### 1945 Infant Mortality Tells the Story of Trinity

By Bernice Gutierrez, Mary Martinez White, and Paul Pino, Steering Committee of The Tularosa Basin Downwinder’s Consortium

We are the downwinders of New Mexico, victims of the world’s first ever nuclear bomb explosion at the Trinity Site in New Mexico on July 16, 1945. As an added assault on our health, we were also downwind of the Nevada Nuclear Test Site. We ask you to support passage of amendments to the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) which will expand coverage to New Mexico and other forgotten downwinders across the American west and Guam. Currently the RECA only provides payments of restitution to a few counties in Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.

We are three Hispanic cousins who have lost more than 50 family members to cancer. In relation to the Trinity bombing, we have endured a sickening spike in infant mortality, as well as highly increased exposures to toxic plutonium that rained down on New Mexico after the bomb was detonated. Now we are fighting for downwinder parity, and ask for your help.

— Bernice Gutierrez, Mary Martinez White, and Paul Pino

The bomb was incredibly inefficient and overpacked with 13 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium, but only three pounds of the plutonium was fissioned. The remaining ten pounds ascended some 40,000 feet in the fireball created by the blast, and then fell from the sky blanketing New Mexico. Plutonium, the most dangerous substance known to humankind, has a half-life of more than 24,000 years.

The plutonium contaminated our soil, water, crops, livestock, grazing land, wildlife and people. Our water sources included rain barrels, cisterns, holding ponds, lakes, streams, and ditches. In July people would have been working outside most of the day.

### Drive for Illegal Uranium Mining in New Mexico; Cleanup Obligations Unfulfilled

By Leona Morgan

Due to the push for climate solutions and the geopolitics currently at work in Ukraine, there is increased interest in producing uranium for both energy and weapons, threatening those living near uranium sites. Regardless of its end use, new or increased uranium mining results in the same death and destruction for frontline communities, with no guarantee of proper cleanup or compensation.

In 2014, the Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining with many others successfully prevented new uranium extraction in northwestern New Mexico. As an added assault on our health, we were being killed on battlefields while their families were being killed at home in New Mexico.

Every July, the Tularosa Basin Downwinder’s Consortium holds a candlelight vigil to remember the victims of Trinity, the world’s first atomic bomb detonation.

**What you can do**

Help us shine a light on this hidden history. Support the documentary “First We Bombed New Mexico” by Lois Lipman which is nearing distribution and still needs funds to complete. Please also plan to attend our art exhibit “Trinity: Legacies of Nuclear Testing” in Las Cruces, New Mexico July 15 to September 23, 2023. Stand with us in solidarity as we hold our annual Candlelight Vigil on the evening of July 15, 2023. If you cannot be with us in-person please place a luminaria at your loved one’s grave. As the government ignores us, we fear the upcoming movie, Oppenheimer, will ignore us as well. Through the film’s Facebook page, encourage the producers to add a clip of our history after their credit roll. And please encourage everyone to visit our web site at www.trinitydownwinders.com to keep track of our progress, and to make a donation.

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Nukewatch’s office is located on the traditional, ancestral land of the Anishinaabe.