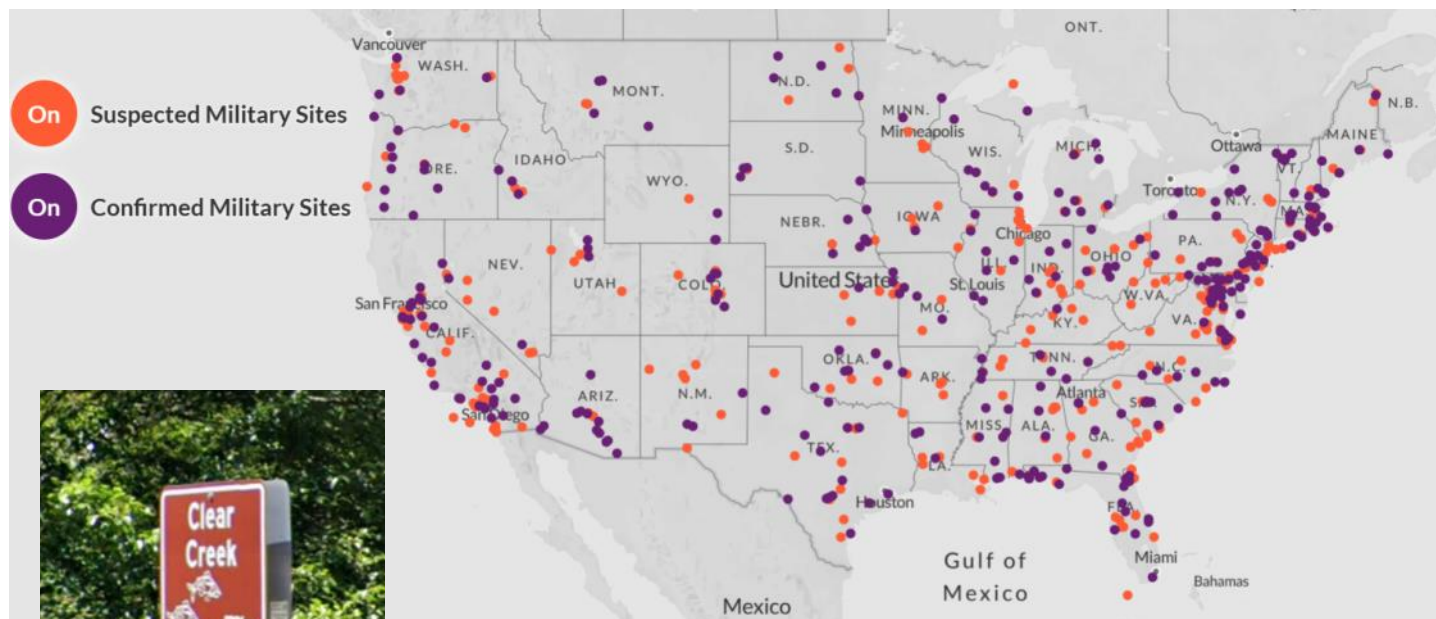


Ground Zero

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“Forever” chemicals

Drinking water in a residential well is 50,000 times above the EPA advisory for per-and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor. The Pentagon is withholding important data.

By Pat Elder

Editor’s note: The Navy is currently conducting an “evaluation of potential long-term solutions for the property with continued PFAS concentrations above 70 ppt near NBK Bangor” and is presenting that evaluation for public comment. Pat Elder serves as the director of Military Poisons, an organization that is engaged in 20 states and in a dozen countries overseas. Pat wrote this evaluation of the Navy’s report for Ground Zero.

The Navy tested well water at a residence just outside of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor in February 2020 and found 177 parts per trillion (ppt) of Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Subsequent testing found levels as high as 200 ppt, which is 50,000 times above the EPA’s interim health advisory of .004 ppt for PFOA in drinking water. PFOA is likely the deadliest of all PFAS compounds.

It’s been four years since the nation’s top toxicologist, Linda Birnbaum, warned that drinking water limits

for PFOA ought to be set at .1 part per trillion because of research linking tiny exposures of PFOA to pancreatic cancer. PFOA is closely associated with higher cholesterol, changes to liver function, reduced immune response, thyroid disease, and kidney and testicular cancer. It devastates the developing fetus.

PFOA levels in human breast milk have been found 40,000 times over the EPA guideline for drinking water.

Back in 2016, the EPA set a health advisory of 70 ppt for the combination of PFOS and PFOA in drinking water. As stated above, the updated health advisory levels are now 0.004 ppt for PFOA and 0.02 ppt for PFOS, but the Navy prefers using the outdated limit of 70 ppt. The Navy says it is “currently evaluating how we will address the new interim health advisories for PFOA and PFOS.” Apparently, they’ve decided to ignore the more

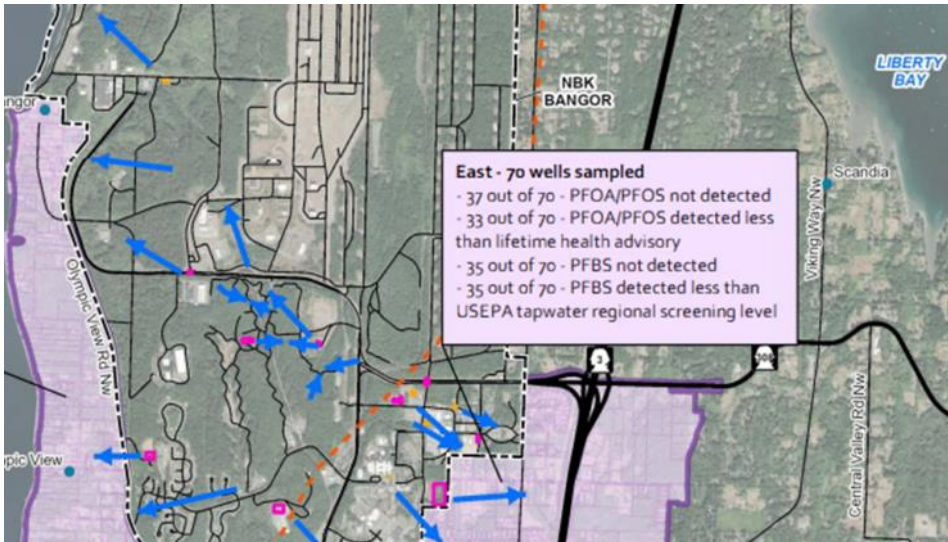
“Forever” chemicals... continued on page 2

stringent advisory to the detriment of public health.

