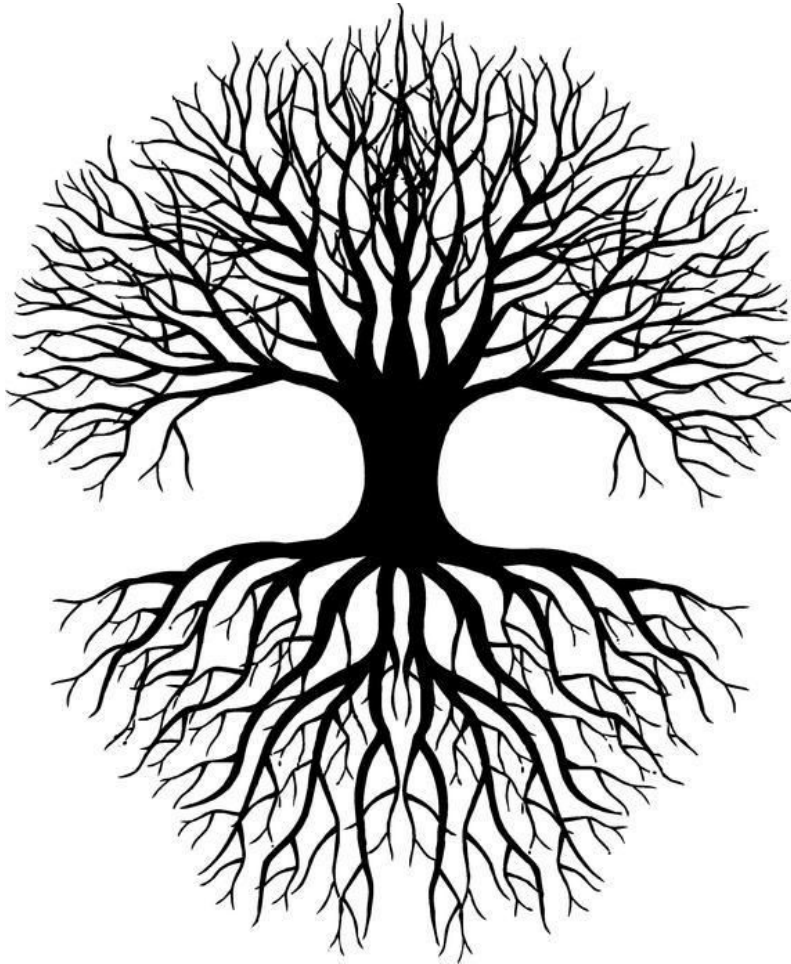


# Ground Zero

January 2022

Volume 27 Issue 1



## ***The Root of War is Fear***

By Denny Duffell

I was one of eight demonstrators arrested last August, on Nagasaki Day, among the 31 protestors gathered at the main entryway of Sub Base Bangor. Because of the pandemic, both the number of attendees and the number arrested were fewer than two years before, when I was also arrested as part of the Hiroshima/Nagasaki action that included the delightful dancing to the music of “War! What Is It Good For? Absolutely Nothing!” This time we were all masked, and cooperated quickly with the arresting officials, to not expose anyone needlessly to potential infection. Both actions reflected the atmosphere of trust that Ground Zero has established with base personnel over the years.

My name is Denny Duffell, and I am an ordained Catholic deacon of the Seattle Archdiocese, stationed at Our Lady of the Lake parish in Seattle. I’m also regional coordinator for Pax Christi Pacific Northwest, a Catholic peace and justice organization, part of Pax Christi USA, which has regions across our country and chapters in each of the regions, and other individual members in are-

as without a chapter. In turn Pax Christi USA is a member of Pax Christi International, which has other national member organizations all over the world. My friend George Rodkey, from the Pax Christi chapter in Tacoma, was also arrested with me last August.

For me, the action and arrest marked a return to earlier times. Not long after my wife and I married in 1974, we met Jim Douglass on Capitol Hill in Seattle. We were part of an early civil disobedience action during the time the Trident base was being built. One group of protestors was camped overnight at the main entry, very visible to base personnel, and was watched periodically through the night. Another group was prepared to arrive and to go over the fence, to the south, at an agreed time. Over the night the group at the entry gradually sawed through one of the supporting poles to the fence at its base, but covered their actions whenever the patrol came by. In the morning, base personnel focused on the group at the gate.

