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Against nuclear weapons

# Aldermaston Blockade

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**When the British Parliament decided to replace the UK's nuclear weapons system Trident in March 2007, it agreed to new submarines and missiles, but not to refurbishing or replacing the warheads. Despite the fact that such a decision is not due until the next Parliament, continued building work at AWE and other evidence (including documents obtained by CND) suggests plans to test, design and build a new generation of nuclear warheads are already going ahead.**

**We must hold the Government to its continued assurances that the decision to replace Trident is not irreversible. There have been a number of positive developments relating to this recently, including the delay to the 'Initial Gate' decision on replacing the Trident nuclear weapons submarines, until after the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 2010. Previously, the Government planned to move on to the next stage of the replacement process during the Parliamentary recess in September. In addition to this, there has been increased support for disarmament, with a recent poll showing the majority of the British public want the country to rid itself of nuclear weapons.**

**There has been a diverse range of anti-nuclear campaigning activities over the decades - from lobbying and petitioning through to street activity, peace camps, and non-violent direct action, from Faslane in Scotland down to Devonport in south west England. All have their welcome place in the movement, and AWE Aldermaston is no exception, as many groups such as Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp, CND and Trident Ploughshares have all played a part in highlighting the role of the nuclear bomb factory.**

### **Recent actions at Aldermaston have included:**

" Easter Monday 2008 - the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the historic first march to Aldermaston, CND organised a demonstration which up to 5,000 people joined at the Atomic Weapons Establishment, Aldermaston, calling for No Trident Replacement.

" Monday 27th October 2008 - around 300 people gathered to blockade the base and there were 33 arrests, organised by Trident Ploughshares.

" Monday 15th June 2009 - 4 gates were blocked as different Trident Ploughshares groups converged on the base from different directions in a surprise action that took over 4 hours for the lock-ons in cars and a caravan to be dismantled.

Now we need action focused on the nuclear bomb factory at Aldermaston to increase, building on the work of the Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp and the non-violent direct actions by TP and Block the Builders. It is crucial we get a massive turn-out to blockade the base on 15th February 2010. We need to send a clear message that we will not tolerate nuclear proliferation and demand that the UK disarm its nuclear weapons now and stop further work on the replacement of Trident. We're calling on all of you to non-violently blockade the nuclear bomb factory. Join us! Be part of it!

## Contacts

For general information on the blockade ring 0845-4588-361 or email [blockawe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:blockawe@yahoo.co.uk)

For more specific information on joining groups coming from your geographical area or special interest then email or phone the following contact:

Wales and **International** - Angie on 01547-520929 or [reforest@gn.apc.org](mailto:reforest@gn.apc.org) .....

Why Blockade the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston? Blockading the factory at AWE is an effective way of disrupting the ongoing work carried out there of building facilities for, and doing research into, the next generation of Trident warheads, Britain's nuclear weapon of mass destruction. Such a blockade allows everyone to get involved at a level with which they are most comfortable. Involvement can range from their simple but visible presence at the gates, to trying to communicate with workers, to directly impeding access to the illegal and immoral work at AWE Aldermaston by blockading the gates for as long as possible and risking arrest.

Participation in the blockade is not restricted to Trident Ploughshares members or to CND members. Anyone willing to abide by the guidelines laid out in this briefing will be very welcome. We're asking everyone who comes to the Big Blockade to make it a colourful and life-affirming occasion with costumes, musical instruments, flags, banners and leaflets. Celebrate life and our resistance to nuclear weapons!

## The Blockade

The action planned for Monday 15th February 2010 is a mass blockade of all of the gates of the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment. We intend to be in place at the gates from 7a.m. Participants will also be distributing leaflets and displaying posters explaining why we are there and offering to engage in dialogue. Don't forget it will be dark at that time of the year so make sure your blockades are visible by having lights or florescent jackets and signs.

There are seven gates at AWE Aldermaston (reading anticlockwise, see map below) You can find photos of the gates at <http://www.aldermaston.net/galleries/140>

The MAIN GATE for visitors and management consists of 2 separate gates for entry and for exit, both of which need blocking; FALCON GATE, rarely used except when other gates are blocked so an important gate to block;

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Groups are being encouraged to take responsibility for different gates as follows:-

Main Gate Out (the right hand side facing the gate) - Southern England, Medical Professionals, Choirs and **Internationals**. For more information about this block please contact [mellcndeast@cnduk.org](mailto:mellcndeast@cnduk.org) except internationals who should contact [reforest@gn.apc.org](mailto:reforest@gn.apc.org)

