

surviving MILITARISM, RACISM & REPRESSION:

AN
EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS
KIT FOR LGBT
& QUEER
YOUTH



American Friends
Service Committee

Produced by AFSC in partnership with
the National Youth Advocacy Coalition



THE DEPARTMENT
OF HOMELAND
SECURITY (SIC) HAS
ITS EMERGENCY KITS
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got
ours!

“Militarism Makes Racism OK”

A Young, Queer Muslim Woman Speaks Out

“Fatima” is the pseudonym for a young woman, 21, who attends college in Philadelphia, self-identifies as Afghan, Muslim, queer, and a New Yorker. Joseph Truong of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition interviewed her.

How does militarism affect you personally?

After September 11, I was very confused. I was the only Afghan in my entire school (and one of two South Asians), and I was forced to take a stance in classes and [other places]. Wherever I went, I faced bigotry and hate. So I had to do a lot of self-education about it. I had to defend my country, I had to defend myself and I had to defend any male relatives I had.

People were torn between feeling sorry for Afghan women, but also feeling contempt for all Muslims in general. It became increasingly difficult.

One thing that I did notice from the non-Muslim activist circle I moved in was a change in how I was treated. People suddenly felt sorry for me. My mother and I were organizing against the Taliban since 1996, but no one seemed to take on that struggle because it wasn't so popular. But after September 11, now all of a sudden it was trendy, but it wasn't done in a way that was helpful. It distanced me from the circle and angered me a lot.

I'm very angry that Bush has stated that we have liberated Afghan women.

Globalization and Western attitudes toward the East play into their oppression, [along with] the juxtaposition of Western and Muslim cultures and standards, mixed with centuries of sexism. Muslim culture extends beyond just religious regimens and practices. This culture alone did not fund the Taliban.* [In U.S. society], we're failing to see our own role in other people's oppressions.

(*Ed. Note: From the late 1970s, into the 1980s, the U.S. government provided

Militarism: mil'it'ar iz'm

predominance of the armed forces in the administration or policy of the state, and in the cultural, economic, and spiritual life of nations and peoples



So what's the big deal about queer youth & militarism, anyway?

So why are we so concerned about queer youth and militarism? And why do we want to write a big thing about it? Well, for one thing, it's not clear in some people's minds that queer youth are affected by the militarism in any way, much less in ways that are different from anyone else. And if you are wondering the same thing ...

keep reading. Those of us who put this publication together either work with queer youth or are queer youth. We see a lot of connections among queer youth concerns and broader issues of peace and justice. That's why

the contributors hope to make those connections real by sharing their stories. We can only start to scratch the surface on the complicated ways in which the racism, repression, sexism, heterosexism and violence of militarism touch our lives, but we hope we'll spark your interest to learn more by talking with friends and checking out the

groups and resources you'll find here.



some of the fundamentalist insurgents in Afghanistan with training, technical assistance, weaponry, and other military aid. Some of these insurgents, including Osama bin Laden, have been central figures in the Taliban.)

continued on page 7

THIS SURVIVAL KIT CONTAINS

Information & Resources to Help You Learn More About:

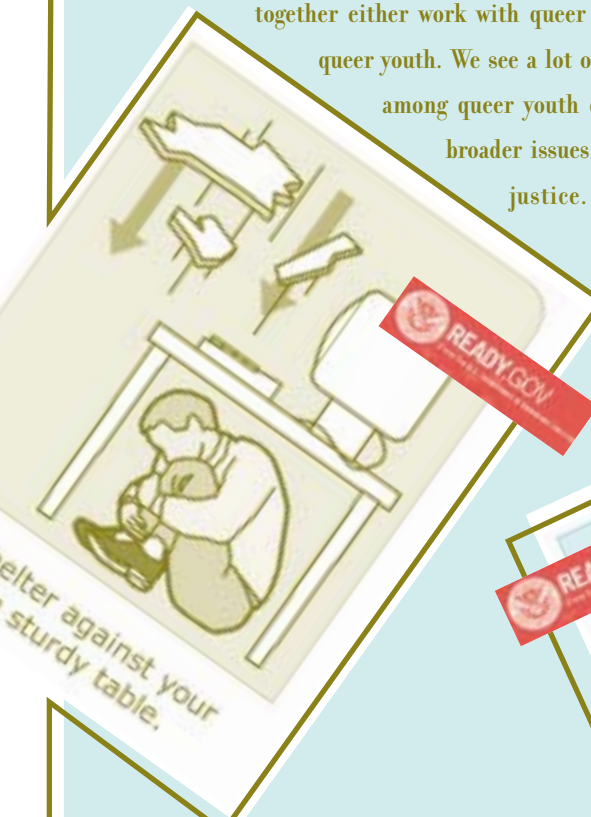
Selective Service, Military Recruitment & Your Options & Alternatives . . pp. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10

Student Rights . . p. 5

Impact of Militarism on Societies and Cultures . . pp. 11, 12

The Voices of Stephen Funk, “Fatima” and 8 more young women & men whose lives are affected by militarism. . scattered throughout

and more!



