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104 GENERALS AND ADMIRALS: GAY BAN MUST END

Date: November 17, 2008

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SANTA BARBARA, November 17, 2008 - Retired Admiral Charles Larson, former Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy, tops a list of 104 retired Generals and Admirals calling for an end to the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy governing gay troops, the Associated Press reported today.

Admiral Larson, who was commissioned in 1958, was in charge of U.S. and Allied submarines in the Mediterranean as a two-star admiral, and became head of the entire U.S. military command in the Pacific as a four-star admiral before retiring in 1998.

President-elect Barack Obama has said that he will work with Pentagon brass to repeal the policy. Last month, however, Obama adviser and retired Air Force General Merrill McPeak, said that "don't ask, don't tell" should be retained. In this context, the statement may help the incoming administration clarify how it will respond to gay issues.

In 1993, Admiral Larson supported "don't ask, don't tell." He thought it was a mistake for Bill Clinton, who was a close acquaintance, to try to lift the ban immediately, and wished he would have worked more closely with the military if he wanted to make the change. "You can't change the military culture overnight," he recalled thinking. At the time he thought that banning open gays and lesbians, which was then viewed as temporary, was the best solution if properly administered.

Admiral Larson changed his view after he learned that "there were a lot of witch hunts and a lot of people were turned out on that basis." He found that the policy was not being implemented as he had hoped, and the military was losing valuable talent. He was also influenced by having a number of people work for him who were gay, and by having a gay daughter with whom he spoke at length about gays in the military.



He now believes the ban should end. "I think the time has come to find a way to let talented, young, patriotic Americans who want to serve their country serve," he said, "and let's enforce high standards of personal and human behavior for everyone.

The statement that Admiral Larson signed is reproduced here:

We – the undersigned -- respectfully call for the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Those of us endorsing this letter have dedicated our lives to defending the rights of our citizens to believe whatever they wish. Scholarly data shows there are approximately one million gay and lesbian veterans in the United States today as well as 65,000 gays and lesbians currently serving in our armed forces. They have served our nation honorably. We support the recent comments of former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General John Shalikashvili, who has concluded that repealing the "don't ask, don't tell" policy would not harm and would indeed help our armed forces. As is the case with Great Britain, Israel, and other nations that allow gays and lesbians to serve openly, our service members are professionals who are able to work together effectively despite differences in race, gender, religion, and sexuality. Such collaboration reflects the strength and the best traditions of our democracy.

Former Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander

Admiral Charles Larson, USN (ret.)

Lieutenant General Quinn Becker, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Henry Emerson, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Robert Flowers, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Robert Gard, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Jerry Hilmes, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Donald Kerrick, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Ira Owens, USA (ret.)

Lieutenant General Thomas Rienzi, USA (ret.)

Vice Admiral Harold Koenig, USN (ret.)

Vice Admiral Jack Shanahan, USN (ret.)

Vice Admiral James Zimble, USN (ret.)

Major General Anders Aadland, USA (ret.)

Major General Floyd Baker, USA (ret.)

Major General Harry Brooks Jr., USA (ret.)

Major General Leslie Burger, USA (ret.)

Major General Alexander Burgin, USANG (ret.)

Major General Rosetta Burke, AUS (ret.)*



Major General William Burke, USA (ret.)
Major General Michael Conrad, USA (ret.)
Major General Eugene Cromartie, USA (ret.)
Major General James Delk, AUS (ret.)
Major General Oliver Dillard, USA (ret.)
Major General John Faith, USA (ret.)
Major General Jack Farris, USAF (ret.)
Major General Fred Forster, USANG (ret.)
Major General Robert Gamrath, AUS (ret.)
Major General Albert Genetti Jr., USA (ret.)
Major General Luis Gonzales-Vales, AUS (ret.)
Major General David Hale, USA (ret.)
Major General Randy Jayne, USANG (ret.)
Major General Lawrence Johnson, AUS (ret.)
Major General Dennis Laich, USA (ret.)
Major General Frederick Lawson, AUS (ret.)
Major General Thomas Lynch, USA (ret.)
Major General Dennis Malcor, USA (ret.)
Major General John Roth, AUS (ret.)
Major General Henry Rasmussen, USA (ret.)
Major General Alan Salisbury, USA (ret.)
Major General Michael Scotti Jr., USA (ret.)**
Major General Harry Sieben, USANG (ret.)
Major General Paul Smith, USA (ret.)
Major General Robert B. Smith, USA (ret.)
Major General Charles Starr Jr., USA (ret.)
Major General Story Stevens, USA (ret.)
Major General Joseph E. Turner, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General John C. Adams, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Clara Adams-Ender, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Hugh Aitken, USMC (ret.)
Brigadier General John "Joe" Allen, USAF (ret.)
Brigadier General Patricia Anderson, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Dale Barber, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General George Baxter, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Robert Baxter, USAF (ret.)



Brigadier General George Blysak, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Harold Bowman, USANG (ret.)
Brigadier General Douglas Bradley, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Jack Capps, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Richard Carter, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Steve Chapplis, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General BG David Cole, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General William Colvin, USANG (ret.)
Brigadier General Joseph Cutrona, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Tom Daniels, USAF (ret.)
Brigadier General Von DeLoatch, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Robert Dilworth, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General George Eggers Jr., USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Evelyn Foote, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Robert Giffen, USAF (ret.)
Brigadier General Robert Hardy Jr., USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Carlos Hayden, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Edwin Heffelfinger, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General James Hunt, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General John H. Johns, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General J.D Johnson, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Keith H. Kerr, CSMR (ret.)
Brigadier General Douglas Kinnard, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Dean Mann, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General James Martin, USAF (ret.)
Brigadier General William Meehan II, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Harold Miller, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Kenneth Newbold, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General I.R. Obenchain Jr., USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Phil Peay, USANG (ret.)
Brigadier General Dorothy Pocklington, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Robert Poirot, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Philip Pushkin, USANG (ret.)
Brigadier General Virgil Richard, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General William Richter, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Kenneth Rieth, AUS (ret.)



Brigadier General Ernst Roberts, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Murray Sagsveen, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General Norman Salisbury, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Donald Schenk, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Bettye Simmons, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Theodore Vander Els, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Daniel Wardrop, USA (ret.)
Brigadier General Robert Watling, AUS (ret.)
Brigadier General John Weinzettle, USA (ret.)
Rear Admiral James Barnett, USN (ret.)
Rear Admiral Robert Krasner, USN (ret.)
Rear Admiral Charles Rauch, USN (ret.)
Rear Admiral Alan Steinman, USPHS (ret.)

* AUS is the Army of the United States.

**General Scotti passed away in September, 2007. His widow asked that his name remain on this statement.

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