These chemicals are powerful. They don't go away, and they continue to accumulate in our bodies.

The Navy is criminally negligent for not sharing this information with the public until now! Women who are pregnant or may become pregnant should not drink this water – and neither should anyone else.

By August of 2017 the DOD had identified wells contaminated with PFOS and PFOA at 401 active and closed installations across the country. They also tested 2,445 off-base municipal and private drinking water systems.



Well tests to date. Seventy private wells were sampled east of Naval Base Kitsap Bangor. Map from the [Navy's Report by NAVFAC Northwest, June 2023](#). Map courtesy of Pat Elder.

Drinking water samples were collected from 292 drinking water supply wells within one mile downstream of potential PFAS source areas at Bangor. PFOS may travel up to 20 miles in groundwater and surface water. Why is the Navy limiting the scope of their drinking water investigation to one mile downstream of known discharges?

PFAS were detected in samples from 80 wells, with two detections exceeding 70 ppt. We don't know the exact concentration, the locations, or the depth of all the wells tested. We also don't know the analytical results of other PFAS compounds analyzed.

At Residence 1, the combined concentration of PFOS/PFOA totaled 77 ng/L. Following the initial sampling event, the resident "made a change to their drinking water fixture," apparently installing a water filtration system. Since then, the levels have been in the single digits. The bottled water initially supplied by the Navy was discontinued and no further evaluations are deemed necessary by the Navy.

At Residence 2, where the 200 ppt level was detected in 2020, bottled water was supplied and continues to

be supplied by the Navy until a long-term solution is implemented.

We cannot trust the Navy. The region is likely to be heavily contaminated and many thousands of lives are threatened based on comparable DOD facilities where analytical testing results in a variety of environmental media have been made public. The Navy's psychological operation would have us believe that the releases of PFAS have been caused almost exclusively from the use of firefighting foams and that the number one pathway to human ingestion is through drinking contaminated water.

The Navy uses copious amounts of PFAS in multiple applications on base, from chrome plating to engine cleaning, although they don't address this in their public propaganda.

PFAS is directly released to surface soils, and it leaches to groundwater. The groundwater contaminates surface water and marine sediment. PFAS tainted waters pour through drainage ditches to Clear Creek, Hood Canal, Liberty Bay, and Dyes Inlet. Fish and shellfish are likely contaminated, but the Navy doesn't want to address this in its public outreach. It's a shame because most of the PFAS in humans is from the food we eat, especially the seafood.

The Navy controls the narrative. We are mere spectators while the press and the state are along for the ride and dutifully relay the propaganda. The EPA is perpetually on the sidelines

while the Navy is on a mission and can't be bothered with trivial things like poisoning people around the world. We don't know much because they're keeping the analytical results from us.

A source once close to the command describes it this way: "The Navy says they tested a bunch of wells and only two had problems and they are being addressed. The contamination was the result of the use of firefighting foams which were found to be dangerous, so the Navy stopped using them. Story over. Everything is fine and dandy."

Activists have a good reason to flyer the neighborhood south of the base to determine if the Navy actually tested these wells. If so, the Navy must provide us with the levels of all 18 PFAS compounds they say they found.

It is also important to know how deep the wells are, because it takes years for PFAS to make its way into deeper soils. The well that was found to contain a concentration of 200 ppt of PFOA was shallow, at 84 feet

Activists honor Mother's Day by blocking Trident Base Entrance

By Leonard Eiger

Activists blockaded the entrance to the US Navy's west-coast nuclear submarine base, which is home to the largest operational concentration of deployed nuclear weapons, in a nonviolent direct action the day before Mother's Day.

Eight peace activists from the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, holding banners reading "The Earth is Our Mother Treat Her With Respect" and "Nuclear Weapons are Immoral to Use, Immoral to Have, Immoral to Make," briefly blocked all incoming traffic at the Main Gate at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor in Silverdale, Washington as part of a May 13th Mothers Day observance.

Traffic was diverted as the 15-member Seattle Peace Chorus Action Ensemble, facing the Navy's security detail, sang "The Lucky Ones", an original composition by their director, Doug Balcom of Seattle, to the assembled guards and Navy personnel.

The song describes the different stages of personal, regional and global destruction that a nuclear war would inflict on humanity and the earth's biosphere, and posits whether survivors to later stages of the devastation would wish they'd perished earlier; it ends with a call to save us from this fate by eliminating all nuclear weapons. The group then led the assembled activists in singing various traditional protest songs, while the State Patrol processed the demonstrators who were cited for interrupting traffic.

Those blocking the roadway were removed from the highway by the Washington State Patrol, cited for violating RCW 46.61.250 (Pedestrians on Roadways), and released at the scene. The demonstrators, Tom Rogers (Keyport), Michael Siptroth (Belfair), Sue Ablao (Bremerton) Lee Alden (Bainbridge Island) Carolee Flaten (Hansville) Brenda McMillan (Port Townsend) Bernie Meyer (Olympia) and James Manista (Olympia), range in age from 29 to 89 years old.

Tom Rogers, a retired Navy captain and former nuclear submarine commanding officer, stated: "The destructive power of the nuclear weapons deployed here on board Trident submarines is beyond human imagination. The simple fact is, that a nuclear exchange between the great powers would end civilization on our planet. I understand this. If I fail to protest the existence of these evil weapons, then I am complicit."