Editorial: Militarism: Definitely a Queer Issue

Queer youth, like many other marginalized folks in our society, are familiar with the lack of peace...in homes, school hallways, classrooms, communities, and within many other parts of society. Youth know what hate violence is, and discrimination, and the ways homophobia and heterosexism mess up people by pitting them against each other. Youth know it doesn't take militaristic attitudes to justify oppression and hatred. But it's also true that in times of war and fear of terrorism, all kinds of violence intensifies: violence against queers, people of color (including immigrants), women, and poor people. It's not only hate violence and battering that intensifies; it's also state violence, such as the increased use of racial profiling, and roundups and secret detentions of immigrants. Even within the queer community, some people are trying to convince us that we should hate and fear Muslims.

Queer youth deal with military recruiters at school. Queer male youth are required to register for the Selective Service or face stiff penalties, whether

they support the military or not—even though the military doesn't want them. Those considering joining the military (and there are a lot) have to face living a double life and risk being discharged from the military because of homophobia. Transgender youth have it even tougher.

Think about facing all the rigid stereotypes about gender and gender identity. Think about the hyper-masculinity of the military, and what message that sends to youth, including butch girls and effeminate guys, who don't adhere to traditional gender roles.

In the United States, militarism affects the economy as billions of dollars are shifted from human needs to "Homeland Security" and militarization, and queer youth are getting hit hard. Especially queer youth of color, low-income, and homeless youth. A lot of HIV-AIDS programs and queer youth programs are getting shut down or "downsized" due to the government's war-oriented priorities and tax cuts favoring the wealthy. And it's going to get worse.

There are queer youth in occupied territories, too. That means places where the U.S military has an overwhelming and dominating influence, such as Hawai'i, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Korea, Turkey, and lots of other places. Queer youth there have to deal with the economic, environmental, and political impacts of that presence. And, of course, some young queer people come from military families or are in the military.

When military service is a meaningful part of your own family life, it's especially hard to come face to face with the ways in which militarism harms people and places, and to consider making different choices for yourself. There are many good people in the military who wish to harm no one. We don't challenge individuals who serve, but the overall impact of the system of militarism.

So, it can't be denied. Queer youth are affected by militarism. Think about it. Are you invested in helping yourself and others lead peaceful, happy, safe, healthy lives? Do you want an end to violence? Do you want authentic justice for all, and the kind of safety that doesn't trade off one group's rights for another's? If so, please read on. Then let's keep talking. ■



Inside, but Wanting Out:

Young Sailor Reconsiders the Military

Jordan, 26, is white. She serves in the U.S. Navy, and was interviewed by Robin Nussbaum, Program Director for AFSC's Hawaii' Gay Liberation Program. Here are her own words, uninterrupted. Jordan has chosen to be identified by a pseudonym.

Imagine, if you can, realizing that your life is a lie.

Well, it happened to me.

I have been in the United States Navy for over six years. I loved it and got extreme joy and pleasure out of doing my job as an electrician and as a sailor.

What happened? Let's just say that the blinders have been taken off, and I really know what the Navy is about. It's about deceiving, lying, and killing the innocent. [It's about] putting its own men's and women's lives in danger without concern for their well-being or safety. These sailors... give their all day in and out to get the job done. We are treated like numbers, not the human beings that we are. I used to feel so proud to tell people that I'm in the Navy. My heart beat just a bit faster and harder. My eyes lit up with the utmost pride. Now I'm embarrassed and even ashamed to let anyone know that I'm in the Navy. There are so many things that are kept from all military personnel that if

They only tell you about the good things... They don't say anything about all the pollution they cause, all the discrimination that happens, or even how "real life" in the Navy is.

