

Congratulations Susan Crane

This past summer the organization World BEYOND War (WBW) announced that Susan Crane had been given its 2024 David Hartsough Lifetime Individual War Abolisher Award.

Crane, Plowshares activist and Catholic Worker from the Redwood City, California CW house, is closing in on the end of her 229-day prison sentence in Koblenz, Germany — the longest term of incarceration ever imposed in the 28-year-long German campaign of nonviolent resistance to the stationing and threatened use of U.S. nuclear weapons at its Büchel Air Force Base, 80 miles southeast of Cologne.

WBW’s Lifetime Individual War Abolisher Award is named for the group’s co-founder David Hartsough who interviewed Susan Crane earlier this year.

Presentation of the award was pre-recorded for the WBW ceremony because Crane was incarcerated in Koblenz, Germany as a result of her participation in multiple nonviolent “go-in” actions at Germany’s Büchel Air Force Base, where the U.S. Air Force stations 15 thermonuclear gravity bombs in direct violation of Article I of the Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The group’s announcement added that the transfer to Germany of the U.S.

European Human Rights Court Rejects Complaints by U.S. and German Nuclear Resisters

By John LaForge

The European Court of Human Rights has rejected the complaints of three nuclear weapons resisters who unsuccessfully appealed criminal trespass convictions in German courts. The cases stemmed from political trespass and/or property damage convictions that followed nonviolent “go-in” protests against the stationing and threatened use of U.S. nuclear bombs at Germany’s Büchel Air Force Base.

In decisions handed down October 21, the Strasbourg-based ECHR ruled that the defendants’ complaints failed to show “a violation of rights and freedoms set out in the Constitution” of the Court. The ECHR considers appeals from individuals, NGOs, or states within the 46-member Council of Europe, but only after applicants have exhausted all the paths of recourse in their own country.

The Court rejected complaints by Germans Marion Küpker of Hamburg, Stephanie Augustin of Dortmund, and yours truly John LaForge of Luck, Wisconsin. All three of us were convicted of trespass and/or damage to perimeter fencing at Büchel AFB, the German NATO base 80 miles southeast of Cologne. The base has been the object of decades of protests because of its maintenance and readiness to use the U.S. thermonuclear bombs (known as B61s) stationed there. German Tornado fighter jet pilots at the base plan, prepare, and train to use the U.S. Air Force H-bombs in attacks against Russia, most recently in the “Steadfast Noon” rehearsal that ended October 25. The transfer of the U.S. nuclear bombs to Germany and four other NATO states is part of a practice quaintly known as “nuclear sharing.”

Küpker, the nuclear weapons spokesperson with Fellowship of Reconciliation Germany, peace activist Augustin, and I appealed our convictions all the way to the Constitutional Court, Germany’s highest. This high court has routinely rejected similar appeals a total of 20 times in separate cases of nuclear weapons protests at Büchel. In January of 2023, I was the first U.S. citizen ordered to prison in Germany in the long-running campaign of civil resistance against the U.S. H-bombs kept at Büchel and was incarcerated for 50 days.

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Susan Crane (left), winner of this year’s Lifetime Individual War Abolisher Award from World Beyond War, is at the train station in Cochem, Germany with Marion Küpker, coordinator of Germany’s Nonviolent Action to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

H-bombs also violates “human decency and basic common sense.” Crane will finish her 7.6-month sentence on January 17, 2025.

Crane tells part of her story in a video posted on the War Abolisher Awards website. (<https://worldbeyonddwar.org/war-abolisher-awards/>)

Susan Crane can receive letters and magazines. Write her at:

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Two other U.S. citizens have been jailed after Büchel trespass convictions. Dennis DuVall with Veterans for Peace, formerly of Prescott, Arizona, now living in Germany, served 60 days in prison in 2023. Susan Crane of Redwood City, California, is currently serving a 229-day prison sentence in JVA Koblenz, Germany, the longest sentence ever imposed in the 28-year-long campaign.