The civil disobedience was part of Ground Zero's annual observance of Mothers Day, first suggested in the United States in 1872 by Julia Ward Howe as a day dedicated to peace. Howe saw the effects on both sides of the Civil War and realized destruction from warfare goes beyond the killing of soldiers in battle.

As a part of this year's Mothers Day observation 45

people gathered to plant rows of sunflowers at the Ground Zero Center directly across the fence from the Trident Submarine Base. They were addressed by Pastor Judith M'maiti Nandikove of Nairobi, Kenya who spoke of the nurturing work her organization does in reducing suffering and promoting sustainable livelihoods through the Africa Quaker Religious Collaborative and Friends Peace Teams.



Bright and beautiful: At the Main Gate of the site with the largest concentration of deployed nuclear weapons in the Western Hemisphere. *Photo by Glen Milner.*

Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor is homeport to the largest concentration of deployed nuclear warheads in the U.S. There are eight Trident SSBN submarines deployed at [Bangor](#). One Trident submarine carries the destructive force of over 1,200 Hiroshima bombs (the Hiroshima bomb was 15 kilotons).

The Navy started deploying the new [W76-2](#) low-yield warhead (approximately eight kilotons) on select ballistic submarine missiles at Bangor in early 2020 (following initial deployment in the Atlantic in December 2019). The warhead was deployed to deter Russian first use of tactical nuclear weapons, dangerously creating a [lower threshold](#) for the use of U.S. strategic nuclear weapons.

The Navy is currently in the process of building a new generation of ballistic missile submarines - called the Columbia-class - to replace the current OHIO-class Trident fleet. The Columbia-class submarines are part of a massive "modernization" of all three legs of the nuclear triad that also include the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent, which will replace the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the new B-21 stealth bomber.

Leonard Eiger has chaired the Communication and Outreach Committee, and managed press releases and information on behalf of Ground Zero.

Banner-waving activists bring attention to Manchester Fuel Depot

By Mack Johnson

On Earth Day 2023, citizens from local organizations gathered for a march and banner at Manchester Fuel Depot, near Bremerton in Kitsap County, to bear witness to the madness of burning massive amounts of fossil fuels in the name of national security while the world is on fire due to global warming.

The Depot is the largest fuel supply facility for the US military, the world's largest consumer of fossil fuels. A wide variety of gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, lubricants and other oil products are shipped, stored, and distributed there. The Depot contains dozens of fuel storage tanks, some of which are leaking.

The Depot is located near major earthquake faults. Spillage of any of these oil products would impact the fragile ecology of the Salish Sea, the world's largest and biologically rich inland sea. Its name honors the first inhabitants of the region, the Coast Salish peoples.

Members of The Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, 350 West Sound Climate Action, and Kitsap Unitarian Universalist Fellowship gathered at Manchester State Park Saturday, April 22, and made their way to the Fuel Depot gate on Beach Drive near Manchester.



Earth Day message at Port of Manchester dock. The Manchester Fuel Depot pier and a vessel are in the background. *Photo by Mack Johnson.*

There they displayed banners and signs calling on the US government to: 1) secure the tanks from leakage and the threat of earthquakes; 2) reduce the Defense department's carbon footprint; 3) change the United States' military and diplomatic policies to rely less on armaments and the fossil fuels whose consumption helps cause the climate crisis.

The demonstrators were greeted at the gate by guards and security personnel, who welcomed them with bottled water and statements that they were protecting the protesters' rights and respected their freedom of speech. Due to the narrow, hazardous roadway, the group only used small signs and shared short speeches.

The group then drove to the dock at the Port of Manchester for a group portrait: a large banner of ground Zero's stating, "THE EARTH IS OUR MOTHER - TREAT HER WITH RESPECT", displayed on the dock with the refueling pier and ships at the Fuel Depot in the background. They then reconvened at the state park for fellowship and some hot dog grilling.

An ironic bit of historical perspective: Manchester State Park was developed as a shore defense installation over a century ago, to defend the Bremerton naval base against attack by sea. The property was transferred to the state of Washington and is now a public space of stunning natural beauty and recreational opportunities. With proper foreign policy and spending priorities, activists envision that in the future military sites such as these can be converted to places that affirm life rather than threaten it.

The U.S. military has approximately [750 military bases](#) around the world and emits [more carbon into the atmosphere than 140 nations](#). If the U.S. military were a country, its fuel usage alone would make it the [47th largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world](#), sitting between Peru and Portugal.

Conflicts induced or exacerbated by climate change contribute to global insecurity, which in turn, increase the chance of nuclear weapons being used. The effects of climate change can also feed the ambitions among some states to acquire nuclear weapons or different types of more useable or tactical nuclear weapons.

While climate change and the threat of nuclear war are the two major threats to the future of humankind and life on our planet, their solutions are similar. International cooperation to solve one of the problems—whether to abolish or tightly reduce nuclear weapons or to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—would greatly help with the solution of the other.

The Manchester depot sits on approximately two miles of Salish Sea shoreline, storing petroleum products in 44 bulk fuel tanks (33 Underground Storage Tanks and 11 Aboveground Storage Tanks) on 234 acres. Most of the tanks were [built in the 1940s](#). The fuel depot (tank farm and loading pier) is less than six miles west of Alki Beach in Seattle.

Mack Johnson, co-secretary of Ground Zero, was recently found not guilty by a Kitsap County judge after holding a banner in the road to the Trident base.

Join Ground Zero to Commemorate the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki!

By David Hall

Mark your calendar now—you won't want to miss the program Ground Zero has planned for August 5, 6, and 7. We have two impressive keynote speakers lined up in addition to music, time for reflection and planning, and a vigil and nonviolent direct action at the Trident base.

Our first speaker, Col. (ret.) Ann Wright, served 29 years in the US Army/Army Reserves. She was a US diplomat for 16 years and served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghanistan and Mongolia. She resigned from the US Government in March 2003 in opposition to the US war on Iraq. For the past 20 years she has challenged US military policies of war with Veterans For Peace and CODEPINK: Women for Peace. She is the co-author of "Dissent: Voices of Conscience."

