

FOR THE RECORD

A REVIEW OF GAY & LESBIAN NEWS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING NOVEMBER 2, 1984

MILITARY SPENDS MILLIONS TO EXCLUDE GAYS

by STEPHEN KULIEKE

A report released in October by the federal General Accounting Office (GAO) has revealed that the military's antigay exclusionary policy leads to the financial waste of millions of dollars annually—\$23 million in 1983 alone.

The four branches of the armed services—Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines—spent \$22.5 million recruiting and training the nearly 1,800 gay and lesbian service members who were ousted during fiscal year 1983 because of their sexual orientation. Another \$370,000 was spent to process their military discharges.

The study supports allegations that homosexual discharges are on the increase and carry a significant financial cost. But gay activists said that the price tag is much higher than the military is willing to admit, and that even

Stephen Kulieke is *The ADVOCATE's* western regional news editor.

Military Discharges

From 1974 through 1983, 14,311 people were discharged from the military for being gay or lesbian. The number of gays and lesbians discharged from the military in 1974 was 875, but that figure has soared to near the 2,000 mark for each of the last four years. The Navy accounts for more than half of the total. Below is a chart showing how the number of these discharges has climbed during the last 10 years. (Source: the Department of Defense, as cited in a recent study by the federal General Accounting Office.)

Year	Number Discharged
1974	875
1975	790
1976	1,141
1977	1,303
1978	1,446
1979	1,459
1980	1,738
1981	1,789
1982	1,974
1983	1,796

the real price tag cannot reflect the incalculable loss to the country of thousands of trained and qualified gay and lesbian soldiers.

The GAO study was initiated by two California Democratic congresswomen, Barbara Boxer and Sala Burton. The two were joined in requesting the report by seven of their colleagues. All are Democrats and backers of gay rights: Ted Weiss of New York, Patricia Schroeder of Colorado, and Californians Julian Dixon, Don Edwards, Ronald Dellums, Edward Roybal and Henry Waxman.

Mike Housh, a gay legislative assistant to Boxer, said the impetus for the request was an increase in the number of calls Boxer and Burton's offices had received in the last year from gay men and lesbians dismissed from the armed services.

The nine members of Congress requested the GAO study in February and submitted 18 questions focusing on gays discharged in the last 10 years.

The answers that the GAO obtained from the Department of Defense revealed the following:

- Since 1974, 14,311 armed services members have been dismissed for being gay or lesbian. The annual number has shown a fairly steady increase over the years.

- The statistics in the report appear to support claims by gay activists that the military is conducting many more "witch hunts" and is discharging several service members on the basis of a single investigation. (From 1974 through 1978, investigations outnumbered discharges. But from 1979 through 1983, the reverse was true.)

- The average time of duty for all enlistees was over five years, but for those discharged for being gay or lesbian only three years. "The military is losing at least a couple years of service from well-qualified gay personnel," observed Jeff Levi, the Washington, DC, representative of the National Gay Task Force. "And I don't know how you put a price tag on that."

The report was criticized for presenting the statistics on gay discharges in a way that minimized their significance. For example, discharges because of homosexuality were listed as ranking 12th highest in number since 1974. But two of the highest rank-

ing categories—completion of enlistment and retirement—are voluntary separations, not involuntary ones.

Furthermore, gay activists said the dollar figure assigned to training and discharging gay people represents only a bare minimum of actual expenses. The report failed to include administrative expenses in the \$230 average cost of processing a single charge of homosexuality.

Nor did it estimate the substantial attorney and court fees incurred when a homosexual discharge is challenged in court. Ever since Air Force Sgt. Leonard Matlovich challenged his dismissal in court in a celebrated case, gay service members have sought legal relief from discriminatory military policy. In the Matlovich case, the Air Force paid more than \$150,000 in an out-of-court settlement.

According to gay activists, the \$22.5 million for recruiting and training the gay service members discharged in 1983 also is misleading because it represents only the minimum amount of training necessary to get a soldier to his or her first work station.

