

# Confronting the U.S. Navy at Bangor, 1973-1982

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On February 16, 1973, in the Western Washington city of Bremerton, the clock on the Great Northwest Savings and Loan building chimed the notes to “Happy Days Are Here Again,” and automobile drivers honked their horns. The local newspaper, the *Bremerton Sun*, described a “warm glow” over the area and “ecstatic” local businesspeople. This outburst of euphoria was prompted by the news that the U.S. Navy had chosen the Bangor Ammunition Depot, on Hood Canal, not far from Bremerton, as the site for a support facility for Trident nuclear submarines. Local business and civic interests looked forward to the economic boom that the new installation would bring to the area, including an estimated \$7.5 million a month in wages. This initial reaction reflected the longstanding relationship between Kitsap County residents and the military, a relationship that constituted a form of civic-military partnership.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the *Bremerton Sun*’s description of “almost universal satisfaction” in the area at news of the planned development, however, opposition to the project soon arose.<sup>2</sup> It took a number of different forms, reflecting changes in the social, cultural, and political environments of the 1960s and early 1970s. Some anti-Trident sentiments originated within the Kitsap community; others reflected broader regional, and indeed national, concerns about the project.

Opponents failed to stop the project, and the first submarine, the USS *Ohio*, arrived at Bangor in August 1982. However, the criticism of the Trident base is significant because it marked a sub-

stantial change in attitudes toward the military. In the West, communities had historically welcomed military installations as a source of economic growth. Many communities had actually lobbied the federal government and the military for the establishment of defense facilities in their areas. In Washington State, for example, during the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, local government and business officials had worked hard to attract installations such as the Sand Point Naval Air Station and Fort Lawton in Seattle and Fort Lewis in Tacoma. Local boosters sought the jobs, income, capital investments, and prestige that such facilities brought to their communities. The western United States in general was successful in attracting military spending, and World War II and the cold war increased the region’s dependence on the military. By the early 1960s, defense spending accounted for over 25 percent of out-of-state income for several western states, including Washington.<sup>3</sup>

The Bangor case highlights a change in the public’s attitude toward the military. The 1960s marked the end of an era of mostly unquestioning faith in the economic benefits of defense installations and of unqualified support for those facilities. This change was influenced by the growing affluence of the region after World War II, mounting concern about the environment, and increased skepticism regarding the military. Some westerners no longer looked to the military as a source of economic growth for their communities but instead saw such development as a threat and regarded the defense establishment with distaste and suspicion. The civic-military alliance did not end because of

these challenges, even after the end of the cold war in the early 1990s. It did, however, have to operate in a different climate after the 1960s. This growing doubt of the worth of military facilities was especially true of sites connected to nuclear weapons and would be epitomized by opposition to Trident in the 1970s and 1980s.

The navy’s Trident program consisted of a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines equipped with Trident nuclear missiles. At 560 feet long, the new vessel was almost twice as large as its predecessor, the Poseidon. In addition, the Trident missile had longer range and greater accuracy than previous models, and each of the 24 missiles carried by the submarine had 17 separate, independently targetable nuclear warheads. These characteristics would later lead to the system being labeled a “first-strike” weapon by antinuclear protesters. Reflecting cold war tensions of the 1970s, the navy, by contrast, argued that Trident was a defensive weapon essential to national security.<sup>4</sup>

The navy chose Bangor on Hood Canal as the site of its support facility for the new Trident submarines for several reasons. The canal is a saltwater inlet, approximately 80 miles long and 600 feet deep; it provides access to the Pacific Ocean via Admiralty Inlet and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. It lies on the western side of the Kitsap Peninsula, a body of land bounded to the north by Admiralty Inlet and to the east by Puget Sound. The navy had established an ammunition depot there during World War II and facilities for servicing Polaris nuclear submarines in the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> It also owned a large swath of undeveloped land on which it could expand to

accommodate the Trident program. A further advantage of the area was its proximity to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton, a facility with workers experienced in the maintenance of nuclear vessels. In addition, both Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr., chief of naval operations in the early 1970s, and local newspapers emphasized the importance of local goodwill toward the military.<sup>6</sup>