Next, Howard Frumkin, PhD, MPH, MD, will present on the climate crisis. Howard served on the national board of Physicians for Social Responsibility. He joined the U.S. Centers for Disease Control as a senior physician leader beginning in 2005. In 2010 he became Dean of the University of Washington School of Public Health. He is an expert on the health effects of climate change and knows well the risks from nuclear weapons. His books include "Environmental Health: From Global to Local," "Planetary Health," and "Making Healthy Places."

Here are some highlights from the schedule:

Saturday, August 5th

Plenary: Save the Planet - Abolish Nuclear Weapons

10:15 Ann Wright - nuclear weapons

10:45 Howard Frumkin - climate change

11:30 Panel response and discussion

1:00 Lunch -- Break when Peace Walkers arrive

2:00 Continuation of Keynote/Panel conversation

6:15 Rally at Bangor main gate

7:30 Concert - Rainbow Coalition Death Cult and Generation in Decline

Sunday, August 6th

9:45 Nonviolence training

1:00 Lunch

2:00 Service of remembrance

3:00 Action and dance rehearsal

5:00 Departure for Green Lake "Hiroshima to Hope" Lantern Ceremony

6:00 Dinner

7:00 Concert - Tom Rawson

Monday, August 7th

5:30 Gather and breakfast snacks

6:30 Vigil and action

8:30 Debrief, clean up, farewell

For a full schedule, please visit www.gzcenter.org, or email info@gzcenter.org. See you in August!

David Hall, MD, is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and member of the Ground Zero Stewardship Council. He serves on the board of the Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Gandhi Statue Unveiled Across From Hiroshima Atomic Bomb Dome

By Rev. Mikio Asai and Leander Alden

On May 20, 2023, a bust of Mahatma Gandhi was presented on the riverbank adjacent to the Atomic Bomb Dome, an iconic symbol of Hiroshima. Positioned approximately 200 yards away. Indian Prime Minister Modi, a guest for the G7 Hiroshima Summit, had the honor of unveiling the statue.

During the ceremony, participants remarked on the profound significance as the silent cries for the abolition of nuclear weapons and an end to war conflicts seemed to resound from the souls of the atomic bomb victims, hidden beneath the ground, unheard but deeply felt.

On this memorable day, Setsuko Thurlow, a passionate advocate for the Nuclear Prohibition Treaty, called for concrete progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. However, the G7 merely expressed its commitment to "curb the use of nuclear weapons" and enhance "nuclear forces and strategies as a deterrent," without presenting a clear roadmap for achieving nuclear disarmament.

Many attendees perceived the bust as an emphatic counterpoint, sounding an alarm and serving as a significant marker in response.



We're Gonna Be Here Tomorrow

By Caroline Wildflower

Author's note: I am sharing more of the history of the anti-Trident movement which has been anchored by Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action since 1977. I wrote this article about our 1982 Peace Blockade to Stop the Trident Submarine when the first Trident submarine came in to the Trident base. It was published as the lead article in the Winter 1983 issue of the Friendly Woman journal.

"We're here to say we're gonna be here tomorrow
We love this world and we won't let it burn
We're choosing life and all of its wonder
We promise the children that they'll have their turn."

I cried when I heard Barbara Clark sing her Covenant song at North Pacific Yearly Meeting in July. I have recurring visions of my children and other children melting and burning as the children did in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I know I couldn't face myself if that happened and I knew I hadn't done all I could to prevent it.

Barbara Clark put into words the reasons I felt it important to risk my life or a long separation from my children in the Peace Blockade To Stop the Trident Submarine. My children, Rachel and Sal, are five and two. I enjoy watching each new thing that they learn, and get excited about their memories, new words, and new concepts. I've been involved in their First-Day School and preschool experiences. I love them. How could I risk being away from them and the potential damage of a long separation?

It seems ironic that the same thing, the children, would be motivating me to take these risks. Children have always been important in impelling me to do what is right. The children of Vietnam were my motivation to risk my life and a possible ten-year sentence in the People's Blockade in New Jersey in 1972.

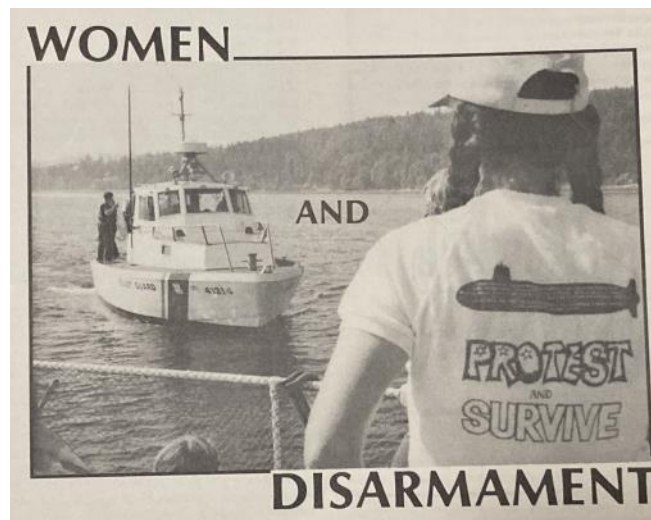
I didn't have children when I first became involved in the anti-Trident campaign. And I had not done civil disobedience since having children. I've been involved in the campaign for seven years. I've been on the Trident base six or seven times, served time in jail, strategized, and led training for nonviolent action sessions.

We all dreamed of the day we'd be out there to block Trident as it came in. Now, the first Trident submarine, the USS Ohio, was coming. The exact date was a Navy secret, but we expected it in August.

