

## Kings Bay Plowshares Sentences: 10 to 33 Months

The Kings Bay Plowshares 7 got inside the world's largest nuclear submarine base—Naval Station Kings Bay, in Georgia—and poured blood, painted messages, hung banners, and damaged several objects there including nuclear weapons sculptures that the seven condemned as “false idols.” The reference is to the Old Testament declaration that “those who worship inanimate idols will be like them, unseeing, unfeeling, unable to hear the truth.” The seven chose April 4, 2018, for their radical action, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In October 2019, the seven were convicted in federal court of felony sabotage and damage to property.

In June, defendant Elizabeth McAlister, 81, of New London, Connecticut, and a founder of both Jonah House in Baltimore and the Plowshares Movement, was sentenced by US District Judge Lisa Godbey Wood to time served after spending more than 17 months in jail awaiting trial. Liz was also sentenced to three years of probation, and ordered to pay \$33,501 restitution to be shared jointly with the six other defendants.

On November 12, via video conference, Carmen Trotta, 58, of the New York City Catholic Worker was sentenced to 14 months in prison, and Clare Grady, 62, was sentenced to one year and one day in prison. The additional day means Clare will be eligible for time off for good behavior while in prison. Carmen and Clare were also ordered to serve three years of probation, and to “jointly and singly” pay restitution of \$33,501.

On November 13, Martha Hennessy, 62, also of the New York City Catholic Worker, was sentenced to



10 months incarceration, three years probation, and restitution.

Fr. Steve Kelly, 71, a Catholic priest from California, has been incarcerated in Georgia jails ever since the action (32 months) for refusing to accept the conditions demanded for pre-trial release. Steve was sentenced October 15 by the same judge who gave him 33 months in prison, three years probation, and restitution. With the time he's already served, and with credit for “good time,” Steve would normally be released. However, he faces additional prison for an alleged probation violation stemming from protests at the Bangor Trident sub base in Washington State. He will likely be transferred from Georgia to Washington State to face the judge there.

On October 16, Patrick O'Neill, 64, a Catholic Worker from Garner, North Carolina, was sentenced to 14 months in prison, restitution, and three years of probation. Independently of the others, Patrick, the father of six children, has appealed the sentence.

Sentencing for the 7th defendant, Mark Colville, 59, a Catholic Worker from New Haven, Connecticut, is scheduled for December 18. Mark has refused to travel to Georgia because of the coronavirus and has insisted on his constitutional right to be sentenced in person before the court.

All seven defendants delivered personal sentencing statements to the court, and we share that of Fr. Steve Kelly, below.

—For complete coverage of the action, trial, and sentencing hearings see: [kingsbayplowshares7.org](http://kingsbayplowshares7.org); and/or [nukeresister.org](http://nukeresister.org). Both contributed to this update.



**Nonviolence, bronze by Carl Fredrik Reuterswärd**

*What an act of faith and hope! How brave it is to believe that in today's world, reasoned, nonviolent protest will register, will matter.* —Arundhati Roy, *War Talk*

## Not Guilty Verdicts for Irish Peace Activists

In Dublin Circuit Court on October 23, a jury of 12 Irish citizens acquitted Colm Roddy and Dave Donnellan of four-year-old charges of criminal damage at Shannon Airport. The trial was presided over by Judge Karen O'Connor.

The anti-war activists entered the airport in northeast Ireland early on May 25, 2016, to investigate US military aircraft being refueled on their way to and from US wars in the Middle East. There were two US air force aircraft inside the airport at the time of the action—an 8-passenger Learjet C-21A used to fly air force commanders, air force academy heads, federal officials, members of Congress, and other high-ranking officers, and a Boeing C-32B airline-size plane used by US special forces and the CIA.

Colm and Dave were charged with causing criminal damage to a fence at the airport, and damage to the runway by writing on it. The government claimed that the cost of the repairs was €3,500 (\$4,153).

Speaking after the trial, Colm Roddy said, “Our peaceful nonviolent actions in May 2016 were undertaken to highlight Irish complicity and participation in US wars in the Middle East that have caused the deaths of millions of people ... including the deaths of up to 1 million children since the Gulf War in 1991.” Dave Donnellan said, “As Irish citizens we felt compelled as a matter of conscience to highlight Irish government complicity in war crimes, and it is a matter of deep regret to us that this complicity is still ongoing—almost daily since 2001.”