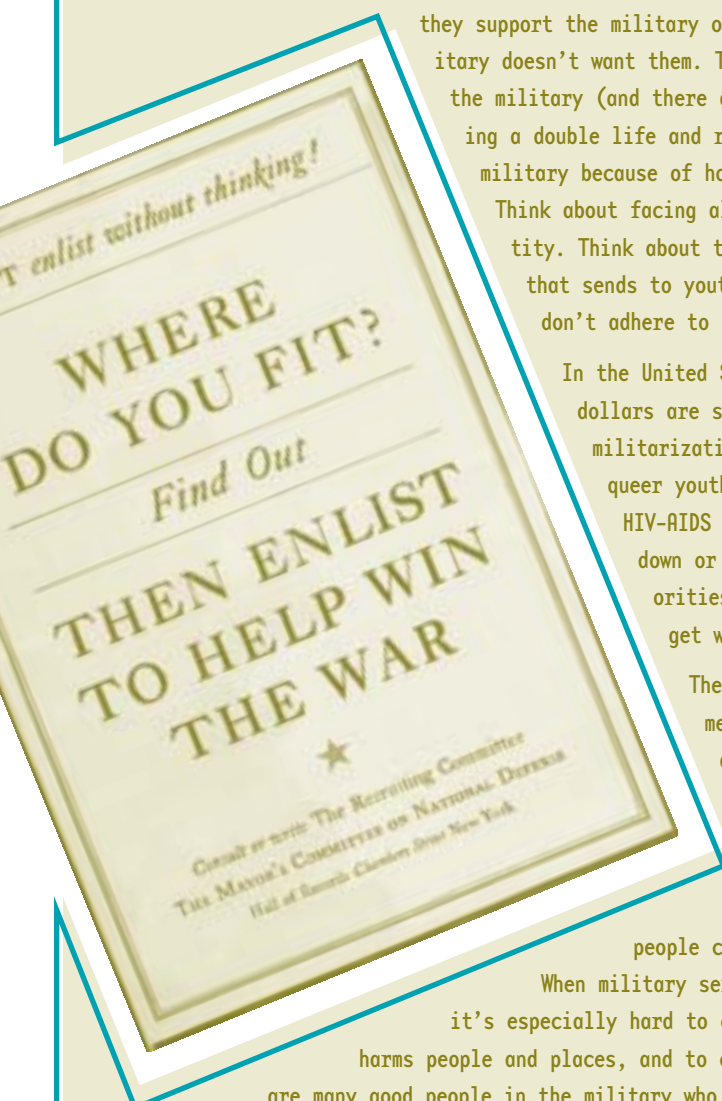
most people knew about they wouldn't enlist. If I knew the things that I do now, I would have never signed my contract.

They only tell you about the good things. Like seeing the world, job opportunities, earning money for college, and all of the benefits. They don't say anything about all the pollution they cause, all the discrimination that happens, or even how "real life" in the Navy is.

I have seen first hand what it's like to be at war. I was in Kosovo in 1999 for seven months. The things that I went through there I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy.

As far as being a young lesbian sailor, I have been blessed in that aspect. The majority of the people that I work with know that I'm gay. They don't seem to have a problem with it. In fact, the ones that know think that it's really cool. The reason is, in my view, [that] I work my butt off, am always on time, and do what I'm told in a timely manner with no questions asked. I'm looked up to and respected by many.

Now, I'm trying to deal with being in the military, and being a part of something that I'm totally against. It hasn't been easy in the least. I don't have the option to



EDITOR: Kay Whitlock

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Emma Schutz Fort, Joseph Truong, Joyful Freeman, Robin Nussbaum, Kay Whitlock, Oskar Castro

DESIGN COMMITTEE: Gabriel Foster, Joseph Truong, Kay Whitlock

CONTRIBUTORS: EvilestEvilBunny, Fatima, Stephen Funk, Jordan, Nikira Hernandez, Jasper, PerpetualBubble, Jimmy Quinn, Rainbow Fairy, Josh Sonnenfeld, and Tae

DESIGNER: Jane Spencer

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DON'T MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT

MILITARY SERVICE

Without Considering the Risks!

Check out these groups and websites that offer information, other kinds of assistance, and links regarding the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy and other issues for LGBT people in the military. (Please don't assume that all of these groups share the viewpoints expressed in this publication.)

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network
<http://www.sldn.org>

Transgender American Veterans Association
Contact: Janice Josephine Carney at jjcarney@dav.nt
Laura Ballard at lballardla@earthlink.net
Monica F. Helms at monicahelms@prodigy.net

GI Rights Network & Toll-Free Hotline
<http://www.glrightrights.objector.org>
1-800-394-9544

Citizen Soldier <http://www.citizen-soldier.org/>



be open about how I feel towards the Navy. Serious punishment would come from this.