When it came down to making a decision about the blockade, I couldn't do it on practical terms. I mulled over all the problems. This year had been a difficult one for my children, because their father and I had just gone through a divorce. I was now getting new housemates. There was a job I might not get if I were facing a jail sentence. Then there was the tremendous risk, both of losing my life, or facing two possible charges, one of which car-

ried a maximum six-month sentence and the other a maximum 10 year sentence. Six months seemed like an incredibly long time to be away from my children, but I could almost imagine it.

I talked over all these issues with friends and family, and found that they would support me in whatever decision I made. I lined up people ready to spend extra time with my children. The University Friends Meeting agreed to give me back my secretary job in the event of my serving a jail sentence.



Caroline Wildflower facing a Coast Guard vessel during the Peace Blockade, on the front cover of the Winter 1983 issue of the Friendly Woman journal.

I had to find out if I was called to participate in the blockade. So I waited on God at odd moments—in the doctor's office, at Meeting for worship, during meditation. One day, during Meeting for Worship, I was called to block the submarine, without knowing the results.

Sometimes I have been given promises or prophecies at these times, which have always been born out. But this time, I was given no guarantee; I just knew that participating in the blockade was the next step on my nonviolent journey.

I remembered studying the early Quakers, and wondering why Quakers today were not going to jail. I take great inspiration from the women and men who did follow that inner voice, no matter what the consequences—being beaten, banned, and on some occasions hung.

They seemed not to worry about the children. Perhaps I shouldn't worry either; when we are doing God's work, other things seem to be taken care of. I remembered the story of the adults in Reading Friends Meeting who were all taken away to jail in the 1600's. The chil-

We're Gonna Be Here... continued on page 7

dren continued worshipping at the Friends Meeting every week.

I made my peace with different aspects of the action at different times. At one point, in a flash, I suddenly saw that my children could be brought up quite adequately by other people—and knew that I could risk death. It would not be what I would choose, but I could risk it. I also realized that we could be separated for several days, since we were now doing that in the process of coparenting.

I still couldn't face being separated from them for perhaps two years or more, missing out on what was happening to them, having Sal, the youngest, not know me when I came out. And Rachel didn't want me to go to jail. I think that was the hardest thing.

Finally, I realized that, basically, it was just fear standing in my way. I've known great fear every time I've moved into civil disobedience and I realized I could face that fear again. I came home from a blockade retreat, and talked with my new housemates about whether it made sense to go on the blockade when they were just moving in. They said they wished they could go on the blockade too, and were supportive.

When my mother called from Baltimore, I told her and got her support. As soon as I hung up the phone, my sister called from Iowa, and I got her support. God's grace. Everything was taken care of in a very short time.

That night, as I was going to sleep with my children, I talked about how special they've been in my life and how much I've enjoyed being with them. But I didn't want to scare them by saying, "If I don't come back. . ." So I decided to write a letter to them that would be available if I did die blocking the Trident. I took steps to make sure all my money was accessible to the children, and I had already completed my will. It was poignant, spending what I could imagine might be my last night with them.

The next morning, on the ferry taking me back toward the blockade campground, I wrote the letter through my tears. Though it didn't seem finished, I never added to it. I put it in my journal, as I had told someone I would.

August 5, 1982

Dear Rachel and Sal,

If I don't come back, I want you to know how very much I love you, and how glad I am to have shared this time with you—five years with Rachel and two years with Salal—and how much I wanted to be with you and watch you grow up. But it is because I want you to have a world to grow up in that I do this. I have no doubt you'll grow up continuing to be the incredible human beings you already are—able to do whatever you want with your lives. I think it's fine to get mad at me for making this choice.

What an incredible experience it was to spend nearly two weeks with a diverse group of 50 people ranging in age from three to 78, and from several countries, all com-

mitted to risking their lives to prevent nuclear holocaust.

The folks from the Pacific Peacemaker had sailed from Australia to greet the Trident as it came in, and took the leap of faith of risking their boat in the action.

(According to the law, the boats used in the action could be seized and not returned.) The Phillips family from Canada also risked the trimaran that they had designed, built, and sailed from England to British Columbia. We had 16 small rowboats, which had been lovingly built for us as "disposable boats" by people in Port Townsend, Washington and Quadra Island, British Columbia. I was in a donated canoe named "The Children." We attached two balloons given to me by Rachel and Sal. We had two motorboats, the Plowshares and the James Jordan.

We anchored in a bay outside Hood Canal, as the Coast Guard had published regulations that would close the entire Canal to us during the time Trident was coming in. We spent most of the week on either the Lizard of Woz (the trimaran) or the Peacemaker. It made for crowded living, but we had many lively political discussions, some meetings with the two boats tied together, and even found room for massages and naps.

Every time we got an "unconfirmed rumor" that the Trident was nearby, we all tripped over each other trying to get our wetsuits on. We had an amazing network of people working on the blockade—watching for the Trident 24 hours a day, working on communications, cooking and washing dishes, locating boats and wetsuits, and repairing boats and engines.

How fully we lived life when we thought we might lose it. We felt the irony of the beauty of the sunsets in this place so near to the docking-point for Trident. I began to understand what Jesus meant when he said that anyone who wants to save her life will lose it, but anyone who loses her life for His sake will find it. (Matt: 16:25ff)

When the Trident came, the two large boats moved out, the trimaran carrying the little green one-person boats and passengers, and the Peacemaker towing all the other boats. Witness boats also moved out, carrying people who wanted to witness to their opposition to Trident, but who did not plan to break the law.

The trimaran Lizard was ahead and refused to stop. The Coast Guard opened fire with water cannon. People and boats were washed into the water, and taken into custody at gunpoint. We still hadn't seen the Trident or had a clear report that it was coming, but we knew this was it.

The Peacemaker moved out; the motorboats went out on their own. The Peacemaker stopped when ordered by the Coast Guard, and we in our canoes struck out on our own. We were still several miles from the channel through which the Trident would be passing.