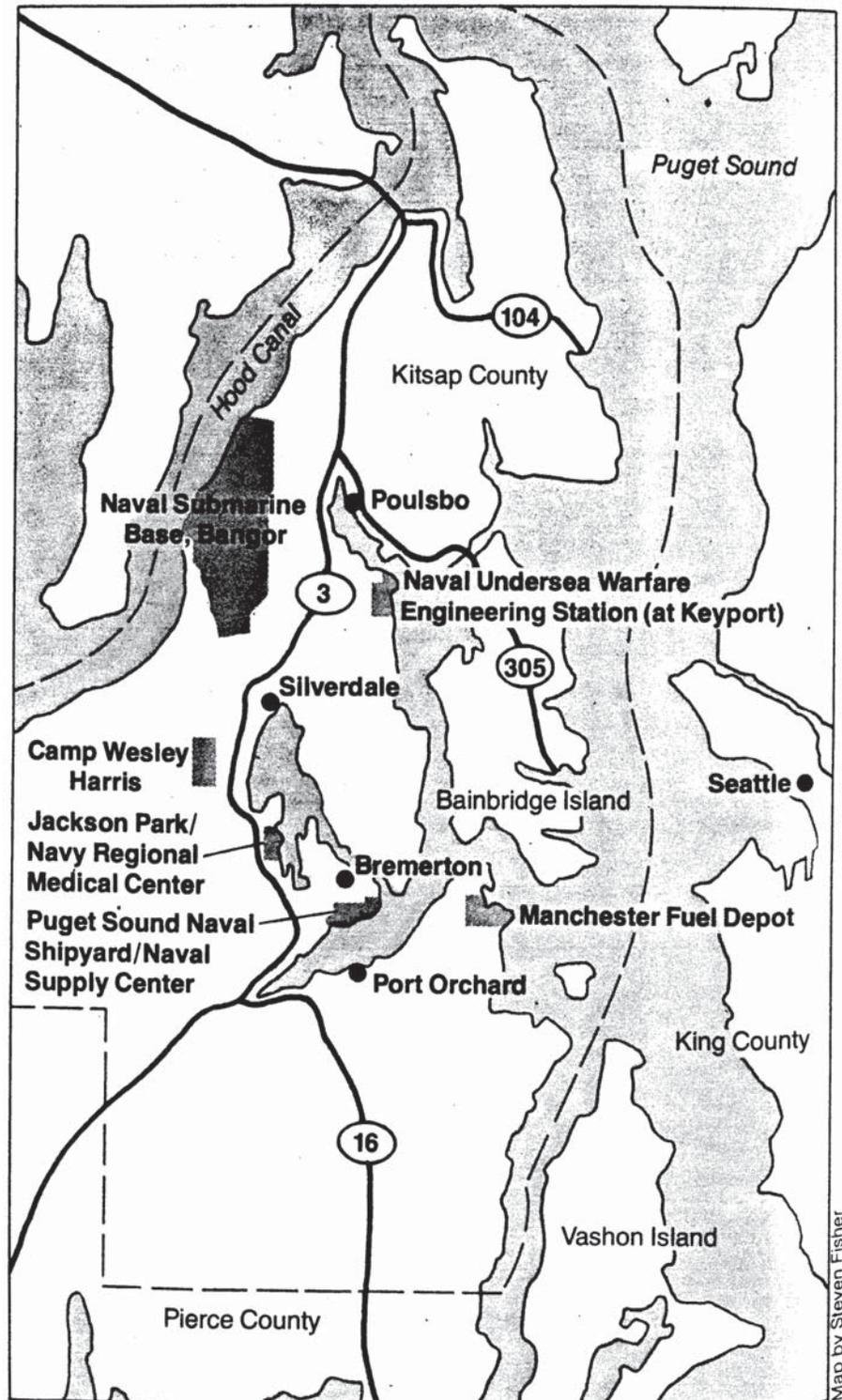
This promilitary attitude reflected the strong presence of the navy in the county. Kitsap County has long been dependent on government jobs: over 38 percent of the labor force in 1970 was employed by federal, state, or local government agencies. Indeed, by 1978, the New York-based Urban Institute could describe Kitsap County as the most “federally impacted” county in the nation.<sup>7</sup> The largest federal employer in the area was the U.S. Navy. By the late 1970s, naval facilities in the county included, in addition to Bangor, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, the Naval Undersea Warfare station at Keyport, the Manchester fuel depot at Port Orchard, and a regional medical center near Bremerton. Kitsap County was “Navy country,” and Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington State was able to talk of a “happy marriage” between the county and the navy.<sup>8</sup>

Despite local support for the navy, opposition to its plan to develop Bangor as a Trident support site soon emerged. The first sign of opposition to the Trident project came shortly after the navy announced its selection of Bangor. Owners of property adjacent to the existing installation worried about the navy’s plans to acquire 150 acres of land near the southwest corner of the base, in the Olympic View residential community, to add to the 7,700 acres the navy already owned. The navy claimed to need this extra property in order to create a greater safety buffer zone in case of accidents with munitions or missile propulsion fuel. Property owners feared that expansion of the

base would mean the loss of their land through eminent domain. For these residents, criticism of Bangor and Trident was directly tied to the threats to their homes rather than to any philosophical or moral opposition to the project. Many of those who feared that

the navy would take their property still saw the development of Bangor as a major boost to the local economy and continued to see the naval installations in the county as an economic benefit—indeed, some whose property was threatened eventually supported the

Map by Steven Fisher; originally published in *Pacific Northwest* (June 1982).



