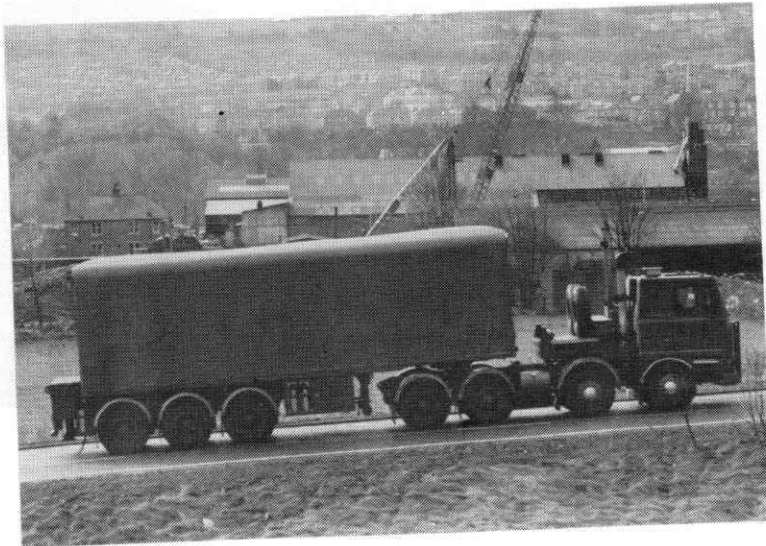


IT COSTS MILLIONS, IT KILLS MILLIONS - AND IT'S COMING DOWN YOUR STREET



The Load Carrier



The Traffic Jam



The spare Tractor



The Breakdown Truck

Nukewatch and Nuclear Warhead Convoys

IT COSTS MILLIONS, IT KILLS MILLIONS, AND IT'S COMING DOWN YOUR STREET

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to explain the background to the transportation of nuclear warheads in Britain.

This has recently been highlighted by two reports; the US senate 'Drell' report and the British 'Oxburgh' parliamentary report. The Drell report suggested that there are major hazards, including nuclear contamination and even nuclear explosion, associated with the transport of nuclear warheads.

Why Are There Nuclear Warhead Convoys?

All British nuclear warheads are assembled at Burghfield, near Reading. Warheads for the Polaris and Trident submarines then have to be transported to their Scottish base at RNAD Coulport, near Helensburgh. The RAF's free-fall bombs, designed to be carried by Tornado bombers, have to be carried to their base at RAF Honnington in East Anglia.

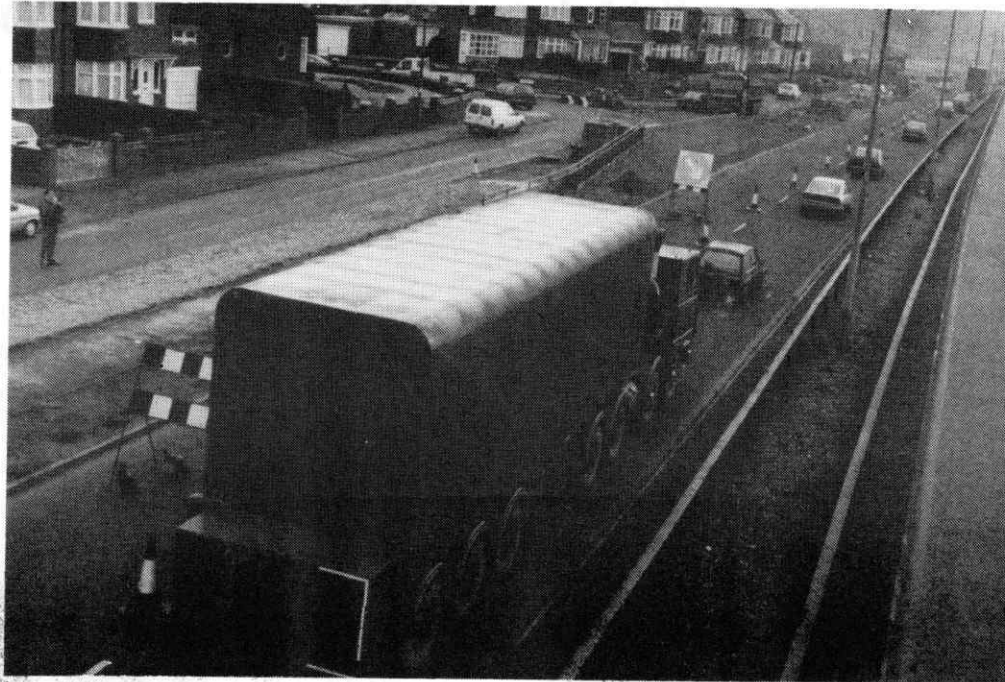
In addition all nuclear warheads have to be taken back to Burghfield at regular intervals for servicing. The materials in the warhead deteriorate and the tritium and plutonium have to be replaced. Thus there is a continuous two-way traffic in nuclear warheads.