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***The Root of War... continued on page 2***

At the agreed time, in full sight of base personnel, they leaned on the fencepost which went over completely, allowing them all to enter the base while the surprised base personnel could only surround them and await orders.

To the south, unattended by anyone, we put a few ladders next to the fence, threw carpets over the barbed



In the 1970s, Denny Duffell participated in a civil disobedience action at the construction of the new base. The group carried bags of seeds which they planted in a garden. *Photos by John Williams.*

top, and easily climbed over! When a patrol found us, we were all already over onto the base. We were hastily ordered to get back over on the other side, but this was obviously not going to happen as there were no ladders on the base side. After a few tense moments, the patrol leader received orders to walk us all to the main gate, which we did. We scattered wheat kernels as we walked along, symbolic of “returning the base to farmland.” For this action, we received barring letters.

My life and faith go to the heart of why I have opposed these weapons, since my grade school days when I first learned what they were. When I was taught that the only thing keeping “the enemy” from bombing us with these weapons was the threat that we would bomb them back, the solution was obvious: everyone involved should agree to get rid of these weapons. My young faith told me that Jesus would never have a part in anything like this, nor would any of his followers.

It doesn’t play out that way in our modern world, unfortunately. In 1962 the Trappist monk Thomas Merton wrote a famous essay entitled “The Root of War is Fear.” Merton diagnosed the American idea that the only way to peace was through threatening nuclear war as being “a form of mental illness.” It is still true.

It’s also true, however, that many people in our country make their livelihoods by designing, producing, deploying, and standing ready to use these weapons. Others are involved and hold considerable authority for the planning and execution of strategies for the how, when, and where of their use. And still others hold power by fanning that fear when needed, and winning votes and their offices for “standing firm and showing strength.” It’s what Eisenhower called our military-industrial complex; he could have called it the military-industrial-political complex.

Catholic leaders, along with many others in our world, have condemned nuclear weapons ever since their beginning, including every Pope since these weapons were invented. But in our country that message is not passed along by our hierarchy to the wider Catholic public, “the faithful in the pews.” The reasons are many, but this too starts with fear. In our country the general public is afraid of enemies that would threaten us, and of being without the “nuclear shield” that is thought to protect us. That includes the general Catholic population. Our Catholic bishops know this and generally remain silent, afraid that a reactive public would show their displeasure, and demonstrate it in the collection baskets.

Many people will remember when this was not the case. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, who died in 2018, said publicly in 1981 that “Trident is the Auschwitz of Puget Sound,” and withheld 50% of his income taxes in protest. I was proud to call Archbishop Hunthausen my friend, and have a framed copy of that iconic front-page picture of him that appeared in the Seattle Times, when he was part of a Good Friday anti-war protest at the base.

In those days, the anti-Trident and Nuclear Freeze movements swelled across the country. Our national leadership responded to this, securing agreements with the Soviet Union to build verifiable trust and limit our weaponry. Alas, after that the general public seemed to assume that there was no longer a threat. But our country has always still threatened to use these weapons when the occasion arose! Catholic Worker and author Art Laffin, with help from Bellingham Pax Christi member Nick Mele, has catalogued this in his recent edition of “The Risk of the Cross: Living Gospel Nonviolence in the Nuclear Age,” listing at least 30 times from 1946 through 2006 that presidents have threatened the use of nuclear weapons. And we are all public witnesses that President Trump did the same, with both Iran and North Korea.

Now, our country is part of a growing international madness: developing and testing new delivery systems, faster and more precise. The US plans to devote \$1.7 trillion to update its nuclear triad, of which the Trident submarine is a key component, with tens of billions for this updating in our current proposed budget.

Personally, I feel that I must continue to protest these weapons as long as I have the health and strength to do so, and if necessary to continue to break the law. Higher laws require it! But sadly, I also must say that it doesn’t feel quite enough. I think we must all take that to heart.