Map by Steven Fisher

navy's plans.<sup>9</sup>

This opposition came to an end in March 1974, when the navy announced that it would not after all need to acquire any property adjacent to the Bangor complex, but the news did not assuage anti-Trident sentiment in the county.<sup>10</sup> People, in Kitsap County and across the nation, increasingly worried that military projects adversely affected the local environment and quality of life. After World War II, Americans went from valuing resources and landscapes primarily for their economic worth to valuing them also for their aesthetic qualities and amenities. As they became more affluent in the postwar era, people were less likely to consider resources wasted if they were not exploited for economic gain. Americans sought a better quality of life, one manifestation of which was the desire to live on the fringe of the city, where there was less congestion and pollution. The first Earth Day, held in 1970, and a range of environmental legislation, such as the Clean Air and Water acts and the National Environmental Policy Act, passed by Congress in the late 1960s and early 1970s, indicated the increased interest in protecting the environment.<sup>11</sup>

Many Kitsap County residents attributed their quality of life to the rural nature of the area and the scenic beauty of Hood Canal and the Olympic Mountains. Residents idealized this aspect of the area. The county was, however, more rural in residents' perceptions than it was in reality. Kitsap County had the second highest population density in Washington State in 1970, exceeded only by King County (where Seattle is located). Only a tiny fraction of the county's labor force held jobs in traditional rural industries such as agriculture, forestry, and fishing. Nonetheless, some locals viewed their area as pastoral, and they valued rural and bucolic lifestyles over urban. Kitsap was, therefore, not so much rural as it was "pseudo-rural."<sup>12</sup>

In a classic case of NIMBY thought, residents feared the development and congestion that the county would experience when as many as 6,000 new employees and their families came to Bangor. One Silverdale woman painted a picture of "mindless developments of sterile suburban character, congested roads and over-crowded recreational facilities."<sup>13</sup> The *Argus*, a Seattle traditional weekly devoted to local issues, warned that the Trident project would change the county from "a rural and idyllic land into a suburban city of more than 10,000 new homes."<sup>14</sup>

A local environmental organization, the Hood Canal Environmental Council (HCEC), expressed its concern over the impact of the Trident base on the landscape and quality of life of the area. Local activists had founded HCEC in 1969 to oppose a large-scale marina and housing development planned in the vicinity of Hood Canal. After the defeat of that project, the council continued to act as a watchdog for the canal's environment. With the navy's announcement of its plans for a Trident base at Bangor, HCEC began investigating what effect the development would have on the area and organizing

local residents to discuss these effects. Initially, HCEC did not take a stand against Bangor's expansion but rather emphasized its interest in gathering facts and studying the situation.<sup>15</sup>

A similar approach was adopted by a new organization called Concerned about Trident (CAT), which included many HCEC members. Its aim was to

assure that the Trident submarine project will not be initiated or conducted or sited at Bangor, Washington[,] unless and until all reasonable alternatives to the program, expenditures and base locations are fully considered; to assure that if the project proceeds, it will be in full compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws, and in all respects be in conformance with the highest environmental standards.<sup>16</sup>

In particular, CAT wanted to make sure that the environmental impact statement (EIS), required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), complied fully with the law.<sup>17</sup> The act gave the public new opportunities to oppose federal projects by allowing public comment and challenges to government plans through the EIS.

Even some local government officials

Protests at Bangor began soon after the Trident project was announced and continued for years. In May 1978, more than 3,000 people marched outside the base. (Sun Archives, Bremerton, Washington)





During the May 1978 protest, more than 400 people were arrested. (Sun Archives)

in Kitsap County looked on the development of Bangor with a wary eye, indicating some weakness in the traditional partnership between the military and local government. They worried in particular about paying for schools, roads, water, and sewage facilities to accommodate the anticipated growth in population. The county established the Trident Coordinating Committee to plan for the changes that the project would bring to the area and to secure a commitment from the federal government to pay its share of the costs of accommodating Trident. The committee was initially unsuccessful in getting the federal government to promise such assistance, and some Kitsap County politicians and citizens began to question whether they wanted the base if local governments were to be solely responsible for carrying the costs of dealing with the increased population. One county official argued that the area's relationship with the navy would be "less cozy than before" if the federal government did not help to financially support the new infrastructure and schools that the project would require.<sup>18</sup>