The Ministry of Defence insists that these warheads can only go by road - even though safety experts regard rail transport as up to 100% safer.

The warheads travel in specially designed articulated trucks which in turn travel as part of convoys consisting of between two and seven warhead carriers together with various support vehicles.

Where do the convoys go?

The convoys, whether on route to Scotland or East Anglia, travel by day only. The Scottish convoys take three days to get to their destination so there are regular stopping points at RAF



And its coming down your street.

Wittering, near Peterborough and Albermarle Barracks near Newcastle. Other military bases have been used as stop over points and might be used again in the future. This allows the convoy to use a variety of routes.

Not all of these roads are suitable for dangerous heavy loads.

Some such as the A69 through Haltwhistle or the A68 through Consett, are narrow and twisty. Others are heavily congested. At least twice, in September 1991 and December 1992 nuclear convoys have been caught up in traffic jams close to the Metrocentre shopping complex near Newcastle. Convoys regularly travel through the centre of Glasgow on the M8 during rush hour. In the south, convoys using the A34 travel through villages such as Marcham and Filford. In January 1993 a convoy was stuck in traffic jams in Royston & Barton Seagrave.

The Dangers:-

Convoy Accidents and Breakdowns;

There have been a number of accidents involving the older type of lorries used to transport nuclear weapons. In June 1991 a warhead carrier, in a convoy that was seemingly lost, hit a stationary car in Corbridge

near Hexham, Northumberland. There have been numerous accidents in other parts of Britain including those at Helensburgh, Strathclyde; Dean Hill, Wiltshire and Ilminster, Somerset.

The most serious of these was at Dean Hill where a carrier slid off the road and rolled onto its side in a field.

Convoys have also broken down on a number of occasions. A breakdown on the M25 in 1991 which resulted in both carriageways closed while a crane removed the nuclear load from one lorry to another.

These old vehicles had become so unreliable that, at the end of 1992 they began to be replaced by new Foden carriers. However, these seem to be equally unreliable. One suffered brake failure at Allensford near Consett on the A68 in November 1992, leading to the closure of the road. Nuclear convoys have been sighted on numerous occasions, halted by the roadside while running repairs are made.

So far as it is known none of these accidents have resulted in serious damage to the warheads.

What are the dangers?

Nuclear warheads contain both conventional explosives and

CONVOY ROUTES

The map shows the main routes taken by convoys. It also shows some of the other routes taken recently. The new Foden lorries are restricted in their choice of route because of weight, but they do vary their route considerably.