I argued in my complaint to the ECHR that its mandatory requirements were violated by German courts when they prevented me from presenting a complete defense. The complaint argued that the trial courts erred by refusing to consider expert witness testimony, which would have corroborated my defense of “crime prevention.” I had offered the testimony of the eminent international law scholar Francis A. Boyle of the University of Illinois who has said that international treaties prohibit any and all planning or preparation for nuclear weapons attacks, and also

forbid nuclear weapons “sharing” by any state which is party to the 1970 Nonproliferation Treaty. But the ECHR ruled that Germany’s trial court’s decisions were not “unfair” and did “not appear arbitrary or manifestly

unreasonable.” The ruling is final and is not subject to appeal.

We gave the human rights court a chance to examine the legality of transferring U.S. nuclear weapons to Germany. At a time when threats and risks of nuclear attacks over Ukraine are reported almost daily, the ECHR ducked the opportunity to shame the “sharing” of U.S. nuclear weapons and to condemn the U.S./German violation of the Nonproliferation Treaty.

Three other nuclear resisters have filed similar complaints with the ECHR including Germans Ariane Dettloff of Cologne and Johanna Adickes of Emden. Susan Crane of California had her application dismissed on a technicality.



European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. Photo: John LaForge.

New UN Panel to Study Effects of Nuclear Attacks

By Ray Acheson

For the first time since 1989, the United Nations will establish a panel of experts next year to examine the effects of nuclear [attacks]. In a resolution adopted on Nov. 1, 2024, at the UN General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security, 144 states voted in favor of setting up a new panel of 21 experts to study the physical effects and societal consequences of a nuclear war. Only three states voted against the resolution — nuclear-armed France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Most other nuclear-armed states — Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Israel, Pakistan, and the United States — abstained, while China voted in favor. France and the U.K. reportedly tried to get members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to vote against the resolution, but this effort failed. Some NATO states voted in favor while others abstained.

The resolution was [sponsored] by Ireland and Aotearoa/New Zealand, who explained that the new study, which will report to the First Committee in 2027, “will deliver a stronger evidence base that will inform the world and contribute to constructive dialogue with a view to convergence in work on nuclear disarmament and arms control,” and that it will also strengthen the taboo against nuclear weapons.

The idea for the study came from a recommendation made by the Scientific Advisory Group to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in December 2023. The co-chair of the Scientific Advisory Group published an article advocating for the study in Reaching Critical Will’s First Committee Monitor, explaining, “A UN-mandated expert study assessing and addressing the current knowledge of the effects of nuclear [attacks] can help enable a more fully informed and inclusive global debate on what nuclear [attacks mean] in terms of the harm that would come to people and planet.” Furthermore, the co-chair argued, “An impartial science and evidence-based benchmark for the global consequences of nuclear war would be especially important for people and countries that have not done nuclear war studies of their own, but would be innocent bystanders in any nuclear [detonation].”

Reaching Critical Will worked with UN delegates to encourage the adoption of the resolution, which was also supported by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN); the Federation of American Scientists; Scientists for Global Responsibility; the Arms Control Association; the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament; former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; Annie Jacobson, the author of *Nuclear War: A Doomsday Scenario* [Dutton 2024]; and many others. The panel will be set up in 2025 and work through 2026, reporting back to the UN General Assembly in 2026.

The fact that certain nuclear-armed states do not want this study to be undertaken shows that they know exactly how devastating their weapons of mass destruction are and do not want this information reaching the public. Of course, a UN study is not enough on its own to end the era of nuclear weapons, but it will be a useful tool to build support in this direction, including by mobilizing public attention to this issue. Without prejudging the results of the study, it is likely that once updated information about the effects of nuclear war is more widely available, the decisions by these governments to continue investing in nuclear weapons and wielding them through “deterrence” doctrines and nuclear force postures will be exposed for the dangerous political gamble that this is, which will help build momentum for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

— Ray Acheson is the Director of Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament program of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.
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