Main Gate In (the left hand side facing the gate) - Northern England, Midlands, Choirs and Internationals. For more information about this block please contact [mellcndeast@cnduk.org](mailto:mellcndeast@cnduk.org) except internationals who should contact [reforest@gn.apc.org](mailto:reforest@gn.apc.org) '

## Aldermaston Blockade

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Home Office Gate - Women. For more information about this block please contact andreeduguy at yahoo.com. There will be a training for women to prepare to blockade the Womens Gate. For more information see

<http://www.aldermaston.net/events/297>



We would like as many groups as possible to organise their own training, tactics and support well before February and then to travel directly to AWE Aldermaston to join the blockade on the Monday morning. We can help put people in touch with groups if you contact us and we can also help provide groups with trainers and advice. We will be doing overall legal support and will organise the pick-ups from police stations as people are released. Those who cannot find a group to join can come along on their own on the day but should read the pack carefully and note the strict nonviolence guidelines. Contact the Action Line on 0845 4588 361 for more information.

### **Nonviolence Guidelines**

We are committed to acting always in a way that causes no harm to ourselves or others. We ask that everyone taking part in this action respect and follow these guidelines:

" Our attitude will be one of sincerity and respect towards the people we encounter. " We will not engage in physical violence or verbal abuse toward any individual. " We will carry no weapons. " We will not bring or use alcohol or drugs other than for medical purposes. " We will clear the blockade to allow emergency vehicles in or out of the base and then resume the blockade afterwards For instance, we would not want people to come masked up or to have personally insulting placards against the police.

### **Affinity Groups**

We're asking people to organise into self-sufficient affinity groups. An affinity group is a group of people of about 6 - 18 people who support each other during an action. It makes it easier to look after everyone's welfare and safety and to keep track of arrests for legal support. Through affinity groups we can make decisions quickly with spokespeople from each group meeting together.

## Aldermaston Blockade

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You can join an affinity group or organise your own at the regional meetings being held before the action. If you are not already in an affinity group we can help you find one to join.

### Non-violence Training

If you haven't had training for Non-Violent Direct Action before you should attend a training workshop before the Blockade. There will be Trident Ploughshares non-violence trainings being organised regionally so once you have been put into contact with a local group you should be able to access a planning and training workshop. There will be a training for women to prepare to blockade the Womens Gate. For more information see <http://www.aldermaston.net/events/297> Alison Crane 0845 4588362 can help find trainers and provide training materials for your local group. Let us know about your training so we can help publicise it.

### Tactics

We want to stop all traffic and pedestrians from getting into the base for as long as possible by non-violently using our bodies and safe equipment like lock-ons and our imaginations to block the entrances to the site. No one should do anything that they are unhappy with. Usually the police only arrest people who refuse to move from the roadway so arrest of supporters who do not wish to be arrested and who move when asked is unlikely unless the police place a section 14 order on the demonstration (see legal briefing).

In the past people have blockaded by standing, sitting or lying across the road/gate entrances with their arms linked. People often go limp when arrested making it harder for the police to move them.

Sometimes people have chained themselves together or to objects. To make it more difficult for the police to cut chains, people join their hands through metal or plastic tubes and lock their hands together using karabiners (climbing clips) attached to chains or rope around their wrists. The lock-on tubes have to be long enough to prevent the police sliding them along people's arms to reveal the chain or rope. If you use lock-ons make sure you know what they have been made of and can answer accurately the police cutting-team's questions on whether they are safe to remove ie. make sure they do not have asbestos or sharp glass at weird angles or anything else that would hurt a careful person doing their best to release you without hurting you or themselves.



Care has to be taken not to let the police suspect you plan to use lock-on materials as in the past they have arrested

## Aldermaston Blockade

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people for having tubes or chains. Tubes can be disguised as part of a fancy-dress costume, as part of street theatre props, as dummy missiles, in old rucksacks - use your imagination! You can look at the photos on the [www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org) website for lots of pictures of different kinds of blockades. Even just sitting can be very effective if there are large numbers of people and if they continue to keep coming back if they are just moved aside by the police. Tactical details can be worked out at the local meetings beforehand. It is best to have a meeting specifically for planning and making materials for blockading and for painting your own banners. Remember that you can make blockades very accessible, warm and comfortable by designing lock-ons around umbrellas, chairs, sofas, beds or pop-up tents - be creative!

### Support Work

There are important support roles that require some people in each affinity group to avoid arrest. At least one person in your group should act as 'Legal Observer' to record the names of those arrested and pass them on to the Legal Support Team. Training for legal observers can be included in your local trainings. People not risking arrest can also take care of practical support for people who have been arrested such as looking after their belongings and keeping those vital minibus keys safe. It would also be very useful for supporters to support other gates if and when their gate has had their blockade 'cleared' by the police. Some of the gates are out of the way and not used much (the North Gate is a good example) but nevertheless it is important for the effectiveness of the blockade as a whole to have all gates blocked and it would be good if news/music/good wishes and thanks can be taken around to them too.