Convoy Starting Points

RNAD Coulpport

-Polaris/Chevaline A3TK warheads and Trident warheads

RAF Honnington

-WE177 Free-fall nuclear bombs

AWE Burghfield

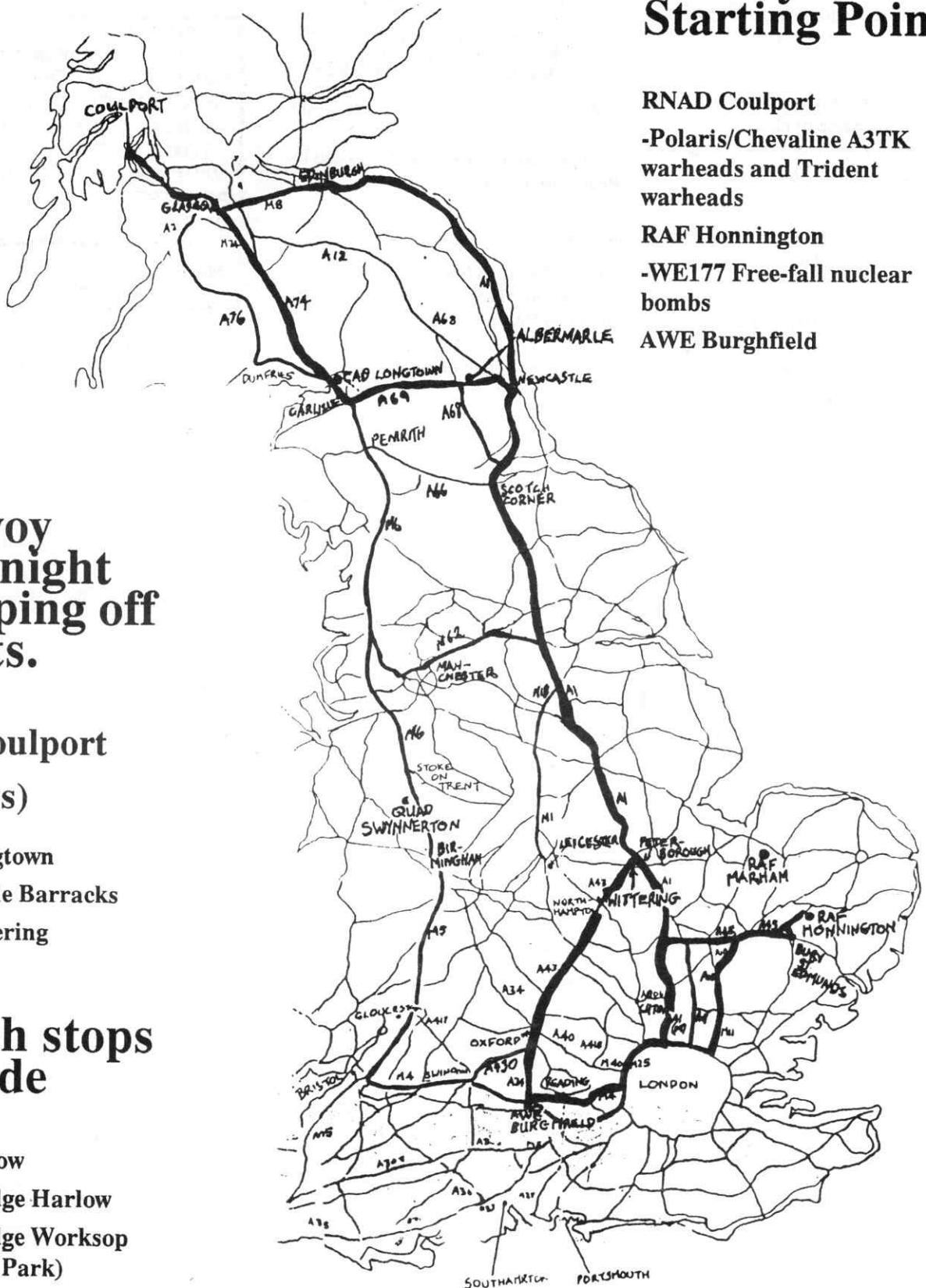
Convoy Overnight Stopping off points.

(for Coulpport convoys)

CAD Longtown
Albermarle Barracks
RAF Wittering

Lunch stops include

RAF Henlow
Weighbridge Harlow
Weighbridge Worksop (Clumber Park)
M4 Jn.6 Windsor



radioactive material. It is in fact illegal to carry such a combination civilian transport.

An accident that involved a severe impact on the warhead or a fire in its vicinity could detonate the conventional explosives. This in turn could have several consequences.

1) The explosion ruptures the warhead and scatters radioactive materials in the warhead. Blown by the wind this would lead to long-term toxic & radioactive contamination of an area of up to 10 square miles.

