

MISSOURI PEACE PLANTING '88  
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PRESS RELEASE

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14 ARRESTED AT MISSOURI MISSILE SILOS

At 7:15 this morning, 14 people, calling themselves the Missouri Peace Planting '88, entered 10 missile sites in Bates County, Missouri. "With the intention of bringing the presence of 150 local nuclear silos to the surface, those arrested had the support of 75 Kansas City residents." said Janice Dover of Kansas City.

After cutting through locks and scaling fences, some of the peace activists sat silently and prayed, others planted trees, while others left crosses bearing the names of Central Americans who have died in regional conflicts. All the participants left personal artifacts at the sites, including World War II medals, family photographs, and children's poetry.

Within minutes of the non-violent actions, armed military personnel from nearby Whiteman Air Force base surrounded the ten sites. With weapons drawn and dressed in camouflage fatigues, the soldiers approached the protestors cautiously. Military personnel frisked the protestors nervously, in an apparent reaction to the simultaneous triggering of the 10 missile site "sensors".

Madison, WI resident Sam Day, 61, co-director of Madison based Nukewatch, was among the first to be arrested. Together with Katie Willems, 26, of Milwaukee, Day cut through a lock at the missile site and planted flowers. As he was being led away to face criminal trespass and conspiracy charges, Day, dressed as a clown, said, "I'm dressed like this because I'm a fool for Christ and I'm a fool for peace." As to the missile sites, Day said, "They are like razors in a loaf of bread. I can't leave them as a heritage for my own or any one else's grandchildren." Katie Willems reacted calmly as the soldiers pointed their rifles at her. "When you point your gun, smile" she said to the agitated Air Force men.

Each of the protestors was assisted by a "witness" who remained a legal distance away from the missile silo site. The witnesses, some of whom were from Kansas City, watched as the military personnel handcuffed the protestors before turning them over to the local police.

Milwaukee resident Paul Foley acted as a witness as Ariel Glenn, 27, of Milwaukee scaled an 8 foot fence and three strands of barbed wire to "occupy" a missile site. Foley, detained and then released, reported that Glenn reacted calmly as the soldiers took her away. "I went to Hiroshima as a little girl," Glenn said, "and the emotional connection has made me do this."

Two other Madison residents, Gail Beyer, 36, a computer programmer for the state of Wisconsin, and Bonnie Urfer, 37, a co-director of Nukewatch, were arrested together and taken to Bates County Jail. Beyer, the mother of two, brought a banner to the silo which her twelve year old daughter had painted.

Other participants included Father Jerry Zawada, 51, of Milwaukee, a Franciscan priest. He and Chicago resident Duane Bean, 30, a former National Guardsman, entered a missile silo site and drew a cross on the missile site hatch. Before the military arrived, Zawada also performed a Catholic liturgy.

Katey Feit, 26, and Sam Guardino, 29, of Chicago, both associated with the St. Francis Catholic Worker, scaled the missile site fence together. Guardino got caught on the top strand of the barbed wire, tumbling over the eight foot fence. Eyewitness accounts report that Guardino was unhurt and is reported to have said, "I'm doing this action because I love this world and the people on it. I don't want to see it get blown up."

Dorothy Eber, 63 of Villa Park, IL, the mother of 4 and grandmother of 11 entered a silo after cutting the lock of the silo site fence. Eber carried with her a picture of her family and a quotation of peace activist Daniel Berrigan. Eber noted, "I'm doing this action in part because of my friends Joe and Jean Gump. Like a lot of people, when they acted, I knew in my heart that my time would come. I just thank God I lived to do this."

Another arrestee, Betty Lewis, 61, also of Chicago, said she, too, acted as a consequence of having known Jean and Joe Gump.

Before her arrest, Kathy Kelly, 35, of Chicago placed a group of World War II medals on the missile silo. The medals were given to her by a Kansas City friend who wanted to renounce his support of U.S. nuclear weapons policy.

Two other people arrested, Dan McGuire, 30, and Mike Stanek, 22, of Chicago both said they acted out of concern for the world's homeless and disenfranchised. "These missiles are a waste of our resources; resources which could be used to feed the hungry and house the homeless." Stanek said.

Most of the 14 group members were taken to Bates County Jail where they were greeted by a group of supporters singing songs and displaying banners opposing the missiles. The 14 are expecting to face a federal charge of criminal trespass, carrying a maximum sentence of 6 months imprisonment and \$500 in fines.