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**Denny Duffell** is an ordained Catholic deacon of the Seattle Archdiocese and regional coordinator for Pax Christi. He was first arrested at Bangor in July 1975 with the Pacific Life Community.

# January 2022 Ground Zero Events

By Glen Milner

On Saturday, January 15, 2022, Ground Zero will have a short four-hour retreat and strategy meeting facilitated by Jenell DeMatteo at Ground Zero. All are invited to this and all events.

The great room at Ground Zero will be open at 9:00am and the retreat will begin at 10:00am. This will be a roundtable style of discussion to eliminate nuclear weapons—there will be no Zoom connection for these discussions.

From noon to 2:00pm, we will conduct a vigil at the Main Gate of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, and later share a light lunch. During this time, we will also have a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the newly-installed photovoltaic power system at Ground Zero.

From 2:00 to 4:00pm on January 15, we will discuss and summarize the strategy meeting.

On Monday, January 17, Ground Zero members will march in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day march in Seattle at Garfield High School. Rodney Brunelle will be

there, on the hill in front of the school, around 11:00am with signs and banners. Please contact Rodney at [rodney.brunelle@gmail.com](mailto:rodney.brunelle@gmail.com) or 425-485-7030 for more information.



**Check out our new roof!** Ground Zero recently upgraded to eco-friendly solar power. *Photo by Rev. Senji Kanaeda.*

Rev. Senji Kanaeda, of the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Temple and Ground Zero member, will be conducting a short Peace Walk in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in January. Please contact Rev. Kanaeda at [kanaedasenji@gmail.com](mailto:kanaedasenji@gmail.com) or 206-780-6739 for more information.

On April 4, 1967, Dr. King stated, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Please join with us. Please contact [info@gzcenter.org](mailto:info@gzcenter.org) or 360-930-

8697 for all events.

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**Glen Milner** serves on the Stewardship Council and works with the Media and Outreach Committee.

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## Biden Can Deescalate the Threat of Nuclear War

By Dave C. Hall

President Biden's administration is developing the next Nuclear Posture Review that will set U.S. nuclear weapons policy for the foreseeable future. Given the Pentagon's recent elimination of Leonor Tomero's position leading that review for the Pentagon, it will require of the president enormous foresight and courage to reassert his earlier determination to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. policy.

Under President Obama as his vice president, Joe Biden led the administration's campaign to support the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and get the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) ratified. Sadly, even under those promising circumstances, support for the NPT was undermined by a political deal with senators required for support of NewSTART nuclear weapon limitations with Russia. Again the CTBT did not win Senate approval. By forced agreement with the Senate the Obama posture re-

view called for modernizing the entire nuclear arsenal and reinforced the belief that a large and technically sophisticated nuclear arsenal was essential for U.S. security. The underside of this decision was to elevate nuclear weapons in the U.S. defense strategy and further enshrine the notion of deterrence as a valid and rational justification for these weapons of terror.

In January of this year, President Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin affirmed the principle that a nuclear war could not be won and must never be fought.

Now in a highly contentious time Biden leads a new Nuclear Posture Review that seems likely to be more of the same. The posture reviews throughout their history since 1993 have all enshrined nuclear weapons as necessary evils in the service of deterrence.



**A shared devotion** to the myth of "deterrence" and commitment to fund nuclear weapons in perpetuity. *Photo courtesy of www.defensenews.com.*

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**Biden Can Deescalate...** continued on page 7

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# Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda Update

By Glen Milner

Construction of the [Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda](#) by [Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist monks](#) has made steady progress over the past two years.

[The Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda](#) is a Buddhist stupa that seeks to unite all sentient beings, regardless of race, creed or nationality, in the universal aspiration for genuine world peace. The Peace Pagoda is inspired by traditional stupa designs, reflecting the original Indian style of a dome-shaped building topped by a spire. It will be approximately 32 feet in diameter at the base and about 30 feet tall. As with many stupas built since the time of Buddha Shakyamuni, the Peace Pagoda will entomb his relics.

