

CSSMM

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUAL MINORITIES IN THE MILITARY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

FALL 2005

STUDY ADDRESSES RELEVANCE OF FOREIGN MILITARY LESSONS

In August, CSSMM assistant director **Geoffrey Bateman** completed a study titled "Is the U.S. Military Unique?: 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' and the (Ir)relevance of Foreign Military Experiences." The study tests a rationale that the U.S. military and its advocates often promote, in particular the claim that the U.S. military does not compare itself to other militaries or learn lessons from them. Surveying a number of different historical and contemporary examples, the study concludes that contrary to this claim, the U.S. military does indeed consider the experiences of foreign militaries useful when assessing new policies.

The study identifies four issue areas in which the U.S. military has turned to foreign militaries as examples to inform its own policies. These include technical innovation, privatization, counterterrorist strategy, and medical and sanitary policy. The study also unearths testimony from earlier debates about gays and lesbians in the U.S. military to show that, ironically, opponents of gays in the military have drawn upon the examples of foreign militaries with gay bans to support their argument that the U.S. should continue its ban. Ultimately, the study finds that the U.S. military often compares itself to foreign militaries and learns lessons from them.

MILITARY ACADEMIES HOST CSSMM STAFF

On October 3, CSSMM director Aaron Belkin led a discussion on "don't ask, don't tell" with twenty-two midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, and on October 24, he presented a lecture on gays in the military at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Over the past two years, he has also presented CSSMM research at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the National Defense University, and the Naval Postgraduate School. Belkin also visited the Pritzker Library in Chicago for a debate on "don't ask, don't tell" on June 30. The debate can be viewed at <http://www.pritzkermilitarylibrary.org/>.

CSSMM assistant director **Geoffrey Bateman** spoke about CSSMM's recent research on September 23 at the *Out & Equal Workplace Summit* in Denver, Colorado, and discussed how issues relating to gays and lesbians in the military have changed since 9/11.

CSSMM IN THE MEDIA

ABC Nightline featured the CSSMM in its report on August 9, 2005. CSSMM director Aaron Belkin appeared with gay Iraqi war veteran and Purple Heart recipient, **Sgt. Robert Stout**. The program also discussed the U.S. military's practice of firing fewer gay service members during wartime than peacetime. The broadcast is posted at www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu in the "Press Center."

CSSMM research recently has been covered by *Army Times*, *Air Force Times*, and *Stars & Stripes*. On September 26, 2005, the *Army Times* reported results from a CSSMM poll which shows that "don't ask, don't tell" makes more people embarrassed of the military than proud of it. The following week, *Air Force Times* ran a similar story. In a single week, *Military Times* newspapers reach 72 percent of the active-duty military. On October 13, *Stars & Stripes* reported the findings of a new CSSMM poll which found that 76 percent of potential military recruits would not change their decision about whether to enlist in the military if the gay ban were repealed.

NEW BOARD MEMBER WELCOMED

We are proud to announce that **Melissa Sheridan Embser-Herbert** has joined CSSMM's board of directors. She is Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, Hamline University, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Dr. Embser-Herbert earned her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona and her J.D. at Hamline University. Her publications include *Camouflage Isn't Only for Combat: Gender, Sexuality, and Women in the Military* (NYU Press, 1998) and "A Missing Link: Institutional Homophobia and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military." She is a past-chair of the American Sociological Association Section on Sexualities and currently serves on the board of Minnesota Lavender Bar Association. Dr. Embser-Herbert is also a veteran of the U.S. Army and Army Reserve, 1978-2000.



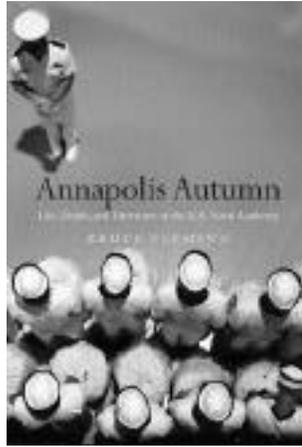
Dr. Melissa Sheridan Embser-Herbert

CSSMM RESEARCH CITED IN CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

In July, CSSMM's research was cited during a Congressional hearing when Congressman **Marty Meehan** (D-MA) questioned Undersecretary of Defense David Chu. In his questions, Meehan referred to CSSMM research documenting numerous service members with critical skills who were discharged during the past five years under "don't ask, don't tell."

NEW BOOK ON NAVAL ACADEMY

Bruce Fleming, Professor of English at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, has published a new book titled *Annapolis Autumn* on life at the academy, which includes discussions of homosexuality and homoeroticism in military culture. Having taught at the academy for nearly two decades, Fleming draws upon his many years of experiences there to shed light on the traditions of the institution and the mindset of those who attend it. In part of the book, he reflects on what it's like to teach midshipmen about gay poets of World War I and how this discussion challenges them to think differently about gays and lesbians in the military.



DEVELOPMENT NEWS

CSSMM is extremely thankful for the generous support that a number of organizations and individuals have provided, including the **Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund** for its grant of \$120,000, which will be paid over the course of two years; the **David Bohnett Foundation** for its grant of \$25,000; **Andrew Tobias and Charles Nolan** who donated \$5,000; **Jody Cole** who gave \$2,500; and to the **Silva Watson Moonwalk Foundation** for its years of generous support.

Director	Aaron Belkin
Assistant Director	Geoffrey Bateman
Senior Research Fellow	Nathaniel Frank
Senior Research Fellow	David Serlin
Senior Research Assistant	Alastair Gamble
Newsletter Designer	Karla Milosevich
Web Designer	Shivaun Nestor
Filmmakers-in-Residence	Tom Shepard, Michele Sieglitz

The Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military is an official unit of the Institute for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Research at the University of California, Santa Barbara; www.isber.ucsb.edu. You can reach the Center at (805) 893-5664; (805) 893-3309 (fax); belkin@polsci.ucsb.edu; or <http://www.gaymilitary.ucsb.edu>.

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF
SEXUAL MINORITIES IN THE MILITARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93106-9420