

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

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA

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## NEW STUDY COMPARES MILITARY AND CIVILIAN RATES OF ANTI-GAY ABUSE

A new study commissioned by CSSMM was published in April in the journal, *Military Psychology*. Written by Professor **Bonnie Moradi** of the Psychology Department at University of Florida, the study suggests that a disproportionate number of military commanders perpetrate and witness anti-gay harassment in the U.S. military when compared to a civilian population. It also found that reported incidents of some forms of perceived sexual-orientation-based harassment were lower in the military than in the general population.

The study was designed to compare data obtained in a year 2000 Defense Department survey of anti-gay harassment to parallel incidents in the civilian population. The military poll had surveyed over 71,000 active duty service members from 38 randomly selected installations and found that 80% had heard offensive speech, including derogatory names and jokes, targeted at gays during the previous year, and 5% had witnessed a violent, anti-gay assault.

Researchers involved in the current study sought to assess whether the high incidence of anti-gay harassment reflected similar attitudes and behaviors in the general population or was instead attributable to norms or policies that were specific to military culture. They also aimed to measure the success of military policies meant to curb anti-gay harassment, which were part of a "don't harass" clause added in 1999 to the 1993 policy known as "don't ask, don't tell."

The study found that compared to civilian respondents, a greater proportion of military respondents who reported a harassment incident indicated that a senior person perpetrated the harassment. Among the civilians who reported witnessing a harassment incident, 7% indicated that a person of authority committed such abuse, while among military respondents who reported witnessing an incident, 15% of

respondents claimed a supervisor or commander had done so. Nine percent of civilians who witnessed anti-gay harassment reported that a person of authority had also witnessed the incident, while 25%, or nearly three times the number, of military witnesses indicated the same.

Dr. Moradi found that the pattern was reversed when it came to the general incidence of some forms of reported anti-gay harassment. Participants in the civilian and military surveys reported witnessing about the same amount of violent anti-gay assaults. However, military respondents reported lower levels of offensive speech and gestures aimed at those perceived to be gay or lesbian than civilian participants.

One possible reason for the discrepancy is the prospect of under-reporting of sexual-orientation based harassment by military respondents. Additionally, to the extent that anti-gay harassment is normalized in military culture, anti-gay epithets or abuse may be considered a routine part of socialization rather than as harassment.

## LECTURES AT MILITARY UNIVERSITIES

CSSMM Director **Aaron Belkin** visited the U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY during the past several months. During the visits, he taught classes, presented lectures, and met with faculty, students and administrators.

## NEW RESEARCH AND ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

**Geoffrey Bateman** has been promoted to the position of Research Director. In this position, he plays a central role in designing CSSMM's research agenda, identifying and hiring scholars to conduct research, and assisting scholars at every stage of the research project including study design, archival access, editing, and revising for publication. Bateman is the co-editor of a book on "don't ask, don't tell" and he is also the author of several scholarly articles on gays in the military. Congratulations Geoffrey!



We would like to welcome **Allison Lusero Hoffman** as the Assistant Director to CSSMM. She has been interning for the past 6 months and is happy to be stepping into this new role. For the past 10 years, Allison has been working in the non-profit sector with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender homeless and at-risk youth. She has presented at national conferences about working with LGBT youth and was recently published in the Child Welfare Journal Special Issue on Serving LGBT Youth. In addition, Allison just completed her graduate degree at the University of Northern Colorado in December. Welcome Allison!

## FELLOWSHIP NEWS

CSSMM is proud to announce the following fellowships. **Dr. Stephen Owen**, Radford University, is including a unit on sexuality in the military, with an emphasis on the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, in his course, "Law and Sexuality". **Dr. Terence Kissack** of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, is producing "Out Ranks: Gay and Lesbian Military Service from World War II to Iraq," the first exhibit to focus exclusively on GLBT veterans. **Steve Gratwick** of the International Documentary Association and graduate student at the University of Southern California is working on completing a documentary on the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. CSSMM also provided support for an April symposium titled "Sexism and War" at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Panelists explored the role of sexism in warfare and included Professor **Joane Nagel** (Sociology, University of Kansas), Professor **Stacey Mayhall** (Political Science, Trent University), and Professor **Thomas Scheff** (Sociology, UCSB).

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