News



Seven Catholics, calling themselves the Kings Bay Plowshares, are seen April 4, 2018, before they entered the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia to protest nuclear weapons. The group includes, from left, Clare Grady, Patrick O'Neill, Elizabeth McAlister, Jesuit Fr. Steve Kelly, Martha Hennessy, Mark Colville and Carmen Trotta. (CNS/Kings Bay Plowshares)



by Jesse Remedios

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Trials of Nonviolence: The Kings Bay Plowshares story is a three-episode podcast series exploring the motives of seven Catholic peace activists who broke into a nuclear submarine base in Georgia. In the first episode, launching today, Bertelsen Intern Jesse Remedios tells the story of how they pulled it off.

The entire series is available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Play, or wherever you get your podcasts.

A previous version of this post misstated the date of the break-in. It was April 4, not Aug. 4

Soundcloud

On the night of April 4, 2018, seven Catholics successfully broke onto Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in St. Marys, Georgia — the east coast home to U.S. nuclear armed submarines — undetected by base security. The youngest member of the group was 55; the oldest, 78.

Who are they? What drove them to choose Kings Bay? How did they pull this off?

On today's episode we will hear from four of the Kings Bay Plowshares 7:

- Martha Hennessy, a retired occupational therapist from Vermont and granddaughter of Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker movement.
- Patrick O'Neill, a journalist and founder of the Fr. Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker House in Garner, North Carolina.
- Clare Grady, a Catholic Worker and activist from Ithaca, New York.
- Carmen Trotta, an anti-war activist and member of the New York Catholic Worker for over 30 years.

Background reading:

- On April 5, 2018, NCR reported on the group's arrest at Kings Bay. In their mission statement, the Kings Bay Plowshares 7 explain their intention was to disarm "the world's deadliest nuclear weapon, the Trident submarine" and "seek to bring about a world free of nuclear weapons."
- The Department of Defense writes that the nuclear triad is the backbone of our national security system, providing "24/7 deterrence to prevent catastrophic actions from our adversaries." Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, located on the southeastern corner of Georgia, is the homeport of six Ohio-Class Trident submarines — a substantial part of the triad's sea leg.
- The tragic human costs of nuclear weapons that activist Martha Hennessy read about in John Hersey's *Hiroshima* stuck with her all her life.

[Jesse Remedios is a Bertelsen editorial intern with the National Catholic Reporter. His email is jremedios@ncronline.org. Follow him on Twitter @JCRemedios.]

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This story appears in the **Trials of Nonviolence** feature series. View the full series.