### Legal Observers and Legal Support Team

Each affinity group should include at least one Legal Observer. Their role is to be present throughout the blockade, and: " Ensure that everyone in their group has filled out a legal registration form and given it to the Gate Support person to take to the Legal Support Team.

" Record all arrests where possible, including the name of the person arrested; the number of the arresting officer; time of arrest; reason for arrest and any other relevant details, including if there is any use of excessive force or other unlawful behaviour by the police.

" Provide this information to the Legal Support Team. Legal Observers should not liaise with the police, but should talk to the Gate Support Team if there are problems. All legal observers need to have pen and paper and a mobile phone in order to contact the Legal Support Team. Please send the name and mobile number of your legal observer to Sian (one of the Legal Support Team) on 07887802879 before 7.00 am on Monday 15 February. Please note, legal observing carries serious responsibilities, including that you may have to act as a witness in a court case or complaint against the police. Click here for a full version of the Legal Observers Briefing There will be an On-Site Legal Support Team, who will be available to help observers and with whom observers will meet at Mackie's Café (across the road from Home Office Gate) after the blockade is over. The On-Site Legal Support Team will contact police stations, arrange lawyers if necessary and send information on arrests, places of detention and information about releases to the Off-Site Legal Support Team (location to be announced later). This team will maintain records of arrests etc and arrange pick-ups from police stations. If you want to know what has happened to your friend, please ring them on the Action Line. At each gate there will be volunteers in yellow fluorescent vests as part of the 'Gate Support Team'. They will be there to help with transport, police liaison and any other difficulties that may occur. One of them will take your legal registration forms and deliver them to the Off-Site Legal Support Team.

There is a lot of other support work that needs to be done in the week before, during and after the action. If you wish to help in any way then please contact the Action Line. For the On-Site Legal Support number and the Off-site Legal Support Team number please look at the bust card nearer the time. It will also be posted on the website.

Action Line: 0845 4588 361

## Practicalities

Accommodation: All the groups coming will be sorting out their own en-route accommodation so that police cannot easily prevent people from getting to the blockade. However, if you have decided to stay near Reading we might be able to help provide you with some information on accommodation. Many groups will be travelling overnight to arrive in time for the early 7am start of the blockade.

We will however be providing accommodation for people on the Monday night after the blockade so we can de-brief together, and provide food and entertainment for the blockaders as they are released from the police station.

The accommodation and meeting place will be announced later, and will be open from 4pm on Monday 15th February 2010 until Tuesday morning at 8am. There will be several other places to sleep that will stay open until 9.30 am on the Tuesday morning. Please let us know if you want accommodation and for what nights by ringing 0845 4588 361 or emailing us.

Legal Support and Media Liaison: will also be run from off site, and it would be good if you could arrange to do your own local media work as we will be concentrating on the national and international press.

There are no special arrangements for children at this event and for animal welfare reasons please leave dogs at home.

Food: Everyone should come as self-sufficient with food and drink as possible although we have arranged for there to be 4 tea-stalls serving hot drinks, soups and tea and cakes at 4 of the gates and drinks and snacks will be taken to all of the gates at some time or other during the blockade. There will be hot vegetarian and vegan food available on the Monday evening at our meeting venue from 5 p.m. onwards and breakfast will also be available for the Tuesday morning (please offer a donation if you can).

Registration: We'd like everyone to fill out a legal registration form (whether or not you are arrestable or a supporter) for the action so we can provide effective legal support and get people out of police stations as soon as possible. Please fill in a registration form and give it to the gate support person who will arrange for all the registration forms from that gate to be taken to the Legal Support Team. You will also be able to register on your bus or at the start of the day and these forms will also be given to the gate support person.

Briefings: Workshops to discuss nonviolence, blockading tactics and legal briefings will be arranged by groups around the country in different places so do get in contact with your local regional organiser or phone the action line for contacts. Legal briefings, bust cards, nonviolence guidelines and legal registration forms will be available from gate support people at each gate.

## Getting to AWE Aldermaston

Each local group should work out their own route to AWE Aldermaston depending on which gate they are blockading. It might be a good idea for some of you in your group to visit AWE Aldermaston well before the day and do a recce. Or have a woman in your group visit the Aldermaston Womens Peace Camp during one of their monthly week-end camps there ( see <http://www.aldermaston.net/index.php> ) - they can give you lots of advice and help and take you around.