However, such positions may have been posturing designed to ensure federal aid.<sup>19</sup> Despite these concerns, other local officials, such as the Bremerton finance commissioner, Bob Stewart, remained supportive of the

navy. He continued to believe in the benefits a continued relationship would bring to the local economy and expressed confidence in the ability of the local area to successfully absorb the impacts from the Trident project.<sup>20</sup>

At hearings in late April 1974 in Kitsap County about the draft environmental impact statement, the navy came under a barrage of criticism. Audiences consistently applauded anti-Trident speakers while some supporters of the civic-military alliance tried to defend the area's relationship with the navy. Phil Best, a Bremerton attorney, member of CAT, and former president of HCEC, argued that the projected economic benefits of the Bangor project would be offset by increased taxes needed to fund expanded services and that the project would threaten the area's quality of life. Other members of the audience, which numbered nearly 900, carried on the theme, opposing the type of growth that Bangor's expansion would bring to the region. One woman argued, "Each time a Tasty-Freeze goes in, each time a California style subdivision goes up . . . a part of our way of life . . . is lost."<sup>21</sup> Local government officials at the meeting emphasized their support for Trident and the economic benefits that it would bring to the area, but they also demanded that the federal government cover the expense of building new

schools and infrastructure to accommodate the increased population.

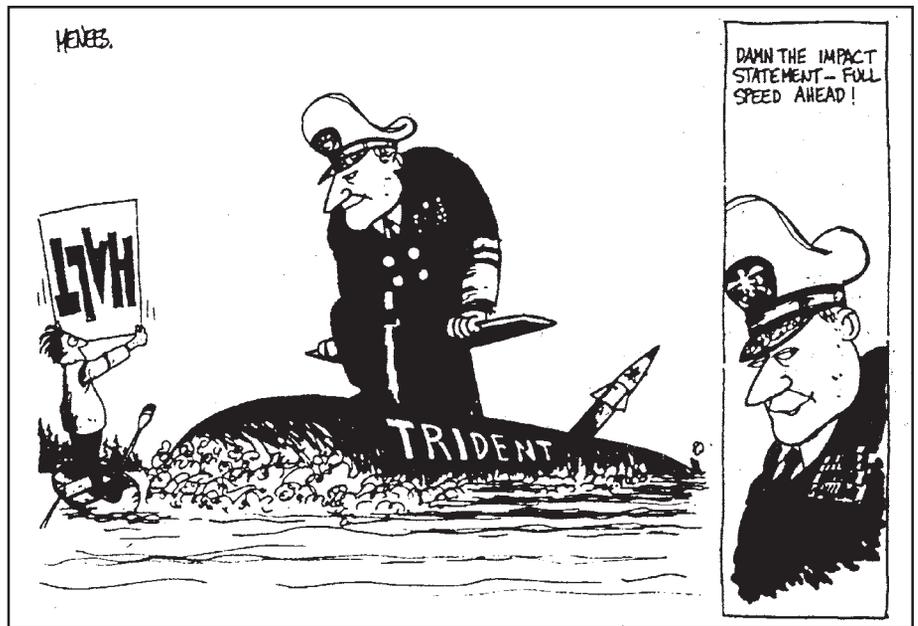
Key members of the local civic-military partnership remained loyal to their traditional alliance. The Bremerton mayor, Glenn Jarstad, for example, stated at the draft EIS hearing that "the Navy is an outstanding employer, and has worked closely with city officials in the past. We are most thankful for that cooperation."<sup>22</sup> He was confident that the navy would do its part to help the area deal with the changes brought by Bangor. Jarstad's support for, and belief in the benefits of, the civic-military alliance in Kitsap County was seconded by Chuck Warner, executive director of the Bremerton Area Chamber of Commerce, another traditional component of the civic-military partnership, at a second EIS hearing held on April 25. Warner praised the area's "excellent working relationship with the Navy" and assured the audience that the federal government would pay its share of the costs of accommodating Trident and the attendant growth in population in Kitsap County.<sup>23</sup>

Gene Gisley, editor of the *Bremerton Sun*, emphasized the need for Kitsap County to take advantage of the opportunity to strengthen its "75-year harmonious relationship with the U.S. Navy." Gisley also pointed out the risks involved in alienating the navy over Trident. Trident supporters also often adopted a rhetoric of patriotism that emphasized the need for Trident for national security.<sup>24</sup> Supporters of Trident argued that the silent majority of Kitsap County residents favored the project. Indeed, several polls taken after the navy released the draft EIS on Bangor indicated local support. While these polls were generally positive, they did not always reflect the complexities of local feeling about the project: many people indicated that their support for the base and its expected economic benefits was tempered by concerns about the negative impact it could have on the community.<sup>25</sup>