When completed, the Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda will stand at nearly the exact location as an earlier pagoda started in 1982 on property owned by [Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action](#), and later stopped by the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners.

In June 1982, founder and preceptor of the Nipponzan Myohoji Order, [The Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii](#), said that Ground Zero was selected because the “*place constitutes a front-line base for U.S. nuclear weapons. ...People held rallies here so that the nuclear weapons will be rendered inoperational. We have devised a plan to build a Buddhist pagoda here to achieve the goals of the anti-nuclear campaign.*” Fujii believed that the Peace Pagoda at Ground Zero could lead to an end to nuclear war.

The Peace Pagoda is about 110 feet from the property line of [Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor](#), currently the location of eight Trident nuclear missile submarines and the [largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons](#) in the United States.

Beyond supporting a movement against nuclear weapons, the Peace Pagoda serves to help people find their spiritual selves, grow, and connect with their Buddha nature. When people connect with their Buddha nature—they will stop the deployment of nuclear weapons.

[Thich Nhat Hanh](#), in “[Opening the Heart of the Cosmos: Insights on the Lotus Sutra](#)”, stated, “...you are already a Buddha in the ultimate dimension, and you can become a Buddha in the historical dimension. Buddha nature, the nature of enlightenment and love, is already within you; all you need to do is get in touch with it and manifest it.”

Nichidatsu Fujii stated, “*Our true nature is exactly equal to Buddha’s.*” The key to peace is within us all—

and on both sides of the fence—at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor and at Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action.

On May 17, 2019, the Peace Pagoda building permit was approved by the Kitsap County Department of Community Development. The [Ground Purification Ceremony](#) for the Peace Pagoda was held in Poulsbo, Washington on August 24, 2019.



**The vision.** Rev. Senji Kanaeda drafted this diagram of the Peace Pagoda in 2019.

In December 2019, much of the Peace Pagoda site work was completed ahead of the onset of heavy winter rainfall. The site and the route to the site had been reinforced with gravel and sand, and provided with drainage for the Peace Pagoda site.

On February 29, 2020, the CDC and the State of Washington reported the first known COVID-19 death in the U.S. in Kirkland, Washington. Construction activities at the Peace Pagoda site were modified accordingly for the health of workers and visitors.

On March 4, 2020, a pipe was set in concrete at the precise center point of the Peace Pagoda to establish perfect radii for inner and outer critical diameters during construction.

On October 23, 2020, the Peace Pagoda concrete foundation was poured.

On July 13, 2021, the lower half of the cylinder of the Peace Pagoda was poured. Ten people worked along with concrete company workers. Eight additional visitors were present to watch the pour on a beautiful and sunny day. Later, in September 2021, Kitsap County approved all pending inspection items and waived further inspections until the final inspection.

On October 20, 2021, the upper half of the cylinder was poured. Five people worked with concrete workers on a wet and rainy day. Four visitors were present to watch the successful concrete pour.

In September and October 2021, Rev. Senji Kanaeda worked with [Thomas Matsuda](#), an artist and stone carver in Leverett, Massachusetts, to finalize the design of the Buddha sculpture that is set in the face of the Peace Pagoda. The stone for the Buddha sculpture is high-quality [Indiana Limestone](#).

[Thomas Matsuda lived in Japan for twelve years and studied under renowned Buddhist sculptor Koukei Eri.](#) Matsuda stated, “...I am constantly striving to realize a synthesis of East and West.” Matsuda’s teacher, Koukei Eri, has stated, “*In the West, sculpture, like most forms of*

**Peace Pagoda... continued on page 5**

art, is viewed as a medium of artistic self-expression. With Buddhist sculpture, however ... what is important, is for the artist to devote himself wholeheartedly to his task in an attitude of benevolence. That's why you will find no signature or seal on a Buddhist image."