A substantial number of ousted gay military personnel took advanced

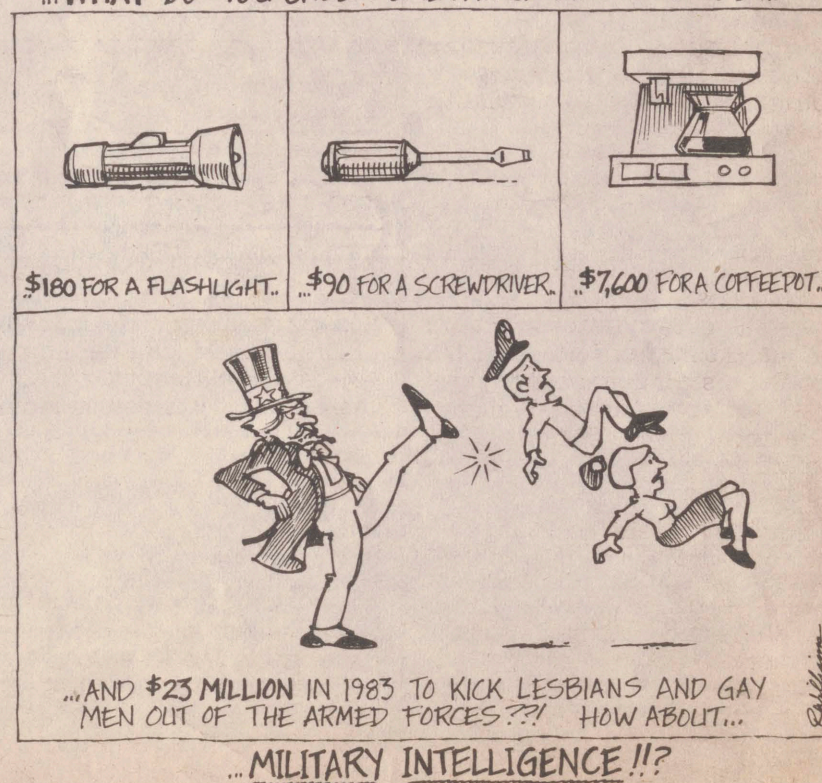
training paid for by the military. Navy officer James Dronenburg, whose request for reinstatement was rejected by a federal appeals panel, was a Korean linguist and cryptographer before being dismissed after nine years in the service.

But even a less-than-comprehensive report is useful, Housh said. At the very least, he noted, it forces military leaders to answer detailed questions about their antigay policy, which they like to avoid doing. And, according to Housh, the report "gives us a wedge to pursue the subject further."

Housh noted that one way progay members of Congress could pursue the report's unanswered questions would be to ask the GAO to independently verify the statistics, rather than relying solely on the Defense Department.

Another option, Housh said, is to call for a hearing on the report in the House Armed Services Committee, although the committee may be less than hospitable to such a request. Whatever the strategy, no follow-up is likely until after January when the new Congress convenes, according to Housh.

...WHAT DO YOU CALL SOMETHING THAT SPENDS...



OPINIONS

Koch's Version Questioned

In a letter in Issue 402, New York City Mayor Edward Koch expressed his "distress" at your coverage of the controversy surrounding his voluntary suspension of Executive Order 50, which bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation by contractors who provide goods and services to the City of New York. The Mayor should be upset with his own actions, not your coverage. Let's look at the facts.

Executive Order 50 was promulgated in 1980 and remained in force until the New York Archdiocese threatened to stop providing child care services through its charitable agencies unless they were exempted from E.O. 50. The Mayor, in an unprecedented move, announced that he would suspend enforcement until the Archdiocese had an opportunity to sue. Take note: The suspension came before the city had received a single legal paper or heard a single legal argument by the opposition. I can't understand why the Mayor would so willingly undermine his own executive authority. His action certainly telegraphed the message that he doubted his own authority, and that he would subordinate his commitment to protect gay rights to his eagerness to satisfy the unreasonable demands of the Archdiocese.

In his letter, the Mayor also claims that the Board of Estimate (composed of the three citywide elected officials and the five borough presidents, with power to approve city contracts over \$10,000) did not rebuff his position. That's simply untrue. At the first opportunity, the Board of Estimate refused to approve contracts unless they contained gay rights protection. The board adopted a clear resolution — put forward by my office, the comptroller and the Brooklyn borough president — which affirmed our overall support of civil rights, specifically including the rights of lesbians and gay men.

We refused to adopt a resolution, proposed by the Mayor, which focused heavily on his executive order and which I believe was designed to drag us into the mess he had created by suspending it. His resolution — proposed before the lawsuit was brought — referred to "questions raised as to the legal status of the sexual orientation and affectional preference portions of the Executive Order."

