

Group watching border in California; 30 VOLUNTEERS MET BY PROTESTS

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Body

Volunteers patrolled remote mountains outside San Diego for human traffickers and drug smugglers Saturday, launching a campaign modeled after an effort in the Arizona desert to draw attention to the nation's porous **border** with Mexico.

Jim Chase, a former Arizona Minuteman **volunteer** who cut ties with that **group**'s leadership, is leading **California Border Watch**, which gathered Saturday to patrol a 26-mile rural stretch of rolling hills from Jacumba to Tecate through Aug. 7.

Chase, a 58-year-old retired postal worker from Oceanside, said he and others will carry guns for self-defense but will not initiate attacks.

"The guns are for one reason -- to keep my people alive," he said in an interview.

About **30 volunteers** came out Saturday to join the patrol, Chase said. A loud **group** of protesters, however, outnumbered the **volunteers**, and Chase temporarily drove away from the **border** in the afternoon to chants of "racists go home."

Earlier this week, the Web site for Chase's **group** urged **volunteers** to bring baseball bats, mace, pepper spray and machetes. Chase said he removed those items after the U.S. **Border** Patrol expressed concern.

The **group** has set up headquarters outside the Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Campo, an unincorporated mountain village of about 1,200 people about a mile north of the Mexican **border**.

A **group** of about 100 migrant activists staged a rally Saturday against the **volunteer** patrol, said Stan Isham, a supervisory **Border** Patrol agent. The rally was civil and no problems were reported, Isham said.

Rich Macgurn, a human rights activist with Gente Unida (People United), said the number of patrol **volunteers** was "pretty scarce" and that protesters had spotted only a few of them.

The **Border** Patrol was setting up a command post outside its Campo station, and San Diego Sheriff Bill Kolender said deputies would closely monitor the area.

"We will not tolerate any kind of hate crimes, we will not tolerate any violations of the law, and we will see to it that the **Border** Patrol is able to do their job in a safe manner," Kolender said.

Chase said he expected 100 and 200 **volunteers** to join the patrol throughout the three-week vigil.

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Volunteers will call the **Border** Patrol if they spot illegal **border** crossers, Chase said. He won't chase illegal immigrants but said others might.

"If somebody's stupid enough to do it, I'm not going to stop them," he said.

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