**On three occasions in 2021**, students and instructors from IslandWood, an environmental education nonprofit on Bainbridge Island, helped with the construction of the Peace Pagoda. Each day they provided inspiration and cheerful energy. *Photo by Rev. Senji Kanaeda.*

Buddha images have their own gestures using the fingers of the hand like a sign language. It is called [inso \(Japanese or Chinese\) or mudra](#) (Sanskrit) and refers to the real existence and the meaning of Buddha, bodhisattva, and Hindu gods. The motif of the Buddha image at the Peace Pagoda is when Buddha gave his first preaching at Sarnath (Deer Garden) in India. The hand gesture (mudra) is called [Dharmachakra Mudra](#) which is the gesture of Teaching.

Throughout construction, the Peace Pagoda site has been kept in immaculate condition, with newly planted grass and an orderly grounds. Jim Lyman, who is providing a lifetime of construction expertise and his own labor to the Peace Pagoda project, stated. *"The construction of the Peace Pagoda is a prayer unto itself, and every facet of the project is to be treated with the utmost care and respect."* [Lyman met Nichidatsu Fujii when Fujii visited Ground Zero in November 1980 and June 1982.](#)

The next phase of the Peace Pagoda will involve the challenging task of building concrete forms for the dome. The concrete for the dome is expected to be poured in March 2022.

It is our greatest wish that the presence of the Pacific Northwest Peace Pagoda will grow in the hearts of all peace-loving people in the U.S. and across the planet. Please join us when you are able, to walk the site, pray and meditate, or to work to build the Peace Pagoda, by contacting either Rev. Kanaeda at [kanaedasen-](#)

[ji@gmail.com](mailto:ji@gmail.com) or (206) 724-7632 at the Nipponzan Myohoji Bainbridge Island Temple or Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action at [info@gzcenter.org](mailto:info@gzcenter.org) or (360) 930-8697.

On June 16, 1982, after his second visit to Ground Zero and at the dedication ceremony of the Nipponzan Myohoji Dojo on Bainbridge Island, [The Most Venerable Nichidatsu Fujii](#) said,

*"NA-MU MYO-HO-REN-GE-KYO. ...a spiritual movement of religious people must rise. This is what we call 'non-violence,' a movement for which no one needs to take another's life, but rather practice compassion and prevent others from plotting to take life.*

*For the sake of this nonviolent movement, the people of the world must come to possess one-heart, one mind, and combine their strengths together to liberate humanity from the threat of annihilation."*

**Glen Milner** lives in Lake Forest Park. He identifies with the Society of Friends. This article will also be in the January 2022 edition of Northwest Dharma News. See <https://northwestdharma.org>.

## How Dare You

By Mack Johnson

How dare you prepare to blow up the world?  
How dare you give people jobs that destroy life instead of building it?  
How dare you think that security comes from killing instead of loving?

How dare we look away from the specter of a mushroom cloud?  
How dare we allow our leaders to spend our taxes on death?  
How dare we put off screaming, "ENOUGH!"?

How dare I believe in love, in light, in this beautiful planet, and do nothing?  
How dare I not walk my talk?

**Mack Johnson** is a longtime member of Ground Zero and a retired school teacher.

# Deploying Love in a Permanent Warfare State

Interview with Kathy Kelly by Martha Baskin

*Reporter Martha Baskin conducted an interview with Kathy Kelly at Ground Zero on Mothers Day weekend, May 14, 2019. Kelly's keynote address at Ground Zero was titled "Deploying Love in a Permanent Warfare State." Baskin caught up with Kelly before she and other activists left to walk to the Bangor Trident nuclear submarine base where Kelly and seven others engaged in a nonviolent direct action blocking the roadway into the base. The interview has been edited for clarity and length.*

**Baskin:** "Deploying Love in a Permanent Warfare State" sounds ephemeral and almost other worldly, especially when the US has been involved in multiple wars and civil conflicts since Vietnam: the Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Libya, Syria, Yemen, to name a few. What do you mean by "deploying love"?

**Kelly:** In a permanent warfare state the crucial step of education goes missing. I think democracy is based on education. Unfortunately the military has a vice-like grip on many means of educating the public: whether it's media literacy, on college campuses or entertainment. As a result it depends on people—good souls who come to gatherings like this—to inform the public. But one very shrouded reality remains the ballistic missile test launches. Last week the US launched an intercontinental ballistic missile test from California's Vandenberg Air Force Base toward the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The launch received little attention but occurred on the same day North Korea ended a 522-day halt to such activity with its first missile launch test since 2017. Do people know about that or do people recognize that we really can't have a rational discussion about solving our very real social problems—climate catastrophe, mass incarceration, immigration—unless we tackle the 750-billion-dollar military budget?