I found a paper that I had written when I was debating enlisting in the Navy. It's quite interesting how much my views on the military have changed since then. Then I was only 17 years of age, right out of high school. I didn't have a clue about what I wanted to do with my life. One day a friend and I went to his recruiting office. I told him that I had no interest to talk to anyone about enlisting. Suddenly, before I had time to say anything, a thundering shout came from the back of the room: "Young lady, come back here, sit down, I want to talk to you!" I turned around and before me was the biggest, toughest looking man I had ever seen in my life. His shoulders must have spanned the Grand Canyon and his arms were the size of wine barrels, it seemed. This man would change my life.

He asked me about my hobbies, health, school and general interests. We joked and talked for quite some time. When he was all done, I felt like I had spent two hours of the day with Alex Trebek auditioning for Jeopardy! He asked me if I thought if the Navy had what it takes to give me a career. With all the excitement I could gather up, I said, "Yes sir!"

It's very sad to me to remember how excited and thrilled I was to join the Navy and be part of something so great and exciting. They make it sound like it's a great big pleasure cruise. Now all I think about is how nice it will be when my service is up. I can get out of the Navy, stop living this lie, and get on with my life. ■



FALSE PROMISES:

Beware Deceptive Recruiting Tactics

You've seen the slick brochures, the cool MTV ads, the ads at the movies. Military recruiters and ads promise:

- * job training
- * money for college
- * adventure and glory
- * leadership skills and more

But ads are meant to sell things, including fantasies. Be aware that the military might not give you the job training and work experience you expect. Jobs with fancy-sounding titles often are low-skill and non-technical.

☞ Many military jobs are so different from civilian jobs that you may not be able to use your training after you leave the military, or you may have to be retrained.

☞ The military is not required to keep you full-time in the job for which you trained or for the entire time you are in the military.

☞ The military's money for education plan (New GI Bill) is not as easy to use as it sounds. It is only after you leave the military that you find out whether you've met all of the requirements. The largest amount of money mentioned in the ads—\$50,000—is offered only to those GIs who take jobs the military has a hard time filling. ■

In the Army Now... All That You Can't Be!

Military Targets Poor Youth of Color; Reinforces Racism and Homophobia

by *Jaye Sablan, MultiQueer Coordinator/Love Makes A Family, Inc., with Pam Phan, Co-Director Latin American/Asian Pacific Youth Program of the American Friends Service Committee, Pacific Northwest Region.*

Jaye, 25, self-identifies as a queer, multiracial Pacific Islander. Pam, 26, self-identifies as straight and Vietnamese American.

Our nation's government has a deep history of recruiting disenfranchised youth into the military. Many people of color live at the poverty level. Recruiters intentionally target poor youth, advertising college tuition, career opportunities, the chance to travel abroad, and the stability in life that they may not be getting at home.

After all, queer young adults of color are more likely to be low income and do not have equitable access to education.

They do not, however, discuss the realities of military life, such as killing others and being killed, or the potential for youth of color and immigrants to fight against their former countries of origin. Instead, the military glamorizes itself with hip commercials and giving young people easy, sometimes free, access to violent war simulation video games on CDs and through the Internet.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and questioning youth of color, like their straight peers, feel all the pressures of military recruiters and, in fact, many are tempted by the often dishonest promises those recruiters make. After all, queer young adults of color are more likely to be low income and do not have equitable access to education. The social service system that's supposed to serve them is usually underfunded and lacks real skills for working competently with all of the different youth of color communities.

Opportunities, such as job training and higher education are scarce,

Many gay men and lesbians serve in silence with the fear that they will be physically and/or verbally harassed, or dishonorably discharged.

so some queer youth, especially poor youth and youth of color, tend to view the military as a viable option for a better life. But it's important to think carefully and critically about what that "better life" means while you're in the military.

The military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is blatantly homophobic and serves to deny the basic human rights of queer men and women. Many gay men and lesbians serve in silence with the fear that they will be physically and/or verbally harassed, or dishonorably discharged. The military often has an informal code of



silence where sexism, including rape and sexual harassment committed by their soldiers and officers, is not widely publicized, and often simply ignored.