2) The explosion triggers off either a 'Partial' or complete nuclear detonation, which would destroy large areas close to the accident.

The risk of explosion can be greatly increased if the accident involves, for example, another vehicle carrying inflammable or explosive material.

Until recently the risk of a nuclear explosion was considered extremely remote. However a recent US Senate/House Armed Service Committee Report on safety, produced by a panel headed by professor Drell, found that "unintended nuclear detonation represents a greater risk than previously estimated".

The report called for a "need to reassess our priorities for nuclear

weapons, and put safety clearly ahead of military effectiveness, instead of the other way around".

As a result of the report US Trident warheads are undergoing a safety review and are likely to be redesigned to make them safer. The British government have, however, stated they will not be redesigning their Trident Warheads.

Parliamentary report on Nuclear Weapons Safety:-

Following the Drell report the MoD commissioned a report on British warhead safety from a team headed by Professor Sir Ronald Oxburgh.

This report raised more questions than it answered. For the first time it admits that an accidental nuclear detonation could happen, that nuclear weapons transport is hazardous and it also failed to ascertain whether Trident was 'one point safe' ie whether conventional explosive detonation could cause nuclear explosion.

New US computer techniques reveal safety problems in US nuclear weapons. The Drell report said the these studies showed that the risk of unintended nuclear detonation was greater than previously thought or

estimated. Oxburgh says that the WE177 is one point safe yet provides no evidence that the appropriate tests were done. The MoD are now running safety tests on a computer model of the Trident warhead, after these weapons are already in production. The British claim that the WE177 is a domestic design but US documents indicate that it is based on the B57 bomb - a bomb which the US have scrapped partly for safety reasons.

BECAUSE AN ACCIDENT WITH A NUCLEAR WEAPONS TRANSPORTER COULD CAUSE A NUCLEAR DETONATION, OR SPREAD RADIOACTIVE AND TOXIC MATERIALS OVER A WIDE AREA, IT IS VITAL THAT PROTESTS ARE DESIGNED TO BE SAFE AND NOT TO ADD TO THE DANGER CAUSED BY HAVING NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON OUR ROADS.

Civil Liberties:-

The convoys are flanked by RAF military police. Although they behave like ordinary police (for instance they stop traffic at roundabouts) they have no civil jurisdiction. Indeed they could arguably be prosecuted for impersonating police officers. Sometimes MOD police outriders are used, and they do have wider powers.

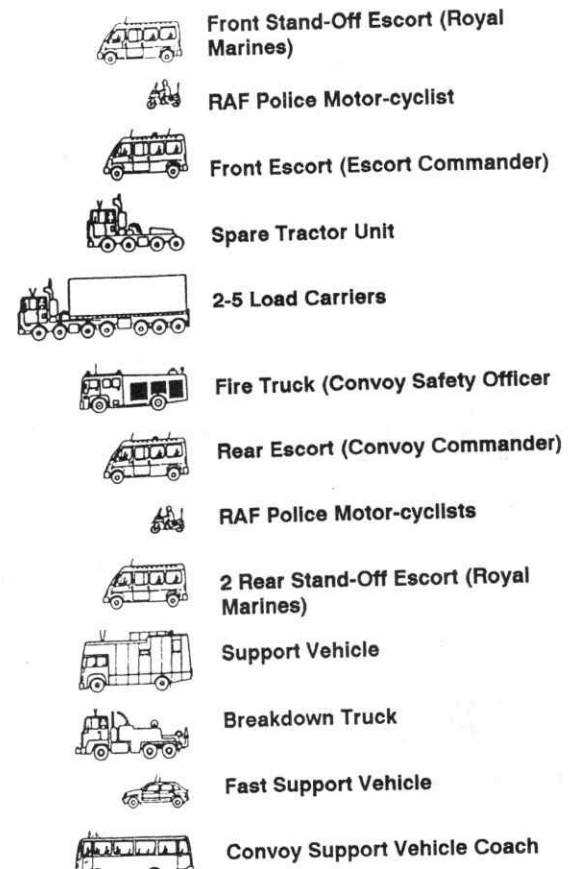
GUIDELINES FOR NONVIOLENT DIRECT ACTION AGAINST WARHEAD CONVOYS;