Many vocal Trident supporters characterized their opponents as predominantly wealthy Seattleites who owned vacation homes in Kitsap County, who wanted to keep the county in a state of rural development, and who cared more for the wildlife and scenery of the area than they did for the region's economy. The board of Concerned about Trident did include several doctors and attorneys, a vice president of PACCAR (the Renton-based truck manufacturer), and Walter W. Heller, a University of Minnesota professor who was a property owner on Hood Canal and a former senior economic advisor to Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Opponents, however, also included many retirees, people of limited means, and members of the general public who feared rising taxes and property values, increased strains on public services, and changes in what they perceived as the rural nature of the area.<sup>26</sup>

The organization Concerned about Trident took opposition to Bangor's expansion to a new level when it, along with several other environmental groups, initiated court action in August 1974, using the EIS as a weapon. These groups alleged that the navy had not properly assessed the environmental impact of the project and that it had not adequately considered alternatives to

Members of the clergy joined the protest against Bangor, including Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen of Seattle. (Sun Archives)



*Kitsap County Herald*, April 17, 1974.

the Bangor site as required under NEPA. The suit sought to halt construction until the navy's EIS complied fully with NEPA. The case was important not just for its implications in Kitsap County but also for raising the issue of the military citing national security in order to circumvent environmental laws.<sup>27</sup>

There were precedents for the use of environmental impact statements to challenge government projects. The government had made some changes to the design of the TransAlaska Pipeline System, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had abandoned several projects because of actions taken by environmentalists under NEPA provisions. These changes had been made voluntarily, however, rather than in response to judicial rulings. Past cases involving environmental impact statements suggested that they were advisory rather than binding and that the best result CAT could hope for would be a delay. Such a delay, however, could have been fatal to a defense project such as Trident that was already subject to close congressional and public scrutiny because of its cost.<sup>28</sup>

Local members of the civic-military

partnership rallied to help defeat the CAT lawsuit. Chambers of commerce from around Puget Sound had already joined forces to form the Puget Sound Trident Task Force with the goal of raising public support for Bangor. The task force would now focus on raising money to fight the CAT lawsuit and presenting pro-Trident arguments in the news media.<sup>29</sup> If the task force, the *Bremerton Sun*, and local businesses represented one pole of local opinion on the Trident program and CAT the other, then the majority of Kitsap County citizens probably fell somewhere in between. In general, even if they had reservations about Trident's impacts on their lives and the environment, most seem to have accepted the project, although not always enthusiastically, because of the economic growth it promised, because of the traditional relationship they had with the navy, and perhaps because they had a general faith in the defense establishment.<sup>30</sup>

CAT's lawsuit against the Trident base failed in its initial hearing. The federal judge George L. Hart ruled in August 1975 that national security needs could take precedence over environmental issues.<sup>31</sup> CAT appealed this decision to

the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., and won a partial victory in October 1976 when the court ruled that the navy needed to develop a more detailed EIS that fully considered alternatives to the Bangor site; however, the court did not require construction to halt. The navy produced another EIS early in 1977, and CAT again criticized the document. However, the group's efforts became mired in the legal and bureaucratic complexities of the environmental review process, and it no longer had the funds to challenge the navy in court.<sup>32</sup>

During the three years that CAT spent on legal action against the navy, new forms of opposition to the Bangor development grew and eventually overshadowed its efforts. Local, environmentally based opposition gave way to a more broadly based regional movement based on opposition to nuclear weapons.

A group of peace activists from Seattle, led by Robert B. Shaw, a retired United Methodist minister, had formed the Action Committee against Trident Submarines (ACATS) shortly after the navy announced its plans for the Bangor site in 1973. This group was opposed not just to the Bangor development but to the whole Trident program, and its members aimed to educate people about what they saw as the wasteful nature of Trident. Their arguments failed to grab public attention as effectively as did fears about the more immediate and tangible threats to the local quality of life in Kitsap County.<sup>33</sup>