And now, in mid October, the Mayor and the city's Corporation Counsel have determined that the Board of Estimate may indeed have the authority to require compliance with the principles of E.O. 50, if we act on a contract-by-contract basis. Apparently the Mayor has now changed his tune and agrees with the board that it should determine which contracts are worthy of approval, regardless of the city's legal problems with E.O. 50. Naturally, I welcome the Mayor's new approach, but I question his timing and motives. It seems he is attempting to upstage the board by taking credit for a position that the board had approved several months earlier.

A responsible public official should stand up for human rights and the separation of church and state. Frankly, I do support the constitutional rights of the archbishop to hold his views. I am surprised and saddened, however, that he would threaten to refuse to provide for the needy rather than agree not to discriminate. Those of us who are bound by law, as well as by conscience, to oppose discrimination and uphold the Constitution must protect the rights of everyone whether a particular religious leader agrees or not.

The Mayor's remark that, by supporting gay rights "you cannot come out a political winner because . . . you tend to alienate huge

numbers of people with equally strong feelings of an opposing view" reflects his failure to put conscience above consensus. Doesn't the Mayor realize that he is playing politics with the rights of nearly 1 million of his own constituents? He should recognize that fundamental issues of human rights and the separation of church and state are at stake.

Carol Bellamy
President of the New York City Council
New York City

Terra Culpia

In "More Gays Run for Public Office" [Issue 406], Stephen Kulieke, in paraphrasing *The Baron Report*, tells us that "the candidate who acknowledges he is gay has a tough road to hoe with voters." I don't know, of course, who first made this slip — it might have been anyone from Mr. Baron on down — but somewhere along the line someone ought to have realized that you don't hoe a road! Even a city slicker like me knows that vegetables generally are planted in rows, not roads.

Roy J. Wyman
San Francisco

The Image Doesn't Fit

Your article on "The Gay Family" [Issue 404] was excellent. The ideas discussed by Alan Sable and Don Clark for new kinds of gay and mixed family structures were positive and encouraging.

However, I take issue with the cover photo and its headline, "The Gay Family." The cover displays two nearly identical, albeit attractive, gay males, which you would like your readership to think of as the ideal role models for gay coupling.

I am tired of the gay media pursuing this image as the perfect gay male: white, muscular, with short hair and mustache. It is even more frustrating to have two of them portraying everyone's perfect gay family. The photo is a subtle but powerful message to Gay America. It conveys a narrow-minded vision of what we must attempt to be to make it as a gay couple.

There are many more gay men out there who cannot and will not ever fit this image. Until gay image-makers open their minds to all types of men, we will continue to experience difficulties in creating the new "gay family."

Charles Wing
San Francisco

Robert Patrick — Encore, Please!

It is ironic that just after you profiled playwright Robert Patrick [Issue 406], he left the *The Fifth Estate* and the wonderful work he started in Los Angeles. To those of us who worked with him, it will be an immense loss — as well as to the audiences who came to be entertained and enriched by his contributions to our culture.

Doubtlessly, Patrick will be informing you of his reasons, but it is a sad commentary on our city that we were not able to provide the support to sustain him. Much has to do with the climate of Equity Waiver, which is crucial to maintaining the kind of productions Patrick created at *The Fifth Estate*.

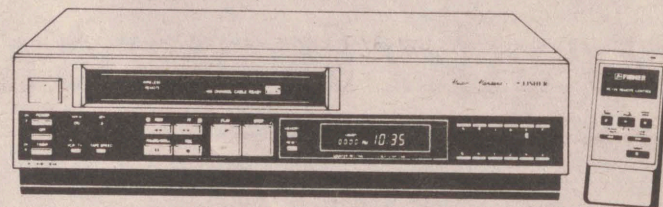
I can only hope that wherever he goes, Patrick will continue to give our community the energy, creativity and love that he gave to us in Los Angeles. I also hope he will get the support needed from actors in their union and from theater owners and producers, so that he will consider coming back to L.A. We need him!

Bill Kaiser
Los Angeles



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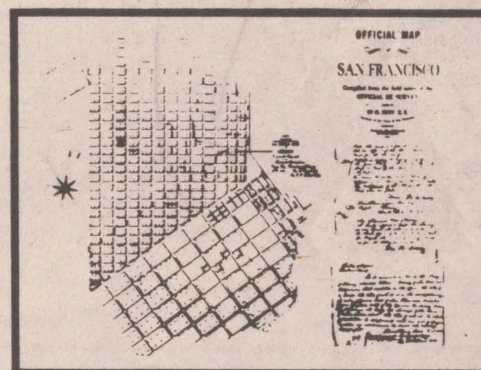
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