1. Nothing should be thrown at moving vehicles in a warhead convoy.
2. The Action should be called off if road and weather conditions make it unsafe (When there is fog or ice and the road is wet.)
3. There has to be a visible roadside demonstration at the place where the action occurs to ensure the drivers know something might happen.
4. Actions should only be carried out where the convoy has to travel slowly - at junctions, roundabouts, through roadworks. You should never try to stop the convoy when it is travelling fast.
5. It is preferable that more than one person should do the action.
6. Be aware of other vehicles on the road.

These guidelines have come from experience of taking nonviolent action against the nuclear warhead convoys since 1984. No-one has ever been hurt and there has never been an accident. We want to keep it that way. Please always take great care when protesting about the convoys.

No-one should take part in an action without having been told or having read these guidelines.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVOY COMPOSITION



Nukewatchers tracking the warhead convoys have been stopped by the RAF and civilian police under the pretence of 'random checks' just before a convoy turns onto a new road. In the past film has been confiscated and arrests made under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Charges were not brought.

Nuclear Secrecy:-

The level of secrecy surrounding nuclear weapons in Britain is greater than in the USA, but Nukewatch USA tracks and discover convoy routes as we do. Undemocratic and hazardous military manoeuvres put the public at unnecessary risk.

For example the Ministry of Defence denies that the compound at Albermarle Barracks in Northumberland was built for nuclear warhead convoys. They claimed when it was being built that £5 million was being spent on a "glorified car park" (Newcastle Evening Chronicle). This 'car park' was photographed by newspapers and by Nukewatch with warhead carriers parked in it.

This secrecy also poses a threat to our safety. The Ministry of Defence will neither confirm or deny when warhead convoys travel on our roads. They do not even warn emergency services when convoys are to pass through their areas, they only inform the Police. The Oxburgh report did not consider nuclear weapon accident response & training procedure. This is a major omission and a full investigation should be carried out.



The Home Office Guidelines:-

After years of trying to pretend the convoys did not exist the MoD has issued guidelines to local authorities advising them of what to do in the event of an accident involving the convoys. They include evacuation of a 600 metre radius from the accident and asking people living in a 45 degree arc up to five Kilometres down wind to close their windows and stay indoors. The guidelines reveal the existence of a hazard from radiation yet the measures it advises for coping with

that hazard would be clearly useless in the face of such a hazard.

Local authorities simply do not have the resources to plan for such an eventuality, to train staff to deal with it or to make vehicles and equipment available in the event of such a disaster. In practice there are no plans to deal with a nuclear emergency.

The Home Office guidelines say that the probability of a major accident with these lorries is remote but the consequences of such an accident, even by the ludicrously optimistic assessment the Home Office use, are truly horrific. This is a man made hazard. There is no reason at all why the people of this country should be subjected to such a risk.