Opposition to Trident's nuclear weaponry next resurfaced in early 1975. This time, opponents adopted a more confrontational approach than ACATS had used. In March, a number of activists planted a cross at the Trident site, and in July a group of 150 Americans and Canadians, calling themselves the Pacific Life Community (PLC), demonstrated outside the Bangor complex. In an act of civil disobedience, 20

people illegally entered the base, where they planted a vegetable garden to symbolize the conflict between issues of world hunger and "the tremendous amount of money being spent on a nuclear first strike offense."<sup>34</sup> Over a period of 12 months, PLC staged at least 12 demonstrations at Bangor, during which some members of the group would try to cut the perimeter fence and enter the installation. The members of PLC were following in a tradition of protest against the Bangor facility begun in 1972, when a group called the People's Blockade tried to block the transshipments of ammunition to Southeast Asia by lying on the railroad tracks leading into the base and by preventing ships from leaving the facility. Indeed, some members of PLC had also been involved in the People's Blockade and the larger antiwar movement of the 1960s. In its work against the Trident project, PLC reflected new attitudes toward war and the defense establishment that had developed during the Vietnam War.<sup>35</sup>

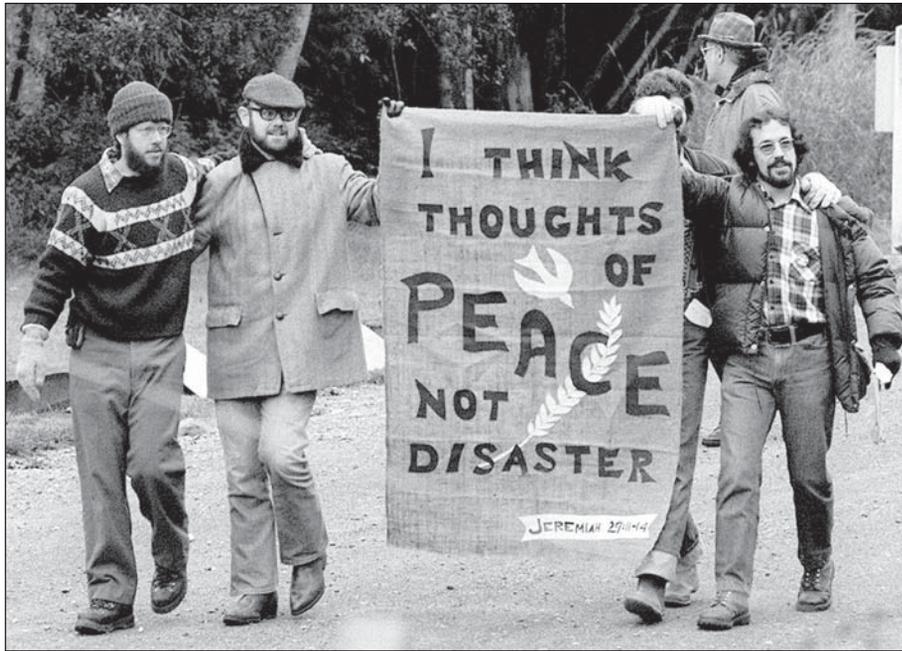
Pacific Life Community had a mixture of "radical Christian, Quaker and feminist roots," as well as links to the Catholic Worker movement, and members

were influenced by the teachings of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., on nonviolence.<sup>36</sup> It drew most of its members from Canada and Western Washington, but it also included people from across the U.S. One of its most prominent members, Jim Douglass, an activist with roots in the New Left and Catholic peace movements, argued that protests could halt the construction of Trident support facilities by drawing "worldwide attention" to Bangor as a moral issue. His fellow PLC members believed that Trident gave the U.S. a first-strike capability, through its accuracy and power, to destroy an enemy's nuclear weapons in such a complete manner as to preclude retaliation.<sup>37</sup>

The emergence of antinuclear protests at Bangor in 1975 reflected the gradual rebirth of the antinuclear movement across the U.S. Opposition to nuclear weapons and fear of nuclear war had been prominent in the 1950s and early 1960s, and those fears had led to the founding of SANE, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, a national organization that campaigned for an end to the testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere. With the ratification of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty in 1963,

In October 1979, protestors scaled the fences around the base. (Sun Archives)





Protestors argued that the Trident submarines were first-strike weapons and increased the possibility of nuclear war. (Sun Archives)

the issue of nuclear weapons had faded from public consciousness.<sup>38</sup> Most important, the Vietnam War monopolized peace activists' attention during the second half of the 1960s and the early 1970s. After the war, national antinuclear groups like SANE tried to refocus on the issue of nuclear weapons, but they initially experienced difficulties in raising funds and securing public support. The Vietnam War, however, did impel many Americans to become critical of defense policy and provided antiwar activists with experience in nonviolent protest, experience that opponents of Trident drew on in the mid-1970s.<sup>39</sup>