A Coast Guard cutter came up to us and we were ordered to turn around. We kept saying that that they had no authority to stop us at that point. They finally claimed that a new regulation had gone into effect that morning

We're Gonna Be Here... continued on page 8

making it illegal for us to go beyond that point, and they managed to get our canoe with their boathooks.

We jumped into the water, trying to delay our arrest, but they circled around, and then shouted, "You better get back to your boat." We swam to our canoe, and found that they had taken our paddles. We began paddling with our hands. A witness boat sailed up, and people handed us two more paddles. So we started toward the channel as fast as we could go. Now we could see the Trident, but it moved into Hood Canal before we could get to it.

A little later, we saw the James Jordan motorboat, and heard the dramatic story of how they circled the Trident, and then were stopped by helicopters coming down low and, in effect, creating a storm in the water. The Coast Guard cut their fuel line, but they managed to hold it together and keep going.

Meanwhile, all the Peacemaker folks and the Peacemaker were taken into custody, while the little boats were left to drift disabled. We learned later that the other motorboat, the Plowshares, also came up very close to the Trident, and was taken into custody.

I have never seen such a show of military force on a protest action like this. There were 98 Coast Guard boats to deal with 46 people on only 21 boats. I think it was truly a miracle that two boats with eight people got through to the Trident. The James Jordan was stopped several times and for some reason not detained, so again God's grace worked in some way. And in many senses,

all of us got there with the eight people who made it.

Only some of the people detained were brought in and charged with various crimes, while the others were released at the base. All the boats were released within a week. Eight days later, all the charges were dropped.

While I had good reason to be glad I had not been arrested, it did separate us terribly to have some people facing charges, and others free, when we had all done the same thing. And having the charges dropped meant that we could not carry out our defense, usually a time of community and bonding among the people working on it. The publicity, which had been constant for months, also died down at that point.

Now the first Trident submarine is patrolling the Pacific with its deadly payload of approximately 408 nuclear bombs, each independently targeted. We can never know the results of our actions, and I think it important that each one of us made the decision to participate. The blockade has been a source of play, drawings, and fruitful conversation for Rachel and me. I continue to find my life richer and many of my friendships improved because I took the next step on my journey for nonviolence.

Caroline Wildflower *has been working to abolish nuclear weapons for over 65 years, and is currently co-chair of the Ground Zero stewardship committee. She got to be with the children as they grew up, got married, and each had a child. Caroline is very glad to still be here to spend time with grandchildren as well as children.*

2023 Pacific Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk

By Rev. Senji Kanaeda

Na Mu Mho Ho Ren Ge Kyo

All are invited to participate in the 2023 Pacific Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and End All Wars. The walk will begin in Salem, Oregon and conclude at the Ground Zero Center.

Here is the schedule:

Thursday, July 27 and Friday, July 28: Salem, OR

Saturday, July 29: Portland

Sunday, July 30: Vancouver

Thursday, August 3: Tacoma

Friday, August 4: Bainbridge Island and Suquamish

Saturday, August 5: Poulsbo and Ground Zero Center

Sunday, August 6: Lake Forest Park and Seattle

Monday, August 7, Ground Zero Center and the Sub-Base Kitsap-Bangor

This annual Peace Walk is organized (and sponsored) by Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order; the Eugene, Portland, Vancouver and Tacoma Catholic Workers; Ground Zero Center For Nonviolent Action; Veter-

ans For Peace; Indian People Organizing for Change (California); and more.

This will be the 19th peace walk (since 2005) in the Pacific Northwest directed to the Ground Zero Center.

We continue to walk, listen, and share the voices of war survivors and world citizens. Our tie to the Marshallese community in Salem has been strengthened through the march. The steps that we take are small like a ripple in the ocean, yet it is certainly a way to teach the promise of peace on this earth.

We will walk about 13 miles a day. Work for peace by walking even one day, or one hour. or talking at our evening potluck. Bring personal gear and smile with you! All are welcome.

Contact Rev. Senji Kanaeda at 206-780-6739, or 206-724-7632 (cell), or email kanaedasenji@gmail.com.

The smallest contributions are gratefully received.

Rev. Senji Kanaeda *serves on the Stewardship Council, and has led and participated in Peace Walks around the world.*

Freeway Bannering Starts Again

By Glen Milner

On June 2, 2023, Ground Zero members held banners and signs on the I-5 overpass at [NE 45th Street](#) that stated, “Abolish Nuclear Weapons” and “Renounce Militarism.” It was the start of summer bannering at the overpass every Friday from 3:00 to 4:00 pm.

As Rodney Brunelle and I began assembling the frame for banners, we realized that we were about to conduct the largest public anti-nuclear weapons demonstration in Seattle—at least so far for 2023. Soon Denny Duffell would be joining us on the overpass. Throughout the hour we were conscious of the fact that no one in Seattle was doing what we were doing.

As peace activists, knowing that there are approximately 755,000 people who live in Seattle, and knowing that the threat of nuclear weapons is as great as ever in history, and that there were only three of us on the overpass, we might have felt insignificant.

But on the NE 45th Street overpass, cars and trucks are moving slowly and closely enough to see drivers and passengers as they pass. Folks on I-5 seemed to feel what we were thinking—from their honks and waves—that our world could be free of nuclear weapons. At that place and time, we all knew that our world could change.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed his thoughts on our self-perceived insignificance and said, “Whatever you do in life will be insignificant but it is very important that you do it because you can’t know. You can’t ever really know the meaning of your life. And you don’t need to...”

In a concert with Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie explained perceived insignificance in another way.

Arlo Guthrie said Pete Seeger reminds him, “If the world was perfect ...and everything was wonderful, and everyone was happy all the time—you would have to go a long way out of your way to make a difference in this world. But in a world that sucks, like this one, you don’t have to do very much at all...”

We see almost no peace activism in Washington State. Even small steps mean a lot.

Join Rodney Brunelle and Denny Duffell on Fridays, from 3 pm to 4 pm and you will feel the elation that action and connection to others can bring. Please contact Rodney at rodney.brunelle@gmail.com or (425) 485-7030.