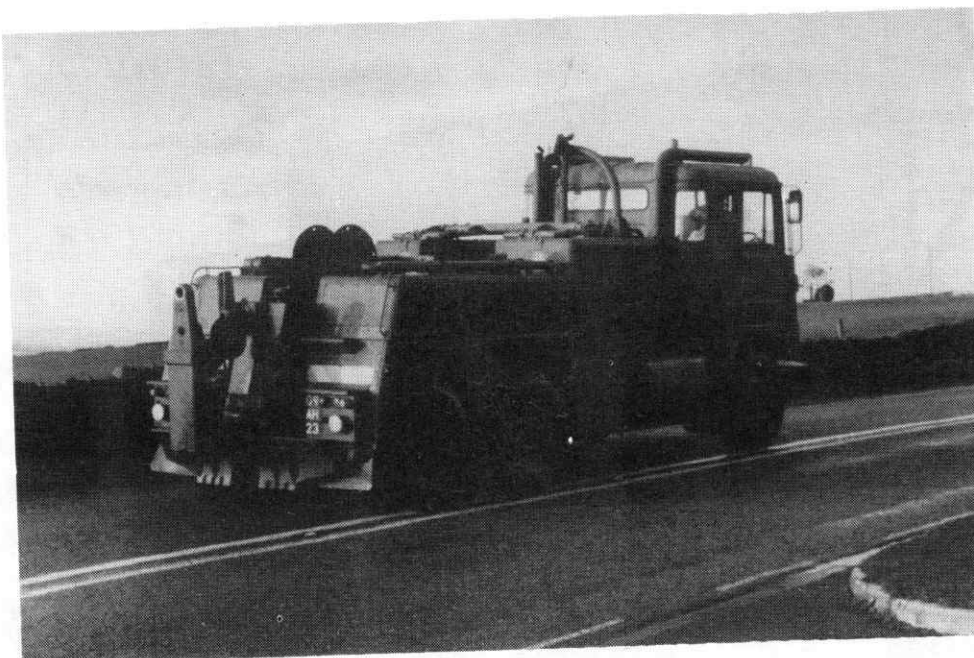
These guidelines have been issued to Emergency Planning Officers in the section of your local authority responsible for Fire and Civil Defence. You may be able to get a copy from your local authority. If not, ask the Nukewatch contact.

Trident:-

Trident submarines are now coming into service. The dangers of nuclear warhead convoys are greatly increased for two reasons:

1) More Nuclear Warheads- More Nuclear Convoys

Four Trident submarines are to replace the four Polaris boats. The



A heavy duty tow truck always accompanies the convoy

first, HMS Vanguard, was launched in March 1992 and is due to become operational in 1994. The second will follow shortly after.

Each Polaris submarine (when and if it is in service) can target 16 cities. Each Trident Submarine is capable of carrying 16 missiles with a maximum of 128 independently targetable warheads, 512 for the four submarines. Therefore, the number of journeys made by the Trident and Polaris convoy has increased threefold to once a month. In addition WE177 free-fall nuclear bombs are still transported to and from Honnington in East Anglia.

2) Trident warheads are more dangerous:-

The High Explosive (HE) used in the Trident warhead is the most unstable available. Therefore, in a serious transport accident there is a high chance of an explosion resulting in the release of radioactive and toxic material.

The United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency recommend that explosives should not be moved with nuclear materials. The MoD ignores these guidelines.

Spotting a Convoy:-

Convoys travel by daylight. The nuclear weapons carriers have green canvas covers.

They are usually made up as shown in the diagram.

The warhead carriers are specially designed articulated seven-axle Foden trucks.

Convoys travel at speeds varying from 20-35 mph loaded to 35-60 mph unloaded.

What is Nukewatch?

Nukewatch is not an organisation but a network of groups and individuals working toward the same goal - the end of nuclear weapons convoys. It gains some funding from CND but depends largely on the voluntary contributions of its members.

It involves a range of activities including tracking convoys, roadside protests, street work, monitoring bases, Non Violent Direct Action, working with the press and local authorities.



A convoy stopped by protesters in Dumbarton (Scotland)

What does Nukewatch want from me?

Your presence is the most important thing.

We need as many people as possible to come to routes as the convoy approaches and join in the protest. Even if you live at some distance and would take time to arrive, you can still be vital when you get there in helping local people track, leaflet and protest. We can usually give reasonable notice once the convoy is on a Burghfield/Coulport journey.

If you live in the area of a convoy route one of the most useful things you can do is to become involved in a monitoring group.

Organise yourselves into groups of people who are prepared to go out and keep watch. Remember, convoys can come out at any time in daylight so you will probably need some people who are prepared to watch in the working day, and others who agree to go out and monitor very early on summer mornings.

Contact Nukewatch through the phone numbers given at the end of this broadsheet. We can arrange to fit you



Two side views of the Nuclear Weapons carriers.

on telephone trees to alert you when the convoy goes out and send people to talk to you about setting up monitoring groups and some of the problems you might face - from the need for hot coffee to what to do if the police prevent you from using telephone kiosks (this did happen to some anti-cruise campaigners in the mid 80's).

What if the convoy has gone to another part of the country?