The successful defense case was based on the argument that the two had a “lawful excuse” for their actions. In previous trials resulting from similar peace actions taken by five Catholic Workers, Deirdre Clancy, Nuin Dunlop, Karen Fallon, Damien Moran, and Ciaran O'Reilly in 2003, a jury also acquitted the five defendants; and also in 2003 the Court of Criminal Appeal overturned the conviction of Mary Kelly for damaging a US navy aircraft.

—Ed Horgan for Ireland Veterans for Peace; and *The Nuclear Resister*, Oct. 26, 2020



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## Declaration to the Sentencing Judge from a Georgia Jail

*Editor's note: Prior to his sentencing hearing, Fr. Steve Kelly delivered the following letter to the court explaining his decision to continue his non-cooperation with punitive probationary restrictions and penalties regardless of the judge's sentence.*

### Conscientious Objection to and Non-compliance with Post-incarceration Conditions

*While still in chains, I, pro se defendant Stephen Michael Kelly, S.J., file this declaration in an attempt to remove any ambiguity and avoid all misunderstanding, come time of sentencing.*

*I assert the innocence of the Kings Bay Plowshares. But this statement is my own declaration. Both my conscientious objection and my Religious Freedom Restoration Act testimony are attempts to fulfill the mandate of the Nuremberg Accords. This witness has me confronting and engaged with the omniscient policies of the US government. Recourse to appeal is futile, pathetic, and dangerous because all the judiciary's rulings precluded our jury from hearing any defense. The circuit, appeal, the entire judiciary has thwarted redress that would fulfill the purpose and mandate of the signatories of the Nuremberg Accords. For this reason, I am a political prisoner of conscience for Christ. The judiciary has been unable to see the Isaian vision as a way out of this spiral of violence. The [Christian Bible's] Isaiah 2:4 vision is an imperative to conversion. The judiciary dangerously legitimizes a nuclear holocaust in following previous rulings. The precedents, when followed, have functioned as a gag order. This court would not allow the jury, the triers of fact, to hear what was recognized in our Religious Freedom Restoration Act evidence; we were at the Trident base to preach against the sin that flourishes in weapons of mass destruction.*

*Given that situation, my participation in any aspect of supervised release [probation/parole] is to comply with and accommodate the US's compelling interest [in] the nuclear weapons agenda. Compelling interest is a euphemism for 1,000's of Hiroshimas*

*and Nagasakis. And, as in the case of the citizens' obligation to expose the Nazi concentration camps' industrial scale genocide in Germany/Europe in the 1930s and 1940s, the Nuremberg Accords were/are both an appraisal and indictment. The nuclear weapons are flying extermination ovens. In conscience, I can't let any court order or threat restrict me from imitation of the Good Shepherd, Jesus when he placed himself, laying down his life, between the wolf, the thief and the flock. In this case, the wolf is the Trident aimed at millions and the thief is the larceny from the poor predicted by Eisenhower in his Oval Office departure.*

*I answer to a higher authority in that my faith imperative, as outlined in the tenets of the Catholic Catechism, missions me to respond to the needs of the poor, oppressed, and disenfranchised in any locality and without any exclusion of those with felony records. I am indigent and itinerant. I will respond, should I be found worthy, led by the Spirit, to witness the prophetic vision offered in Isaiah 2:4 by fulfilling its embodiment.*

*I am aware that the imposition of supervised release is a [Justice Department] guideline option, not mandatory for this court. I point out that supervised release [probation or parole] was not intended for anti-nuclear activists. Consistent with the above, I will in conscience refuse any fines and restitution. This renders [the probation department's] role to oversee collection pointless. In the wake of sentencing, I will be taken in chains to Federal Court in Tacoma, Washington to answer for the warrant that stemmed from my stating in open court in September 2016 that I refused supervised release. And I suggested [then] to the federal magistrate presiding to translate any term of supervised release into a period of incarceration. This has been consistent in all my previous Plowshares witnesses.*

*In closing this declaration, if it is not apparent that our nonviolent witness at the Trident base was to save not a few but a multitude of lives, then let this instrument serve to make that an explicit recapitulation of that intention. —Fr. Steve Kelly, SJ*