Though nationally the antinuclear weapons movement had been moribund, in the early to mid-1970s at various locations around the West activists emerged to protest the nuclear military-industrial complex. In the wake of the Vietnam War, particularly in metropolitan areas like Seattle, there were a growing number of people who rejected the cold war strategy of containment and the nuclear weapons that were central to that strategy. At the Rocky Flats plant outside Denver, Colorado, which

manufactured plutonium triggers for nuclear warheads, opposition, as at Bangor, first focused on environmental issues. In 1974, however, peace and environmental activists joined forces to found the Rocky Flats Action Group, a development that, along with the emergence of Pacific Life Community in 1975, exemplified the growing concern with nuclear weapons at a local level in the West.<sup>40</sup>

Opposition to Bangor from antinuclear activists intensified during 1977, as CAT's attempts to challenge the base on environmental grounds ended because of a lack of funds. Mainstream religious groups became increasingly involved in opposing the navy's Trident project on moral grounds. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Seattle, Raymond Hunthausen, who would become one of the major figures in the regional nuclear disarmament movement, wrote a pastoral letter that described Trident as an offensive rather than defensive weapon and encouraged Catholics to urge their political representatives to support nuclear disarmament. Other denominations and clergymen in the area also declared their

opposition to Trident.<sup>41</sup> In May 1977, a diverse group of Seattle-based religious and political organizations organized a Trident Concern Week, which featured slide shows, debates, speeches, and worship services.<sup>42</sup>

Seattle-based peace and antinuclear groups, including the local chapter of Greenpeace, Pacific Life Community, the Crabshell Alliance, and the War Resisters League, organized a series of protest activities at Bangor, which began in July 1977 and continued through mid-August. They were joined by two new regional organizations founded specifically to oppose Trident: the Bangor Summer Task Force and Live without Trident. Marches, distribution of leaflets to workers entering the base, and acts of civil disobedience such as climbing over the base's fence culminated on August 14 with a demonstration of 2,000 people outside the facility but failed to halt construction.<sup>43</sup> In the fall of 1977, a group of PLC members purchased land adjacent to the Trident site and established the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolence as a base for protest activities and to establish a presence in Kitsap County that would facilitate dialogue with local residents who supported the base. Protests resumed in May 1978, when 3,500 demonstrators marched outside the base; several hundred people were arrested over several days. That activity contrasted sharply with Armed Forces Day activities held in Bremerton that same weekend, which reflected the close ties between the area and the navy.

Protests at Bangor continued in October 1979, but activities after these demonstrations were slowed by the fact that many of the most committed activists who had taken part in acts of civil disobedience were now in jail. The growth of these protests between 1977 and 1979 highlighted the growing challenge posed to the military's historically positive relations with local communities. However, apart from forcing the navy to introduce increased security

at the base and raising the consciousness of nuclear weapons opponents, these demonstrations achieved little, failing to halt construction or to bring about the termination of the Trident program.<sup>44</sup>

All of this anti-Trident activity quickly drew a reaction from Kitsap County residents. Just a few years previously, many residents had exhibited some tolerance and sympathy toward Concerned about Trident's environmentalist opposition to Bangor. As one local citizen had remarked, though residents did not have much hope of success for CAT's efforts, many did sympathize with the group's goals and felt that it helped "keep the Navy honest" with regard to the local impact of its plans.<sup>45</sup> In contrast, reaction to the antinuclear opposition was much stronger. Part of the hostility undoubtedly grew out of a sense of economic self-preservation: the protesters opposed the navy, which was the source of employment and economic security for many locals. Some Kitsap citizens saw criticism of the military as a sign of protesters' naiveté or even disloyalty to the United States during a time of cold war tensions. For other Kitsap residents, the stereotype of protesters as hippies or unemployed countercultural types presented by the news media helped to foster their antagonism toward the activists. The anti-Trident movement did consist of many younger people affiliated with countercultural groups, but it also included older, middle-class professionals.<sup>46</sup>

Most protesters came from outside Kitsap County, but there were some local anti-Trident activists. At least two of the demonstrators arrested in July and August of 1977 for civil disobedience on the base were Kitsap residents; one was a disabled former employee of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. There was also a small group called Kitsapers against Trident.<sup>47</sup> While some Kitsapers opposed Trident out of an antinuclear philosophy or concern for world peace, others, echoing early opposition to the

base, emphasized Bangor's adverse impacts on their property and quality of life.<sup>48</sup>

Concern about nuclear weapons became more widespread by the late 1970s. In 1979 and 1980, international developments such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian revolution, and President Jimmy Carter's decision to withdraw from the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks resulted in increased defense spending and growing anxiety in the U.S. These developments fostered increased national criticism of nuclear weapons, leading to the formation of the Nuclear Freeze movement. Opposition to Bangor would intersect with this movement in 1982.<sup>49</sup>

