

Large meteorite hits northern Norway

June 10 2006

A large meteorite struck in northern Norway this week, landing with an impact an astronomer compared to the atomic bomb used at Hiroshima.

The meteorite appeared as a ball of fire just after 2 a.m. Wednesday, visible across several hundred miles in the sunlit summer sky above the Arctic Circle, Aftenposten reported.

Peter Bruvold, a farmer, said he happened to be out in the fields with a camera because he was tending a foaling mare and he photographed the fireball.

"I saw a brilliant flash of light in the sky, and this became a light with a tail of smoke," Bruvold said. "I heard the bang seven minutes later. It sounded like when you set off a solid charge of dynamite a kilometer (0.62 miles) away."

The meteor struck a mountainside in Reisadalen.

Knut Jorgen Roed Odegaard, the country's leading astronomer, said he expects the meteor to prove to be the largest to hit Norway in modern times, even bigger than the 198-pound Alta meteorite of 1904.

"If the meteorite was as large as it seems to have been, we can compare it to the Hiroshima bomb," he said. "Of course the meteorite is not radioactive, but in explosive force we may be able to compare it to the bomb."

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