Remember that roads might be quite slow moving if the blockades have already started so choose a route that takes

## Aldermaston Blockade

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you most directly to your gate without passing too many of the other gates. OS maps 174 and 175 together provide the routes in and around AWE Aldermaston, although the establishment is not actually marked on the maps!

Please be aware that blockades may cause traffic hold-ups or make certain roads inaccessible.

The Site: AWE occupies over 600 acres of land between Aldermaston & Tadley. It has a perimeter of 4½ miles, with much of the perimeter being public highway which includes various roundabouts, cycle paths and road junctions, with multiple entrances into the site. Peaceful protest is encouraged anywhere around the perimeter of AWE.

By car: / By public bus: / By Bicycle: More see [www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org) and [www.aldermaston.net](http://www.aldermaston.net)

By train: The nearest train stations to AWE are Aldermaston and Mortimer (latter more frequently served), but unless you want a long walk from the station (or can get a lift/arrange transport), buses from Basingstoke or Reading stations will be more convenient. Times and live 'departure boards' can be found on [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk). Tickets can be bought from your local station or a site like [www.chester-le-track.co.uk](http://www.chester-le-track.co.uk). With a bit of planning it is possible to arrive at Aldermaston village by train then switch to the Newbury 104 bus which will take you to Church Street, Aldermaston - very convenient for people wanting to demonstrate near the Boilerhouse Gate of AWE. People coming to AWE have in the past used Midgham Station. It's an hour's walk from AWE unless you organise a lift from the station. Below is a link to interactive rail routes in the area [http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/..](http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk/)

If coming from a distance, get tickets well in advance, and look for cheaper single tickets. Your local station will tell you whether cheap tickets are yet available (for East Coast main line, [www.gner.co.uk](http://www.gner.co.uk) will also tell you). For further transport assistance contact Kate on 0774 8015601 or email [ktholcombe@aol.com](mailto:ktholcombe@aol.com)

### What to bring to the blockade

The police may not attempt to clear the road immediately so please come prepared for the whole day. " Warm and waterproof clothes. " Something to sit on (a cushion in a sealed plastic bag or an old carry-mat). " Food for you and to share. " Thermos flask with a hot drink or soup. " Any medication you are taking in a clearly labelled bottle or box. " Musical instruments. " Banners. " A bust card with legal support phone numbers will be available on the website nearer the date and from support teams at the gates. " The spirit of hope and resistance.

### What NOT to bring to the blockade

" Alcohol or illegal drugs. " Anything that might be mistaken as an offensive weapon, for example penknives. " Anything you don't want the police to see such as address books, mobile phone contacts, etc. " A negative attitude.

### After The Blockade Finishes

If you have not been arrested: We will get you back to the joint meeting venue in Reading to get some good food and meet everyone else, to join in the de-briefs and to await those coming back from police stations. You are welcome to find a place to sleep at the Reading venue or at some other places we have booked and to travel back in your own transport when it suits you and your group. We have rooms booked until 10a.m. the next morning. Make sure you know when your transport is due to leave and where it will be leaving from. Please remember to collect all your baggage and to always have it labelled.



## Aldermaston Blockade

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If you have been arrested: When you are released there will be people outside the police station to collect you and to take you to the Reading venue (to be confirmed later) where you should let the Legal Support Team know you have been released and what you were charged with. Be careful not to book a return journey early if you intend to get arrested, or if you intend to wait for someone else who will be arrested. We hope you will join in the de-briefs and enjoy the food and company. There are places to sleep if you wish.

Information about people who have been arrested: The Legal Support Team will do their best to get information about your friends and members of your affinity group who have been arrested posted up at the Reading venue as soon as they can on the Monday evening. Please do not ring the Legal Support number to ask for information as this will jam the Legal Support phone lines. If you wish to find out about people who have been arrested phone the Action Line: 0845 4588 361 after 7pm when we should know what is happening with most people. Media: The media team will send out press releases and liaise with journalists on the day. If you want to contact your local press or particular papers or stations please do this if you can. We plan to have our own video and photographic cover to feed into the media, to contribute to our own archives and to encourage best behaviour from police.

Legal Briefing Health Warning! Nonviolent direct action ALWAYS carries the risk of arrest What could I be arrested for? see more on <http://www.tridentploughshares.org/article1577..>

Being Arrested: ....., Being interviewed: ....., Cautions: .... Being charged: .... Going to court: Ring 08454 558 361 for post-arrest support.

Legal Observers Briefing.... The most crucial thing is getting the names of people being arrested.... THE LEGAL SUPPORT SYSTEM.....

[www.tridentploughshares.org](http://www.tridentploughshares.org) or [www.aldermaston.net](http://www.aldermaston.net)