Religious figures locally and nationally continued to oppose nuclear weapons. Even the Reverend Billy Graham, a staunch cold warrior, and the traditionally promilitary Catholic church expressed opposition to the nuclear arms race.<sup>50</sup> In Western Washington, Archbishop Hunthausen remained prominent in the antinuclear movement. Noting an acceleration of antimilitarism among elements of the Catholic church since the Vietnam War, Hunthausen saw opposition to Trident as a local manifestation of opposition to nuclear weapons in general. In 1981 he called Trident "immoral and criminal" and argued that it was a first-strike weapon. A leader of the church's grow-

ing opposition to nuclear weapons, he called for a refusal to pay that half of one's income taxes that was spent by the government on defense.<sup>51</sup> The archbishop was not the only major religious figure in the West to oppose nuclear weapons. The First Presidency of the Mormon Church, traditionally supportive of the military, voiced opposition to government proposals to develop large facilities for MX missiles in Utah and Nevada, areas considered sacred by the church.<sup>52</sup>

Anti-Trident activists' challenge to the navy and Kitsap locals' defense of their civic-military relationship with the navy continued in August 1982 with the arrival of the first Trident submarine, the USS *Ohio*, at Bangor. In addition to rallies against Trident, protestors organized a flotilla of small boats to try to block the submarine's progress down Hood Canal to the Bangor facility. Their efforts were thwarted, however, by the Coast Guard's interception of the protest fleet before it could get near the submarine.<sup>53</sup>

In contrast to the protests, naval officials, the mayors of Bremerton, Poulsbo, and Port Orchard, several Kitsap County commissioners, and representatives of the Navy League and local chambers of commerce extended a warm welcome to the *Ohio*. The Bremerton mayor, Gene Nelson, presented keys to the city to the sub-

In August 1982, protestors organized a small flotilla of boats in an unsuccessful effort to block the first Trident submarine's journey to Bangor. (Sun Archives)



marine's crew. Other segments of Kitsap society expressed similar support, staging rallies and displaying banners, T-shirts, and buttons welcoming the submarine. The local Navy League and chambers of commerce organized receptions and picnics for the *Ohio's* crew.<sup>54</sup> To mark the arrival of the submarine, the *Bremerton Sun* published a special supplement that contained numerous advertisements from Kitsap area businesses affirming their welcome for the navy vessel.<sup>55</sup> Local opinion polls and letters to newspapers reflected popular support for the navy in the county. In their varied gestures and actions, Kitsap residents reaffirmed their long relationship with the navy.<sup>56</sup>

Despite concerns about environmental damage and nuclear issues, in the nine years after the navy announced its selection of Bangor as a Trident base, local citizens continued to value the benefits that came from their relationship with the military. The civic-military complex had survived the challenges; Kitsap County was still "Navy country." Yet despite the triumph of Trident proponents, the period from 1973 to 1982 marked the emergence of a new phase in western relations with the military, especially regarding facilities associated with nuclear weapons. The Trident experience showed that the traditional

welcome extended to the military by local communities was no longer unanimous.

Kitsap County's civic-military partnership was able to withstand the new challenges it faced between 1973 and 1982, but this period marked a significant change in civic-military relations in the Puget Sound region. The successful defense of the base stemmed from the strength of the navy's presence in the area and its relationship with local civic interests. It was difficult for either local or outside opponents of Trident to overcome the county residents' belief that they owed their past, present, and future economic prosperity to this partnership with the navy. Despite the failure to halt the development of Bangor, the very existence of environmental and antinuclear opposition to the base indicated that the atmosphere of cozy cooperation between the navy and local economic and political leaders in Kitsap County would no longer be as harmonious or unchallenged as it had traditionally been.

In large measure this challenge to the traditional civic-military alliance in Kitsap County was due to the nature of the Trident weapons system and its sheer destructive potential and symbolism as part of the nuclear arms race.

Opposition to Bangor was part of a larger shift in some segments of western U.S. culture toward fear and distrust of the nuclear weapons complex and a rejection of the economic development that came with nuclear facilities.<sup>57</sup> Even taking this nuclear aspect of the Bangor story into consideration, however, the anti-Trident movement represented a new development in relations between western communities and the military as many westerners were increasingly unwilling to compromise their natural environments for economic benefits. Despite the success of the civic-military alliance with Trident, the military could no longer count on the unanimous and uncritical support of its civilian neighbors that it was used to prior to the 1960s. The civic-military complex now had to face a new atmosphere of opposition to, and skepticism about, military projects in the West, based on environmental and pacifist beliefs.

**Brian Casserly** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of History at the University of Washington. He is currently working on his dissertation, which is tentatively titled "Landscapes of Security: The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in the Puget Sound Region, 1890-1990."

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