

14 arrested at Missouri missile silos

Group stages anti-nuclear demonstration

By Randell Beck
staff writer

Butler, Mo.—Federal and county authorities today arrested 14 peace activists who scaled fences around 10 nuclear missile silos to hang banners, plant trees and pray.

The first arrest occurred about 7:50 a.m., nearly an hour after the synchronized entrance into high-security areas atop the silos. Activists entered three of the silos by cutting padlocks, one protester said.

Kansas City lawyer Delany Dean, who said she was a volunteer attorney for the group, which calls itself "Missouri Peace Planting '88," said federal trespassing charges, a misdemeanor, probably would be filed against those who entered the missile silos.

"We made our point today that we want to replant the silos with grain and trees," said Sam Day, 61, a nationally known anti-nuclear activist who was among those arrested.

Day, co-director of Nukewatch, an anti-nuclear organization, based in Madison, Wis., and former editor of *The Progressive* magazine also based in Madison, was dressed in a clown suit and wearing a clown face as he sat handcuffed today in the Bates County Courthouse.

Cass County Sheriff Homer Foote Jr. said two women from Independence spotted at a missile silo about four miles south of Harrisonville, were taken in for questioning but were released because they did not get onto Air Force grounds, Foote said. Day said the women were not part of the peace group's activities in Bates County.

Besides those arrested, more than a dozen supporters stood in the courthouse corridors, laughing and talking. Some supporters who watched colleagues scale fences early today were taken into custody. No charges were expected.

Silos

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test against nuclear missiles had been planned for six months.

At 7 a.m. today, the seven men and seven women climbed over 8-foot-high fences surrounding 10 silos that contain Minuteman missiles.

At one silo about five miles southeast of Archie, 61-year-old Betty Lewis, a Chicago mother of seven, placed a bath mat over the three strands of barbed wire at the top and leaped to the ground on the other side.

Outside, Lewis had hung two banners, one of which said, "You can't hug anybody with nuclear arms."

Inside, Lewis placed roses near the steel silo cap, spread birdseed and stood on the cap to trigger sensors and alert officials of her presence at Whiteman Air Force Base.

Lewis tried to plant a small tree but found it tough digging in the packed gravel base around the silo cap.

Two supporters, Cecilia Wagner, 60, and Connie Dover, 29, both of Kansas City, cheered Lewis on as she sat on the missile cap.

"Work on your tan, Betty," Wagner screamed.

An hour and 15 minutes later, two Air Force security officers arrived.

After searching Lewis, the soldiers handcuffed the woman and waited for sheriff's deputies to arrive.

Besides Lewis and Day, others arrested: Gail Beyer, 36, and Bonnie Urfer, 37, both of Madison, Wis.; Dorothy Eber, 63, of Villa Park, Ill.; Katy Feit, 26, Sam Guardino, 29, Kathy Kelly, 35, Dan McGuire, 30, and Mike Stanek, 22, all of Chicago; Paul Foley, 27, Ariel Glenn, 27, and the Rev. Jerry Zawada, a 51-year-old Franciscan priest, all from Milwaukee.

Missouri missile silos have been the site of other protests in recent years.

Staff writer Lewis W. Diuguid also contributed to this story.



Betsy Lewis, 61, of Missouri Peace Planting '88, was arrested today and accused of trespassing at a missile silo site southeast of Archie, Mo. (staff photo by Tony Olmos)