

# CSSMM

## CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL MINORITIES IN THE MILITARY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

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### "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL" CONFERENCE BRINGS CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS TOGETHER

The Center joined the Commonwealth Club of California to host a conference in San Francisco on December 9th on gays and lesbians in the military. Entitled "Don't Ask Don't Tell: Is the Gay Ban Based on Prejudice or Military Necessity?" the conference was the first-ever gathering of a critical mass of experts from the left and right. In addition, a public town hall meeting featured senior military officials from Israel, Australia, Britain, and New Zealand who described the successful eliminations of gay bans in their countries.

The day-long conference included four debates on unit cohesion, foreign militaries that have lifted their gay bans, the financial cost of the U.S. gay ban, and privacy. Some of the debates featured heated discussion. For example, conservatives claimed that lifting the gay ban would undermine privacy in the shower. Professor Melissa S. Embser-Herbert responded that known gay service members already shower with heterosexuals and that lifting the gay ban would not increase the number of known gays in the armed forces. Rob Nunn, an openly gay officer on a British submarine, said that the lifting of the British military's gay ban in January, 2000 had no adverse effects on organizational performance.

Some of the experts on gays in the military who participated in the conference included Honorable Lawrence J. Korb of the Council on Foreign Relations and C. Dixon Osburn of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network. Korb was Assistant Secretary of Defense under Ronald Reagan.

Steve May, a state Representative from Arizona who the U.S.



Representatives of foreign militaries address the December 9 conference at the Commonwealth Club

Army fired after he revealed his sexual orientation, delivered the keynote address. The conference was supported generously by the R. Gwin Follis Foundation, the Michael Palm Foundation, the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation at UC San Diego, the Office of the President of the University of California, and four private donors: Steven Gorosh, Jon Kouba, Robert Kabel, and Arthur Collingsworth. The event attracted broad media attention from National Public Radio, CBS news, PBS television, and gay and lesbian newspapers in several different cities. Sample media coverage of the conference will soon be available on the center's website [www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu](http://www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu).

### MARC WOLF PERFORMS AT UCSB

Marc Wolf came to UCSB and performed his play "Another American Asking and Telling" to a packed house on Friday, February 2. Wolf's award-winning play is based on interviews with approximately two hundred veterans and includes powerful testimonials about the impact of military antigay discrimination. It was directed by Joe Mantello. Audience members included local Santa Barbara residents as well as UCSB faculty and students and nine high school students from the Dunn School in Los Olivos. The theater at UCSB's Multicultural Center could barely accommodate the crowd and many audience members were forced to sit in the aisles.

During the past year, Wolf has performed his one-person show throughout the country and received rave reviews from the New York Times and Washington Post. He was awarded an Obie and nominated for the Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards. The performance was underwritten by a generous grant from the Critical Issues in American program, an annual endowment designed to bring UCSB students, faculty, and artists together to address critical issues in American politics.



Marc Wolf is interviewed by Michele Sieglitz, Jeff Cerie, and Aaron Belkin after his performance at UCSB

## CENTER REPORT FINDS NO PROBLEMS WITH BRITAIN'S DECISION TO LIFT ITS GAY BAN

In January, 2000, Britain lifted its gay ban following a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights. A new 70-page CSSMM study has found that the first ten months of the British policy have been an unqualified success. The Center's research on Britain was reported by the New York Times, Detroit Free Press, SF Weekly, BBC, San Francisco Examiner, and five British newspapers.

Our study found that there have been no negative effects on recruiting levels. No mass resignations have occurred. There have been no major reported cases of gay-bashing or harassment of sexual minorities. There have been no major reported cases of harassment or inappropriate behavior by gay or lesbian soldiers. There has been no perceived effect on morale, unit cohesion or operational effectiveness. According to one Ministry official, the policy change has been characterized by a "marked lack of reaction".

The conclusions of the Center's report have been confirmed by our conversations with liberal and conservative representatives from the military, academia, and non-governmental organizations. None of those interviewed know of any major problems associated with the policy change. No one has heard of any difficulties related to recruitment or training completion rates; recruitment levels are characterized as "quite buoyant."

## FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The Center has awarded a fellowship to Joan Heggie, a graduate student at the Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, England. Heggie's research explores the experiences of lesbians who have served, or who are currently serving in the British Army from 1950 to the present day. A two-stage methodology of questionnaires followed by selective in-depth interviews examines the ways in which the culture of the military institution has affected the construction of their identity as woman, as lesbians and as soldiers. Heggie asks how within a predominantly male, heterosexual and homosocial climate, lesbians have negotiated these multiple identities and reconciled their individual identities as lesbians with the need to conform to the military model of woman. Fellowship applications are available at [www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu](http://www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu).

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## CENTER HIRES COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Nathaniel Frank, who teaches History and Humanities at New York University and the New School for Social Research, has joined the Center as Director of Communication. Frank has



Nathaniel Frank of New York University has joined the Center as Director of Communications

published numerous articles on military antigay discrimination including pieces in the Philadelphia Inquirer, San Francisco Chronicle, New Republic and Lingua Franca. He is the founder of the Philadelphia Fund for Arts Education, a scholarship that promotes artistic development among low-income children. And, he is completing a doctoral dissertation in the History Department at Brown University on the meaning of work in genteel culture in post-Revolutionary America.

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Director of External Relations:	Alix Sabin
Communications Director:	Nathaniel Frank
Filmmaker in Residence:	Michele Sieglitz
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The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities is a formal research unit of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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