

By the Shut Down Drone Warfare Team: Virginia, Ken, Denise, Charles, Toby, Greg and Edwina

Nearly four dozen activists participated in some or all of the first ever weeklong anti-drone peace convergence at Holloman Air Force Base in southern New Mexico, where over 700 drone pilots and operators graduate every year. Over half of the participants were from New Mexico, and others traveled from 8 states, including Minetaka Shimada, a journalist based in Maryland who covered our story for a Japan-based newspaper, and a dozen or so young students from NMSU, Las Cruces and Albuquerque who participated in the April 22 Saturday Earth Day rally in Alamogordo co-sponsored and led by ANSWER/PSL, New Mexico!

Daily varying themed vigils helped to educate and raise consciousness about weaponized drones and our out of control military industrial complex that wreaks havoc on the environment, the climate and terrorizes global communities.

The week culminated in a nonviolent direct action to Shut Down Drone Warfare at Holloman:

[A peaceful blockade of the main gate to Holloman AFB](#), the largest drone training base in the country. 5 peaceful and determined activists and a handful of supporters, with signs and banners, [forced law enforcement to redirect traffic to the alternative west gate](#)

Ultimately, Ken Mayers (NM), Elliott Adams (NY), Michael Kerr (CA), Richard Bishop (MT), and Toby Blomé (CA) were arrested; the first three being U.S. veterans and members of Veterans For Peace.

Of note: Because it was our first-ever anti-drone demo at Holloman, there was a tremendous amount of uncertainty and concern about what the consequences of risking arrest would be, which led to some activists being hesitant to participate fully in the blockade, in light of southern New Mexico's reputation of conservatism and far right alignment. What surprised many of us was the professionalism and respect that all of the Otero County sheriff officers exhibited throughout the arrest and processing phases. Ultimately all arrestees got to bypass jail and were taken to the Magistrate Court house within a few hours. All arrestees pleaded not guilty and plan to take drone warfare to trial. As Michael Kerr said to the judge during his arraignment: "We weren't blocking the roadway, we were blocking the [illegal] U.S. drone

warfare program."

Our trial date was set for May 15, but we will motion for a continuance (postponement), and a request for a joint trial before a jury (our legal right in New Mexico), and all defendants plan to represent themselves pro se.

For now here are just a few highlights:

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Successful blockade of main gate at Holloman AFB to blockade the US drone terror program

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Superb Nonviolence Training Workshops led by VFP activist, Elliott Adams

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Professional and respectful Otero County Sheriff officers throughout the week

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These 2 commercial ads ran locally and throughout NM during our week of action:

<https://youtu.be/4ca-j39wBjI> <https://youtu.be/VEnXCOY-hso>

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Meaningful local coverage in the [Alamogordo Daily News](#) .

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Excellent panel, April 20, that included: Bernice Gutierrez, local activist and downwinder victim from the 1st U.S. Atomic Weapon test, at Trinity, NM (1945); Damascio Lopez, victim of Depleted Uranium Testing and decades long advocate for a global ban on depleted uranium

weapons; and Nick Mottern, co-founder of BanKillerDrones.org

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Awesome music from Emma's Revolution at Camp Justice AND at the panel evening. You rock Pat Humphries and Sandy O.

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Wonderful new connections made with local residents.

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Our creative vigils and messaging keeps getting more creative, effective and impactful.

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Many honks from trucks of all sizes during our vigils. Who says truck drivers are conservative?

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Camp Justice: our beautiful group campsite that provided a place for respite, recuperation, team bonding and rejuvenation that included daily morning yoga led by Sharat Lin

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Delicious and Nutritious meals provided by our Cooking Team: Virginia Hauflaire and Jane Kroesen.

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Most importantly, we had an amazing group of activists who participated enthusiastically in our week of action... devoted, hard working and committed: Yes, and most want to come back!

So much more to report on, but for now, huge gratitude to all those who contributed in large and small ways. This was a team effort, and we couldn't have done it so well without each one of you!