed the explosion. The eruption destroyed two-thirds of the island of Krakatoa. Eruptions in the area since 1927 have built a new island at the same location. Periodic eruptions have continued since, with recent eruptions in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krakatoa>]