**Baskin:** What does "deploying love" look like here?

**Kelly:** I wouldn't give money to the mafia if they came to my door and said, "Excuse me Ms. Kelly, we'd like a third of your income." I just wouldn't do it. I think we should love our neighbors, and many people are inspired by the idea of loving enemies; if you care about people getting enough to feed their children or being able to cope with serious diseases and if you care about Mother Earth then we aren't going to pour our resources into the bottomless hole of military spending. The spending is unloving; it's cruel and destructive and could result in something calamitous in our

time, and I'm talking about nuclear omnicide.

**Baskin:** You deploy love by not paying federal taxes, which you haven't paid since 1980. That in and of itself is a very concrete act of love in opposition to the way the US spends its federal discretionary dollars. Is refusing to pay federal taxes something you encourage others to take?

**Kelly:** Truthfully no. The IRS is my spiritual director. I don't want a car or a home to take care of. So it's worked for me. Instead I've lived in community and had a very good life. But the IRS will catch up with people. On the other hand, if you reach a point where you think, "I can't live my life and continue to support the war makers", then I think it's a good idea to consult with a war-tax resistance counselor.

**Baskin:** And is that part of closing the circle, and another act of "deploying love"?

**Kelly:** I think love goes together with courage and wisdom, if we're going to find a different kind of living. We don't need wisdom without courage and love; we need all three. And when people can blend all three – and it takes a long time using life circumstances as the laboratory – when we can encourage one another to control our fears, then I think we can begin to create the kinds of communities that the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action represents.

**Baskin:** If Voices For Creative Nonviolence could sit down with the Pentagon what would the message be to them today, in this year 2019?

**Kelly:** I would say we need their discipline and their acute awareness of conditions in the world to deal with the greatest terror we all face: the terror of what we're doing to our own environment. We could be harvesting far more wind energy. We could be retrofitting housing stock across the US and building high speed bullet trains. This is the kind of thing that would make the US a more survivable place and also temper antagonism toward the US. Cuba is loved all over the world because they send doctors into precarious situations and the doctors stay for a decade. Well we could be beloved all over the world. We could eradicate diseases, overcome poverty, but we can't do it and still maintain a permanent warfare state. There's no rational discussion of resolving our problems if we don't dismantle our military might.

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*The Voices for Creative Nonviolence campaign, of which Kathy Kelly was co-coordinator, ended on December 31st, 2020. Please see the Voices website for more information.*



**Kathy Kelly.** Photo by Gilberto Perez.



# War Tax Resistance

By Lincoln Rice and Glen Milner

When Ground Zero member Tom Shea passed away in April 2019, he was remembered by many for his life's work for peace and his consistent call for war tax resistance.

Lincoln Rice of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC) spoke of Tom in August 2019, "Tom Shea dedicated his life to peacemaking and saw war tax resistance as a logical facet for the peacemaker in the US. Tom was a tireless supporter of war tax resistance and NWTRCC." Ground Zero member Leonard Eiger remembered, "Every Tax Day, Tom could be found outside his local post office handing out war tax resistance literature and he was always willing to counsel anyone who had questions about incorporating war tax resistance into their own life..."

As late as November 2016, Tom Shea asked Ground Zero to put war tax resistance on the agenda for our monthly meeting. We did then, and we do so now.

Summarized below are a few war tax resistance methods. Some are more convenient to some people than to others. And some methods are better than others at meeting particular goals. Each method also has a different set of risks associated with it.

**File and refuse to pay your taxes.** This involves filling out a 1040 form and refusing to pay either a token amount of your taxes (e.g. \$5, \$10, \$50), or a percentage representing a "military" portion, or the total amount (since a portion of whatever is paid goes to the military).



