

Jerry Berrigan Memorial Blockade Press Release

Jerry Berrigan Memorial Drone Blockade

Hancock Air Drone Base, Jan. 28 – Twelve Activists Arrested

On Thursday morning, January 28, thirty life sized cutouts of Syracuse peacemaker Jerry Berrigan blockaded the main entrance of Hancock Air National Guard Base outside Syracuse, NY. The cutouts were accompanied by twelve nonviolent drone resisters, who were arrested after blockading for an hour and a half. See video (of the blockade and arrests).

Jerry Berrigan, who died on July 26, 2015 at the age of 95, dedicated his entire life – like his brothers Dan and Phil – to Jesus' command to love one another, Jerry came to the base on a bi-weekly basis whenever he was able, in his words,

“to remind the base commander of our government's pledge under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, a treaty to safeguard non-combatant's well-being in any warzone in which U.S. forces are engaged in combat.” And further, “to register horror and indignation at reports of bombing missions by drones in Afghanistan and Pakistan which resulted in the deaths of many innocent civilians; men, women and children.”

Former CIA analyst Ray McGovern was among those standing with the Memorial in the roadway. Others were Beth Adams, Bev Rice, Bill Ofenloch, Brian Hynes, Charley Bowman, Ed Kinane, James Ricks, Joan Pleune, Joan Wages, Pete Perry and Steve Baggarly.

They were all charged with one misdemeanor and two violations, with the exception of Bev Rice and Joan Pleune, who were both charged with an additional misdemeanor (for allegedly violating an order of protection taken out by the base commander).

In 2008 Jerry was asked if there was anything he would change in his life. Jerry replied, "I would have resisted more often and been arrested more often." The activists brought Jerry's image to the gates to remember that this is where he would be, speaking out and putting his body on the line to say a clear "NO" to killing.

The group also remembered Mary Anne Grady Flores, who is serving a six-month sentence for violating an order of protection, taken out by the colonel at Hancock Air Base. Clearly, courts in NYS believe that a colonel at this highly armed base needs protection from citizens calling attention to the drone killings.

More and more evidence mounts regarding the illegality of U.S. drone policies, from the "Drone Papers" published by The Intercept, to the four drone pilots who have come forward to speak out about what this policy is doing. The activists tried to deliver a letter addressed to the Hancock military personnel stating that "Under the U.S. Uniform Code of Military Justice you must not be complicit in these crimes against peace, crimes against humanity and war crimes. In fact, you are required to disobey unlawful orders from a superior."

Hancock Air Base deploys hunter/killer Reaper drones 24/7 over Afghanistan and probably elsewhere. These weaponized robotic drones are instruments of terror. They perpetrate extrajudicial killings, violate due process, violate national sovereignty, and kill non-combatants and civilians.

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