

# DU Activists Busted for Nothing, Again

On August 4, AlliantACTION! activists Tom Bottolene, 59, Char Madigan, CSJ, 72, Pepperwolf, 52, and John Schmit, 67, were arrested and charged with “disorderly conduct” after attempting to exercise their legal right to attend Alliant Techsystem’s annual meeting of shareholders at company headquarters. All four purchased stock for the purpose.

After being told they weren’t allowed inside — even though the four hold legitimate proxies and had tickets for the event — Bottolene lifted an airport strap-like “barrier” that was set up in the parking lot and started walking towards the building. Several Alliant security personnel attempted to stop Bottolene, and while he was trying to walk around them an Eden Prairie police officer put him under arrest. Tom explained that he had a legal right to attend the meeting. The officer asked ATK security, “Do you want him arrested for disorderly conduct?” “Yes,” was the answer.

The three others released the nylon strap barrier to get closer to the building and were also arrested.

The technically unlawful arrests follow last year’s annual meeting incident in which similarly arrested shareholders had their charges dropped and were given a promise from the City of Eden Prairie that no legal ticket holders would be arrested at the company gathering.

## AlliantACTION! Vigil and Civil Resistance

Now in its 13th consecutive year, the AlliantACTION! vigil and civil resistance campaign dramatically focuses public attention on ATK’s war profiteering — it makes everything from bullets to rocket motors. The vigil began in 1996 after ATK was named the largest U.S. producer of anti-personnel landmines by Human Rights Watch. The vigil was originally an offshoot of Honeywell Action, which began during the U.S. war in Vietnam. Honeywell spun off its weapons systems to Alliant.

Since October 1996, 713 arrests have been made for civil resistance at ATK’s headquarters, now in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Alliant is the largest supplier of depleted uranium munitions in medium (25 mm and 30 mm) and large caliber (120 mm) sizes. The company has produced over 18 million shells containing “depleted” uranium-238 penetrators since 1976. The munition was first developed by the Honeywell Corporation.

ATK currently machines and assembles uranium munitions at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant in Virginia. Production depends on intermittent contracts. The waste uranium-238, left from the enrichment of uranium for reactor fuel and H-bombs, is supplied by Aerojet.

## ATK, Uranium and the Environment

The New Brighton/Arden Hills, Minnesota Superfund site consists of the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant (TCAAP) — operated by Honeywell and later by ATK — and the surrounding communities contaminated by its chemicals. Between 1941 and 1981, TCAAP’s waste material was disposed of at 14 sites inside the complex. The Superfund area, including off-site contaminated groundwater plumes, is approximately 25 square miles.

ATK continued to produce uranium munitions at TCAAP until the early 2000s. In 2002, the Safety and Ecology



Photo by Tom Bottolene

**On June 6, about 90 activists (above) joined the second annual Walk Against Weapons, and traipsed three miles under heavy rains to Alliant Techsystems (ATK) corporate headquarters in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. The event raised awareness of ATK’s war profiteering and its violations of humanitarian law. The walk was a fundraiser for Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) which organized the walk with AlliantACTION! Thousands of suburbanites witnessed this year’s walk.**

Corporation, a private contractor, was hired to clean up uranium and other toxic waste in Building 502\* upon the decommissioning of the Army-owned site.

\*Building 502 was the source of 1,457 barrels of Honeywell’s military waste dumped into Lake Superior by the Army Corps of Engineers in the ‘50s and ‘60s.

# Questions, Rather Than Barrels, Raised by Lake Superior Investigators

By John LaForge

Engineers with EMR, Inc. of Duluth, hired by the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to investigate the Army’s waste dumps along the North Shore, have revealed some of their research findings.

During presentations I attended at Red Cliff and in Duluth, EMR disclosed its 2008 underwater survey results. The Q & A sessions that followed left several serious issues unresolved.

EMR representatives said they took sonar and Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) surveys of 95 square miles in the area where some 1,457 barrels of waste were dumped by the



Photo by Cheré Suzette Bergeron

**About 100 people marched July 19 through the Canal Park district of Duluth, Minnesota and dozens more rallied near the Lake Walk for a Lake Superior Day event focused on the 1,457 barrels of military waste that the Army dumped along the North Shore 50 years ago. All but nine drums are still there, and calls for sediment testing are increasing as a new study seems to indicate that some of the drums have been buried or degraded into what researchers call a “debris field.”**

Army Corps of Engineers. Army records, tug boat logs and documentation by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) indicate that between 7 and 16 dump sites were created by the secret, nighttime dumping that occurred on at least seven occasions between 1957 and 1962.

The wastes, from Honeywell’s Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant, were trucked to Duluth, loaded on Corps’ barges, towed up the North Shore and rolled off into the water.

EMR presenters and brochures mistakenly note that the dumping began in 1959. An Army Environmental Hygiene Agency report says the year was 1957, beginning with the disposal of six heavy barrels of toxic battery components each weighing up to a ton. When Glen Maxham of the Save Lake Superior Association pointed out this error, Tracey Ledder, the Environmental Director at Red Cliff, asked, “How could a barrel weigh a thousand pounds?”

The answer is a cliché: They don’t call it “heavy metal” for nothing. Fifty-five gallons of lead weighs 5,269 pounds. A barrel of concrete weighs 988 lbs. A drum of paint weighs 550 lbs., depending on the type, and 55 gallons of diesel fuel weighs 393 lbs. Concrete, lead, PCB oils and a dozen other toxicants and heavy metals, including chromium, cadmium and benzene, were found inside drums recovered in 1994.