Honks and waves: summer bannering campaign reaches thousands of motorists. *Photo by Glen Milner.*

Glen Milner leads legal struggles on behalf of Ground Zero. He lives in Lake Forest Park.

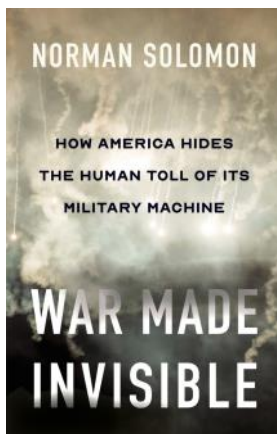
Important book available at reduced price to Ground Zero supporters

By Glen Milner

Norman Solomon has generously advanced his new book, *War Made Invisible*, to Ground Zero at a greatly reduced price—allowing us to sell the book for \$15.00.

More than twenty years ago, 9/11 and the War on Afghanistan set into motion a hugely consequential shift in America’s foreign policy: a perpetual state of war that is almost entirely invisible to the American public. *War Made Invisible*, by the journalist and political analyst Norman Solomon, exposes how this happened, and what its consequences are, from military and civilian casualties to drained resources at home.

Solomon argues that the cloak of invisibility also masks massive Pentagon budgets that receive bipartisan approval even as policy makers struggle to fund the domestic agenda.



War Made Invisible is an eloquent moral call for counting the true costs of war.

Norman Solomon is co-founder of RootsAction.org and executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy. His books include *War Made Easy*, *Made Love, Got War*, and *War Made Invisible* (The New Press). He lives in the San Francisco area.

For single copies of *War Made Invisible* by Norman Solomon, please contact info@gzcenter.org. The book is available for \$15.00, which includes postage via media mail service.

Glen Milner has worked with Ground Zero since the days of *White Train* resistance. He lives in Lake Forest Park with his wife Karol.

below ground surface. The drinking water at Bangor is obtained from on-base water supply wells which draw water from the sea-level aquifer and are screened between 260 and 350 ft below ground surface. The Navy reports no issues with the water drawn from the deeper aquifer. Yet.

Is the deep aquifer completely protected from the contaminants?

The Navy explains, "The likelihood of PFAS-contaminated groundwater migrating into the sea-level and deep aquifers is low, due to the low permeability of the upper confining unit that overlies the sea-level aquifer." Notice they're saying the likelihood is low—rather than claiming it's impossible for the contaminants to reach the lower aquifer.

Of course, we don't know because they still have not published the all-important Site Inspection pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) process which would show the depths of the wells tested and their corresponding levels.

In Maryland the Navy claimed that the contamination in the surficial aquifer at the Naval Research Laboratory – Chesapeake Bay Detachment is completely contained and could not reach the lower aquifer, but this assertion was challenged by the Maryland Department of the Environment which argued that there could be breaks in the confining layer. This is important considering that the chemicals can travel so far in water. In the end, Maryland authorities made their esoteric point while continuing to allow the Navy to do whatever it wants. In these matters, the DOD dictates environmental policy in the U.S.

Where is the state of Washington's Department of Ecology in these discussions? Do they merely act as a rubber stamp for DOD reports? Even the rubber stamps are missing! There has not been a single public filing by the Department of Ecology in the Navy's records for the last six years.

CERCLA is otherwise known as the Superfund law. It's important to note that environmental "cleanup" may be impossible to achieve. How do we clean up hundreds of miles of riverbed sediment that is caked with PFAS? How do we extract PFAS from an oyster? We can't. These chemicals don't go away.

The CERCLA process is stalled at Bangor.

The Navy says toxicological information will be evaluated during the Site Inspection. How long do we have to wait? Site Inspections were completed on hundreds of bases before 2019. It leads us to believe the Navy has a lot to hide here.

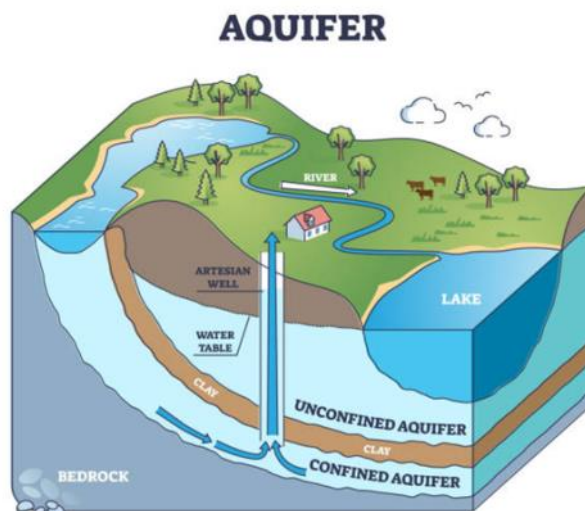
The Navy requires the public to file Freedom of Information Act requests for files that were publicly available

two years ago.

In addition to exposure from groundwater, soil, surface water, and sediment, people may be exposed to PFAS through the consumption of locally harvested fish, shellfish, waterfowl, wild game, berries, nuts, plants, fungi, etc. The air may also be contaminated.

We don't know the levels of PFAS in surface water at Kitsap-Bangor. It'll be in the Site Inspection. The public will eventually come to understand the significance here, because the carcinogens become part of the sediment and the riverbanks. As the waters ebb, the PFAS is baked by the sun. It dries and is lifted by the wind. It forms as dust and settles in our lungs and homes.

The Centers for Disease Control reported that a home in Martinsburg, West Virginia outside of the Shepherd Field Air National Guard Base had dust containing 16.4 million ppt of PFHxS and 13.9 million ppt of PFOS. The Air Force reported that surface waters pouring out of the base contained 8,100 ppt of PFHxS and 3,400 ppt of PFOS. These two chemicals were found at shocking levels in the blood serum of those who live in the home.



Water is life. The Navy claims the likelihood is "low" of PFAS-contaminated ground water reaching the deeper confined aquifer, where drinking water is obtained at Bangor.

