

Rallies at BAE, Endicott and Lockheed Martin, Owego

by Jack Gilroy, VFP Chapter 90 Broome County NY

We had two good events to expose war merchants yesterday, September 9. First, at BAE in Endicott, NY followed by our action at Lockheed Martin in Owego, NY. We congratulated both companies for taking tiny baby steps to convert from systems that destroy to systems that improve mankind and our fragile earth. (electric buses at BAE and a Post Office improvement system by Lockheed Martin)

Certified letters were sent to the CEO's of both BAE and Lockheed earlier in the week. Our attempt to hand deliver letters to BAE and Lockheed were halted by security. At BAE by men who said they were not employees of BAE. They were defenders of private property and not even a shoe tip was to touch the property of BAE. all security at BAE wore shoulder patches identifying them as Black Rhino. At BAE, thirty six people held banners or signs, our VFP flag flew with VFP members from Syracuse, Corning, Albany and Binghamton who joined in solidarity with UpState Drone Action and Peace Action.

Following our sidewalk demonstration and comments broadcasted via our public address system to BAE employes asking them to demand work that gives them purpose to help not harm the earth; we drove twelve miles down the road from BAE (which has claimed on their website to be the #3 arms producer in the world) to the undisputed #1 weapons maker, Lockheed Martin. We stood with our banners before the signs and logos of this giant Pentagon contractor knowing that elevated cameras would soon alert the people inside. This time, it was not a private security team that was dispatched but rather Tioga County Sheriff Department deputies who gently and diplomatically said

we would have to get off the private property of Lockheed Martin. We had time to slowly speak to the young officer as our cameras photographed our folks and banners with Lockheed Martin as the backdrop.

When we drove into Lockheed Martin to try to deliver our letter, their own security team stopped us and called the Tioga Sheriff's Department to turn us around and escort us back to our staging area across the road. Likely a letter of warning will be sent to the three of us, including the TV cameraman who was in the car as we attempted to deliver a letter to the tightly guarded officials at Owego NY Lockheed Martin.

Both events were exhilarating as we exposed the war makers. Good TV coverage and lots of photographs to circulate.

This is the TV coverage (Vera Sdroggins will have her YouTube piece available soon) offered on two national affiliate channels locally Veterans for Peace holds protests at BAE and Lockheed Martin

<https://www.binghamtonhomepage.com/news/veterans-for-peace-holds-protests-at-bae-and-lockheed-martin/>

I had to wait about five seconds to play this link first covered by an ad.

The Weapons Industry

Transformed

by *Jack Gilroy, September 3, 2022*

Locally, we have two of the top ten weapons makers in the world, BAE Systems (#3 according to their website) and Lockheed Martin, the indisputable #1 weapons maker in the world.

No other world culture comes close to our eagerness to dominate other cultures. We have over 800 military bases around the world and have embraced terror over diplomacy. Terror has failed miserably.

Our greed to dominate other lands and people has been a colossal failure. Militarism backed by our firepower has not subdued Vietnamese, Iraqis, nor Afghans. Yet, the cleverness and plotting of the Pentagon and its contractors each year win increases not decreases in weapons making.

Much has been said about the \$739 billion to be spent over the next ten years under the *Inflation Reduction Act*. *We spend more than that figure each year on weapons of mass killing.*

BAE and Lockheed Martin years ago took baby steps to transform a tiny part of their annual revenue into sustainable products or services such as electric bus production at BAE Endicott while Lockheed Martin received a contract to enhance postal packaging at its Owego facility. \$221 million given to Lockheed for postal work amounts to about three tenths of one percent of the \$78 billion given to them by the US government in fiscal year 2022.

The major arms industry uses these tidbit nonmilitary expenditures to claim they are doing economic conversion from military to real needs. It's a sham and they know it.

If workers in the weapons industry were told their jobs would now focus on systems research and production to make our world more livable a sense of joy and purpose would sweep through the arms industry. They would know they were doing work to save our planet from climate disasters. If workers awoke each morning with a resolve to get to work and find ways to

get pure water to people around the world (including our own native and poor people who have to live with contaminated water) they would have renewed purpose to help others, not with daily plans for more destruction and blood letting.

Lockheed Hellfire missiles and BAE laser systems to kill do not address the existential danger of climate crisis. The work of the arms industry could transform to work to cure diseases, to stopping the next pandemic before it starts, to ensuring clean soil and air, to ending malnutrition and hunger, to saving our plant and animal life.

Waking up each day with a zest to do good must be difficult for employees whose job is to design and produce weapons of death and destruction. Yet, our strange culture each year allocates 54% of our discretionary federal spending to our war industry.

Arms industry workers need to demand a sense of moral purpose in their work. Making electric buses and organizing mail distribution is a start to celebrate. The tasks to improve our nation and world are endless, economically profitable and morally joyous.

CEO letter supporters September 9th War Merchants Exposure Day

Veterans for Peace: veteransforpeaceusa.org

World Beyond War: worldbeyondwar.org

Code Pink: Codepink.org

Peace Action: Peaceaction.org

Upstate Drone Action: upstatedroneaction.org

United National Antiwar Coalition: UNACPeace.org

Catholic Worker: Catholicworker.org

Pax Christi USA: Paxchristiusa.org

Pax Christi DC-Baltimore: www.PaxChristiMDCB.org

Nevada Desert Experience: NevadaDesertexperience.org

Brandywine Peace Community: BrandwinePeace.com

Friends of Franz & Ben: bensalmon.org

Broome County NY Peace Action: BCPeaceAction.org

Association of United States Catholic Priests

Pax Christi NYC: PaxChristiNYC.org

Pittsburgh Anti-War Committee

Florida Peace Network