

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Nuclear protesters "speak truth to power" at Bangor Base

Activists from Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action, in Poulsbo, carried signs and banners Saturday to the front gate of Bangor Naval base, the West Coast home port for the U.S. nuclear submarine fleet.

Bernie Meyer, Tacoma, was accosted and handcuffed by Naval military personnel, after crossing the blue line onto Naval Base Bangor. Meyer, 75, began reciting Julia Ward Howe's Mothers Day Proclamation in honor of his mother, before being escorted to a military van for processing.

Two protestors were cited by Washington State Patrol for "Pedestrian in the roadway." Bert Sacks and Mona Lee, both of Seattle, carried a banner into NW Luoto Road, which leads to Bangor's main gate.

The actions were part of a day-long rally to bring attention to Bangor's nuclear arsenal. Rosalie Riegler, author of "Doing Time for Peace" and "Crossing the Line," gave a talk to the 50 people who gathered at Ground Zero Center, a mile north of the main gate. "Speak Truth to Power" was the theme, and included a letter writing campaign, nonviolence training, and education about the Trident nuclear weapons system and the Bangor submarine base.

Bangor, 20 miles west of Seattle, contains the largest concentration of operational nuclear weapons in the US arsenal. Each of the eight Trident submarines based at Bangor carries up to 24 Trident II (D-5) missiles, each capable of being armed with as many as eight independently targetable thermonuclear warheads. Each nuclear warhead has an explosive force of between 100 and 475 kilotons (up to 30 times the force of the Hiroshima bomb). If Kitsap County were to secede from the U.S., it would be the third largest nuclear force in the world.

Ground Zero, founded in 1977, participates in three nonviolent protests a year – on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend, near Mother's Day, and in August to commemorate the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In January, protesters were able to block Bangor's front gate for more than a half hour. On Saturday, however, Washington State Patrol was waiting at the gate waiting for protesters, who regularly give law enforcement advance notice of planned actions.

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Photos attached. Photo Credit: Larry Kerschner, IMG2050: Bernie Meyer (on the ground) begin arrested by Naval security officer. IMG1988: Retired Navy Captain, and former nuclear submarine commander, Tom Rogers (in orange safety vest) acting as Peacekeeper, leading protesters in the walk from Ground Zero Center to the Bangor Main Gate. High resolution versions available.

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