Enlistment means staying in the closet and not having the basic human right to a positive sense of identity. Queer youth of color may be more likely to be closeted than their Caucasian counterparts due to various cultural considerations. Enlisting would also lead to a vulnerability to gay bashing or sexual assault without justice. This emotional, psychological, and physical stress is damaging to young people.

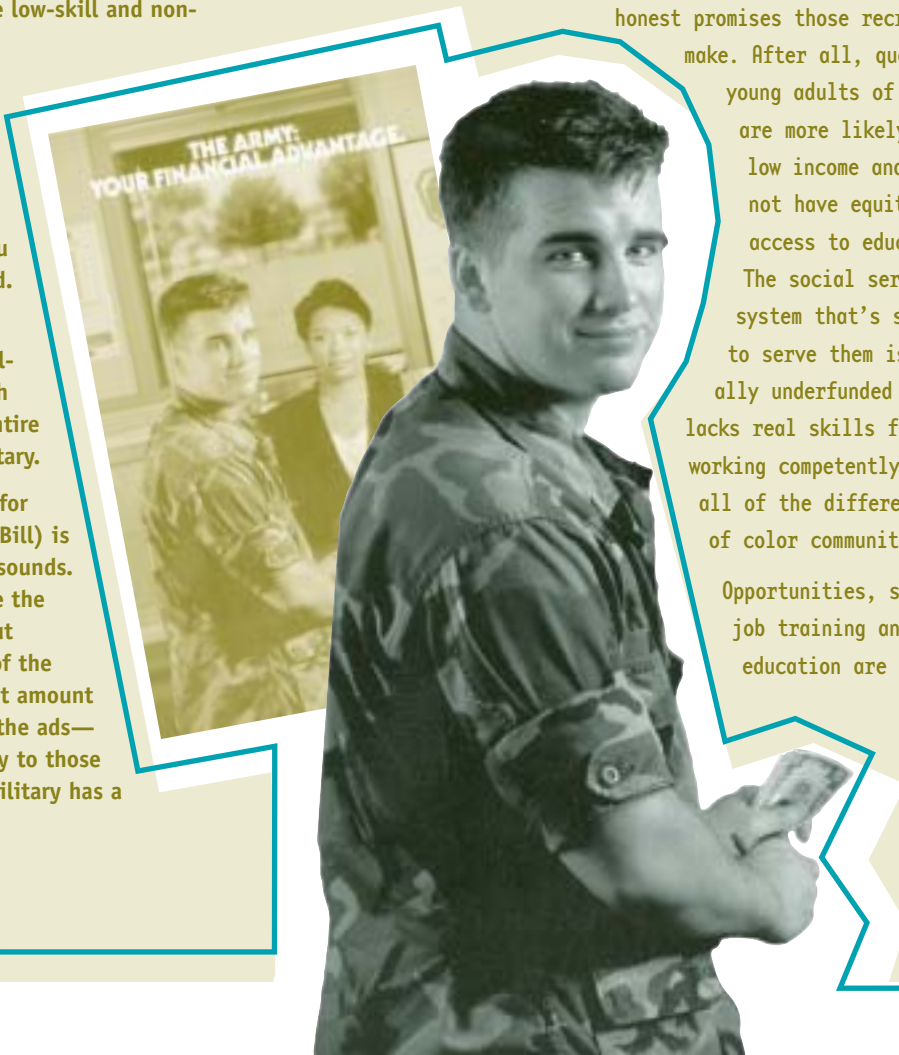
Many times queer youth of color are asked to choose either a racial identity or a queer identity.