The Corps itself officially recorded dumped barrels that weighed this much. Drums dumped May 14, 1962 are described in the “Disposition Form” by then Chief of the Corps’ Lake Superior Operations Division, L.A. Hauser, who wrote, “approximately 206 barrels of straight classified material must be dumped in at least 300 feet of water. Range of weight of barrels is from 720 pounds minimum to 2,040 pounds maximum.”

EMR researcher Scott Carney reported that seven sites were found in his survey, six of which he identified as Lester River, Talmadge River, Knife River, Sucker River, Shoreview Road, and French River. Mr. Carney went on to say, “591 high probability targets [that is, barrels,] were positively identified” at three of the sites — Sucker River, Talmadge River and Lester — and that EMR would recover barrels next year from only those sites.

These dumps coincide with the historical record, but Mr. Carney then said, “The other four did not contain barrels.” A “debris field” is what Mr. Carney called the other well-established dumping grounds. Asked if it would be more

accurate to say that at the other sites “the ROV was not able to positively identify high probability targets,” Mr. Carney said, “Yes. It would be.”

Indeed, a June 29, 1985 “Office Memorandum” by John Pegors, then Director of the MPCA’s Region 1, notes that “The fourth, fifth, and sixth dumps were made at deeper depths in the vicinity of Knife Island near the mouth of the Knife River.”

These Knife River barrels may have corroded and decayed enough to become a “debris field.” When asked if sediments could also have obscured these barrels, EMR’s Scott Carney said, “Sedimentation rates in Lake Superior are only 2 or 3 centimeters a year,” and this only confirms the possibility. Since two centimeters is 0.78 inches, 55 years of sedimentation could amount to 3.5 feet. At 3 centimeters-per-year (1.17 inches), the sediment could be over five feet deep.

Rickie DeFoe, Co-chair of the Duluth American Indian Commission, said EMR’s findings “only reinforce our Commission’s long-standing demand for sediment testing.”

## Duluth News Tribune Trivializes Danger, Re-writes History of Poisons Found in Lake Superior Barrels

A July 28 story in the Duluth *News Tribune* about the Red Cliff Band’s investigation of military wastes dumped by the Army Corps of Engineers into Lake Superior repeated errors that have already been corrected in published letters and commentaries.

Established facts about this compelling and well-documented controversy, even those previously reported in the *News Tribune*, keep being misreported, and always in a manner that minimizes dangers potentially posed by cancer-causing chemicals in the barrels.

The July 28 article notes that the barrels contained “several hazardous substances such as PCBs,” but on Sept. 22, 1994 the *News Tribune* reported that 17 toxic contaminants were found inside, including acetone, chromium, naphthalene, toluene and xylene. Additionally, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s official “Results Table” on the findings says that benzene, cadmium, lead, barium, arsenic and PCBs were found in amounts that exceeded Minnesota’s Recommended Allowable Limits (RAL).

The *News Tribune*’s story states that “there’s no evidence that the barrels contained more than small amounts of the hazardous chemicals or any radioactive materials.” The errors in this statement have been corrected — with citations to official documents — by Glen Maxham of the Save Lake Superior Association (“No risks in Lake Superior barrels? Don’t be fooled,” June 7, 2008) and myself (“Article on dump sites didn’t provide whole story,” Sept. 30, 2007, “Key fact missing in barrel dump story,” Feb. 14, 2008, “Incomplete records cover risks from barrels in Lake Superior,” June 25, 2008, and “MPCA misleading public about Lake Superior barrels,” Feb. 9, 2009).

In fact, the PCB concentrations found by the MPCA were 590 parts-per-billion (ppb), which is 14,000 times the state RAL of 0.04 ppb for this cancer agent. The Minnesota Health Department’s March 14, 2008 “Health Consultation” re-published this breakdown of chemical concentrations.

Contrary to the erroneous assurance “there’s no evidence” of radioactive materials in the drums, in 1990 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found four barrels — 16 percent of the 24 that it scanned — that were emitting gamma radiation “above background.” The EPA’s “Final report of results from survey of drums in Lake Superior,” by Mark O. Semler can be read at the Duluth Public Library.

In addition, submarine operator Harold Maynard was interviewed by Duluth’s KBJR television on April 12, 1995, and he said that one barrel he approached with his sub made his Geiger counter start clicking. For the counter to register the radiation, the barrel’s gamma rays had to pass through the steel drum itself and through the steel wall of the submarine. Captain Maynard, now retired in New York State, still stands by this statement which he repeated to me over the phone from his home last year.

This KBJR interview can be viewed on “youtube” at, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUk9jcmEv\\_Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUk9jcmEv_Y).

The July 28 story, by Mr. John Myers, also reports that in 1995 the EPA and the MPCA said “they found nothing to indicate the barrels held anything but scrap munitions.” This statement can at best be called an inaccuracy and at worst an outright falsehood, since it is contradicted by Mr. Myers’ own Sept. 22, 1994 article in the *News Tribune*. In that story, “Barrels contain toxins,” Myers lists many of the 17 deadly compounds — noted above — that were found in the few barrels recovered by the MPCA and the Army Corps.

Far from finding “no apparent threat to human or environmental health,” as the July 28 story says, the MPCA’s Ron Swenson told Mr. Myers, “We don’t believe there’s any short-term threat to human health. ... What this means in the long-term for public health, for the lake’s ecosystem ... for additional PCBs in fish, we still haven’t determined.”

This extremely weak and nuanced generalization imparts absolutely no information whatsoever, except, indirectly, that the threat posed by poisons in the barrels might be serious in the long-term. (This article ran earlier in Duluth’s *Reader Weekly*.)