Sometimes when you are alerted you will be told at once that the convoy is heading in another direction. At other times - as Nukewatch monitors report in - and they should try to keep in regular contact with the coordinators - It will be seen that the convoy is going nowhere near you.

That is when we need people to head for its destination.

Contact the phone trees at this point, for details of where the convoy is, a rendezvous point for demonstrators, and in case you get lost, a contact phone number (see the back of this document).

What should I take with me?

In addition to what you personally want; in case you have decided to hold a torchlight vigil or bang saucepan lids, we suggest that every car takes:

- a) lots of people!
- b) road maps.



Another constant companion - a military fire engine.

c) Camera (either to take pictures of the convoy or the police)

d) Something hot to drink

e) Warm, waterproof clothing

f) 20p's for telephone calls and/or phone cards. (More boxes are coin operated so the 20p's are the more important).

g) Pencil and paper

h) CB radio, or mobile phone if you have one.

Don't forget to make sure you have a full tank of petrol!

What will happen when I get there?

To a large extent this will be up to you. Your presence is a protest in itself, and you witnessing the convoy base is a simple but very effective non-violent direct action. Some people however will want to do more. It is vital that these people organize themselves into affinity groups. Others may want to join in singing, dancing or holding torchlight vigils at night. Opportunities for all of this, as well as some scouting work, will be available. If you want to discuss this further, people from Nukewatch will be happy to come and discuss it with your group.

It is worth pointing out that you may find yourself confronted by civilian, MoD or military police.

A full legal briefing on all aspects of Nukewatch will be available from the addresses shown at the end of this document, and will be dispatched to you if you send a stamped, self addressed envelope.

It is also important that groups going out should get together beforehand and discuss their feelings about the protest, as well as practical arrangements. Afterwards Nukewatch usually holds a discussion meeting where people can talk about what has happened and explore feelings and options for the future. It is very useful for smaller groups to do this at a local level.



What if the convoy starts to head back? - Follow it.

If it returns to Burghfield, Greenham women will usually be there at the gates whether to blockade or again merely to witness the return, depending on the circumstances.

If the convoy goes elsewhere, contact the phone number you have been given if you have a chance, otherwise follow it to its next destination and then try to contact the network.

What does Nukewatch do when the convoy is not out?

Nukewatch is attempting to maintain a 5-7 days a week daylight watch, where the convoy stops.

Nukewatch does need more people to help in this general monitoring -once again contact the addresses at the end of this briefing.

Nukewatch is also helping to build up a general dossier on the movements of nuclear convoys of any sort around the country. Thus the phone contacts at the end of this broadsheet should be given the information if you see such a convoy at any time.

What if I live far away?

You can tell people the convoy is out. Ideas for campaigning are available from national CND, as are posters. You can hold local protests to heighten public awareness.

Perhaps most important of all you can help Nukewatch by fund raising. People on the routes who are links in the telephone trees and who go out monitoring, face considerable financial outlay. As Nukewatch monitors have to go out on weekdays, many are unwaged. National CND partly funds Nukewatch, but we really need all the donations people can give us.

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162 Holloway Rd

London N7 8DQ

Further Information:-

If you require any further information please contact one of the following.

North (Coulport to Albermarle):-

Nukewatch

c/o Faslane Peace Camp

Shandon

Helensburgh

Dunbartonshire

G84 8NT

Middle (Albermarle to Wittering)

Nukewatch

c/o TUCND

65 Bishops Rd

Newcastle NE15 6RY

South

Nukewatch South

c/o 30 Westwood Road

Southampton SO2 1DN

IF YOU SEE A CONVOY - CONTACT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

And tell us -

- 1) Where you saw it.
- 2) What time.
- 3) What direction it was going in
- 4) If possible how many warhead carriers there were.

North:-

Faslane Peace Camp - 0436 820 901

Jane Tallents - 0436 79194

Scottish CND - 041 339 4844

Middle:-

Jimmy Barnes 091 272 2046

John Brierley - work 0422 883927

home 0422 884276

South:-

Christine - 0742 765092

Di - 0703 554434