

News Release

March 4, 2013 For Immediate Release

Contact: Leonard Eiger, 425-445-2190, subversivepeacemaking@gmail.com Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action

16159 Clear Creek Road NW Poulsbo, WA 98370 www.gzcenter.org

SILVERDALE, WASHINGTON, MARCH 4, 2013_ -- Twenty peace activists from around the United States were arrested as a result of their nonviolent protest against nuclear weapons at a U.S. Naval base.

Members of the Pacific Life Community gathered at the Main Gate to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor early Monday morning in resistance to the continued deployment of the Trident nuclear weapons system and the associated threat of use of nuclear weapons by the U.S. government.

The Bangor Trident base is home port to eight of the nation's 14 Ohio class nuclear ballistic missile submarines and also home to the Strategic Weapons Facility, Pacific, where the Navy stores thermonuclear warheads for deployment on its submarines. Bangor represents the largest operational concentration of nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal.

While maintaining a peaceful vigil along the roadway, six of the resisters entered the roadway with a banner, which they stretched across the entrance lanes in symbolic closure of the base. The banner quoted Martin Luther King Jr.: "When scientific power outruns spiritual power, we end up with guided missiles and misguided men." The protesters also knelt in prayer.

Washington State Patrol officers ordered the protesters to leave the roadway. All six protesters complied with the officers and were escorted to the median where they were briefly detained and issued citations for "Walking on roadway where prohibited."

Meanwhile, another fourteen protesters walked onto the roadway carrying banners and signs calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. All crossed the blue line onto the base and knelt in prayer. Naval security personnel arrested the protesters and drove them to a facility on the base for processing. They were cited under Section 1382 of Title 18 prohibiting trespassing on military bases, and released a short time later.

The resisters carried a letter addressed to the Bangor base commander. It stated that the "Trident II D-5 missiles with their W76 or W88 [thermonuclear] warheads are illegal under international law and hence are also illegal per the Constitution of the United States." Naval security personnel declined to accept the letters.

Those cited for Federal trespassing were Louis Vitale, OFM, Oakland, CA; Rodney Herold, Seattle, WA; Ted Bracknan, Puyallup, WA; Tensie Hernandez, Santa Maria, CA; Betsy (Frances Elizabeth) Lamb, Bend, OR; Ann E. Havill, Bend, OR; Denny Moore, Bainbridge Island, WA; Bill Bichsel, SJ, Tacoma, WA; James G. Haber, San Francisco, CA; Ed Ehmke, Menlo Park, CA; Mary Jane Parrine, Menlo Park, CA; Jerry Zawada, OFM, Milwaukee, WI; Felice Cohen-Joppa, Tucson, AZ and Susan Crane, Redwood City, CA.

Cited by State Patrol were Tom Karlin, Tacoma, WA; Clancy Dunigan, Langley, WA; George Rodkey, Tacoma, WA; Marcus Page-Collonge, Albuquerque, NM; Leonard Eiger, North Bend, WA and Cliff Kirchmer, Tacoma, WA.

The vigil and nonviolent direct action brought to a close this year's Pacific Life Community (PLC) Faith and Resistance Retreat held near Tacoma, Washington. The PLC is dedicated to abolishing nuclear weapons and war-making through nonviolent direct action. The annual event is held each year on the weekend around the anniversary of Castle Bravo, the most powerful nuclear device ever detonated by the U.S.

Fallout from Castle Bravo contaminated a large portion of the Marshall Islands, and poisoned island residents as well as the crew of the Daigo Fukuryu Maru, a Japanese fishing vessel. It also generated international concern about atmospheric testing. The U.S. still occupies part of the Marshall Islands in its continued testing of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

This year's Faith and Resistance Retreat was hosted by the Tacoma Catholic Worker community. The event brought together people from around the Western U.S. Catholic Workers came from San Jose, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Half Moon Bay, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Guadalupe, CA; Sheep Ranch, CA and Redwood City, CA.

Fr. Bill Bichsel, of the Tacoma Catholic Worker community and 2012 Greater Tacoma Peace Prize laureate, commented on the significance of the Pacific Life Community's work. "We refuse to accept nuclear weapons as our security. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to create a nonviolent world. We are the future and the kingdom that we have been waiting for."

Also represented at the retreat were Nevada Desert Experience, The Nuclear Resister and Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. Ground Zero, a community in resistance to nuclear weapons, particularly Trident, hosted this morning's vigil and action at Bangor.

The U.S. Navy is building a Second Explosives Handling Wharf at the Bangor Trident base, and is engaged in research and development to build twelve new ballistic missile submarines designed to replace the existing Trident submarines. Estimated cost to build the twelve submarines is almost \$100 billion. Rear Admiral Joseph Tofalo, commander, submarine Group 10, Kings Bay, Georgia has stated that "A single Trident submarine is the sixth nuclear nation in the world all by itself."