Wastewater Treatment Plants

The Navy is also leaving out a discussion of wastewater treatment plants on its bases in its public messaging. These facilities receive PFAS-laden solids and liquids generated from machine shops and electroplating operations, housing areas, and other locations. These waste streams may contain exorbitant concentrations of PFAS.

"Forever" chemicals... continued on page 11

Generally, PFOS heads into surface waters as liquid effluent while PFOA becomes part of the sludge. Sludge is primarily shipped off-base to the Olympic View Landfill. Activists may consider testing the Union River which drains this area.

The effluent from the wastewater plant is discharged to the sewer, which flows off-base to the Brownsville Sewer Plant. The sludge is transported to either Eastern or Southwestern Washington for composting or land application. Where is this tremendously lethal mix being spread? The agricultural produce must be tested and people who consume the agricultural produce must be warned.

Aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) use at Bangor

AFFF was removed from the fire station at Bangor and given to the Forest Service. This is peculiar because AFFF is for "Class B" fires. A Class B fire is a fire involving flammable liquids or flammable gases, petroleum, greases, tars, oils, etc. It was not developed for putting out forest fires. Even so, Bangor used AFFF for house fires and brush fires. A brush fire at the end of Thresher Avenue Road received approximately a half-acre foam response. (One teaspoon of the foam could contaminate a city's drinking water reservoir.)

Another brushfire at the end of Grampus Road was doused with the carcinogenic foams. AFFF was frequently used during training sessions at the helipad.

There were multiple historical landfills/disposal sites for AFFF on base. They sprayed AFFF in multiple locations on base while testing the firetruck systems. They coated car fires with the foam. AFFF was used near the wetland leading to Cattail Creek.

The base's incinerator was a half mile from the Main Gate. Materials containing PFAS were likely incinerated here. The compounds don't burn. They just coat the ground downwind of the smokestack, starting the process of recycled contamination all over again. The supervisors in the shops would not segregate waste that was burned. The operation was shut down by the EPA for "burning and producing cyanides." That was back when the EPA flexed its regulatory muscle.

Fish and Seafood

The Navy will not address the contamination of the seafood we consume. Once we know the PFAS concentrations in surface waters we'll have a pretty good idea how poisoned the seafood is. Typically, the levels of PFOS are several hundred to several thousand times the ambient water levels. Fish have been found in waters near military installations with nearly 10 million parts per

trillion of PFOS.

In Washington, a file of a smallmouth bass was found to contain 93,800 parts per trillion of PFOS in Lake Washington. The state warns anglers not to eat smallmouth bass from the lake. Inland fish typically have more PFAS than fish in the sea.

PFOS is likely to be present in seafood from Sinclair Inlet, Dyes Inlet, Dabob Bay, Clear Creek, Hood Canal, and Liberty Bay. We just don't know because the state has not conducted a robust fish testing regime. We don't know what's in the fish or the steamer clams, the butter clams, horse clams, cockles, and softshell clams. We don't know what's in the geoduck and the oysters. These may be important pathways to human ingestion.

Don't spend your time engaging with the Navy. They're on a mission. You must apply pressure on your state government to check the military's wanton destruction of the environment.

Sources

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Pat Elder is an investigative journalist tracking how the military contaminates people and the planet. Pat Elder lives with his wife, Nell, in St. Mary's City, Maryland.

Pat Elder will be traveling to Japan in September and October with a delegation from Veterans for Peace to test surface waters for PFAS in 20 cities. The 40 tests kits will cost \$3,160. To contribute, please go to www.veteransforpeace.org/donate/donate-veterans-peace and note that your contribution is for the Japan delegation. Pat receives assistance from the Downs Law Group, which is working to provide legal representation to individuals with a high likelihood of exposure to PFAS and other contaminants. Anyone interested in joining a multi-base class action law suit pertaining to illnesses stemming from various kinds of environmental contamination is welcome to join the Veterans & Civilians Clean Water Alliance Facebook group.

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*“I slept and dreamt that life
was joy. I awoke and saw
that life was service. I acted and
behold, service was joy.”*

— Rabindranath Tagore

**See page 5 for details on
the amazing speakers and
activities planned for
August 5-7!**

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Peace activists to meet the U.S. Navy fleet on Tuesday, August 1, in Elliott Bay

By Glen Milner

For the 22nd year, local activists will stage a water-based nonviolent protest against the glorification of weapons of war at the Seattle Seafair festival. Peace activists will meet the U.S. Navy fleet in Elliott Bay.

Everyone is invited to join on Tuesday, August 1, on the water at noon in Elliott Bay, near Pier 66. Bell Harbor Marina will be open for kayaks and for mooring vessels. Those who wish to remain on land will meet at 1:00pm on Pier 62 on the Seattle waterfront at the same time for a nonviolent demonstration against weapons of war.

Why would we demonstrate for peace at a Seattle maritime festival? We are here for the unrepresented and forgotten victims of these weapons of war and to call attention to the crimes of our nation. And because the celebration of warships in our harbor helps bring about the normalcy of modern war.



In 2021, Peace Fleet sailor Sallie Shawl made final preparations before heading out to Elliott Bay. *Photo by Karol Milner.*

The fleet arrival at Seafair is a public relations and recruiting event for the Navy. Previous years have brought Trident nuclear submarines complete with nuclear warheads and warships used to launch Tomahawk cruise missiles in both Wars on Iraq and the 20-year War on Afghanistan. The fleet is displayed for five days in downtown Seattle at tremendous cost to taxpayers while crucial social services in education, health care, housing, and transportation are impaired for lack of funds.

For more details, please contact Mary Gleysteen at marygleysteen@gmail.com; Rodney Brunelle at rodney.brunelle@gmail.com; or Glen Milner at gk_milner@comcast.net.

Glen Milner leads legal struggles on behalf of Ground Zero. He lives in Lake Forest Park.