**Tom Shea** in 2012, distributing information on war tax resistance.  
*Photo by Leonard Eiger.*

**Refuse to file a tax return.** This might involve trying to stay out of the system or "off the grid." See "To File or Not To File A Tax Return"

**Earn less than the taxable income.** This can involve having such a low income that you are not required to file federal income tax returns (approximately \$12,550 for a single person in 2021), or it can mean filing and taking deductions so that no income tax is owed. Note: Social Security taxes are owed on income of \$600 and up. These taxes will be owed if you have not had them withheld at a job, and IRS collection is the same as for income taxes. See "Low Income/Simple Living as War Tax Resistance"

Many war tax resisters not only refuse to send their tax money to the U.S. government, they also redirect that money to programs in their own communities that are suffering from perverted government priorities, and to nongovernmental regional, national, and international groups seeking to create a better world.

For more information on war tax resistance, please visit the NWTRCC website at <https://nwttrcc.org>. NWTRCC has also compiled a list of volunteer war tax resistance counselors by state. To find a war tax resistance counselor in your area, go to <https://nwttrcc.org/resist/contacts-counselors>.

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**Lincoln Rice** lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is the Coordinator for NWTRCC. **Glen Milner** is a war tax resister living in Lake Forest Park.

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## **Biden Can Deescalate... continued from page 3**

President Biden's Nuclear Posture Review could set a new standard by reducing the role of nuclear weapons in a manner that reassures Russia and China and calls forth serious deep and ongoing conversations with them, our allies and other adversaries designed to put these blighted arsenals into safeguard regimens until they can be destroyed while humane international negotiations work out our very real power differences, cultural misunderstandings, and common safety.

Nuclear weapons, born of fear of totalitarianism, are inherently totalitarian weapons. They were developed in response to fears that Nazi Germany would win World War II if they had nuclear weapons and the U.S. did not. So we adopted a totalitarian regime to build and deploy these weapons of mass destruction. This regime commands the decisions about these weapons, and resists any effort to curtail their place in our defense. Since the U.S. is the only country to ever use nuclear weapons in war,

other countries fear we will use them again.

When the United States modernizes its nuclear arsenal, other countries do the same. China's latest plans to build up their arsenal numbers is the current case in point.

The Biden Nuclear Posture Review faces the likelihood, absent a strong presidential counter measure, that this review will continue to make nuclear weapons central to U.S. military and diplomatic force projection.

This is Biden's opportunity to make history and to advance the true security of all of us by directing his Nuclear Posture Review toward real reductions in the role of these weapons of mass murder in U.S. foreign policy.

Nuclear weapons are antithetical to our democratic values and pose indiscriminate threats to law and life. Mr. President, we implore you to help make them go away.

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**David C. Hall** is a member of Ground Zero and is past president of Physicians for Social Responsibility and Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility. This Op-Ed originally appeared in the Everett Herald on Dec. 5, 2021.

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# GROUND ZERO

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*“To remain in prison for the  
rest of my life is the greatest  
honor that you could give to me.”*

*— Sr. Megan Rice, SHCJ*

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## How to Perform a War

By Larry Kerschner

I will teach you how  
to perform a war  
a clean operation  
to remove that dangerous tissue  
which can no longer be controlled  
we first name it cancer  
we curse it for an inhuman bastard  
nothing legitimate to be found  
the pathologic question  
must be asked and answered  
weighing whether a pound of flesh will be enough  
shared definitions in hand  
we sharpen our knives  
sanitary  
chrome and steel  
bright lights  
remove any shadow  
of doubts  
patriotic anesthesia dulls the senses  
common and other  
to the loud cutting  
ripping and

bleeding to come  
once hidden viscera bloody red  
broken bone white  
and hypoxic blue tissue  
stare out at us  
unexpected collateral damage  
can be dressed  
with sterile white gauze  
although the bloated smell  
sometimes remains

afterwards  
we will remove our gloves and  
wash our hands

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**Larry Kerschner** is a poet who has published collections of his work including *“Grave Lines”* and *“United States Military Diplomacy: From Wounded Knee to Afghanistan.”*