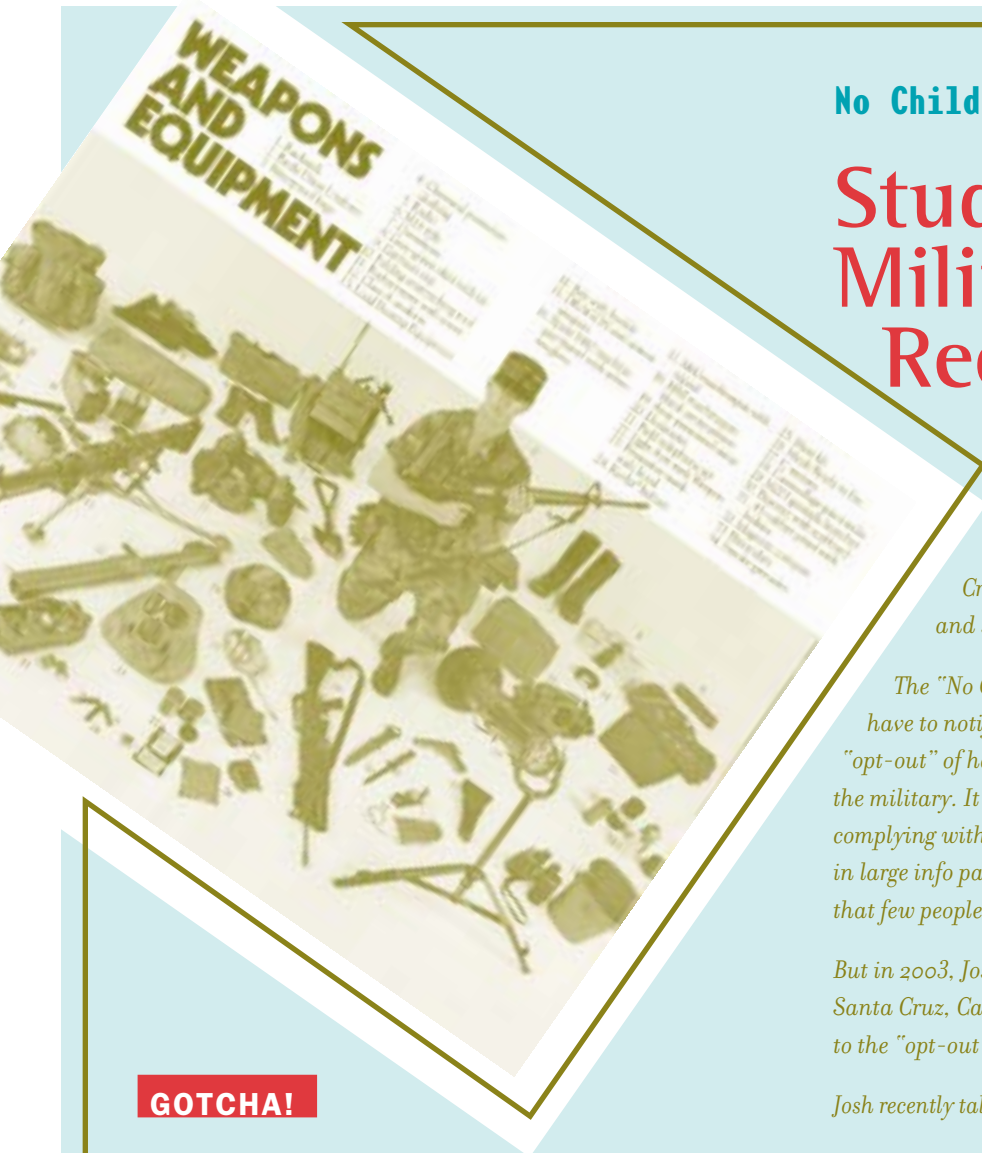
The impacts of militarism and the U.S. government's "war on terrorism" directly affect queer youth of color in other negative ways. For example, the events of 9/11 led to a surge of hate violence directed against communities of color and immigrants. Domestic violence increased in these, as well as other, communities. Racial profiling has been more strongly institutionalized.

Queer youth of color face multiple issues combining race and sexual and gender identities. Many times queer youth of color are asked to choose either a racial identity or a queer identity. This helps to reinforce the

oppressions of racism and homophobia. Both racism and homophobia are based in prejudice and stereotyping. Racism and homophobia exist in the military, and it is alarming that the effects of both are felt systematically. The Army tells you that it will help you "be all that you can be." But do they mean it?

Just look at the term "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." ■





No Child Left Behind?

Students Leave Military Recruiters Behind

Emma Schutz Fort interviewed Josh Sonnenfeld, a student organizer in Santa Cruz, California, for this story. Josh, is white and self-identifies as straight.

The "No Child Left Behind" law says that schools have to notify parents and students of their right to "opt-out" of having a student's information turned over to the military. It's not surprising that a lot of schools aren't complying with this requirement, or are burying the notice in large info packets handed out at the start of school so that few people will even see it.

But in 2003, Josh Sonnenfeld, a high school student in Santa Cruz, California, successfully organized resistance to the "opt-out" policy in his school district.

Josh recently talked with us about his organizing experiences.

"Most people don't know about the opt-out clause, nor do they take advantage of it," he said. "So in Santa Cruz, we tried to change it to an opt-in process as opposed to opt-out, meaning that the information wouldn't be

policy. 'Opt-in' isn't really all that useful unless you have groups that are continually trying to inform the students about what it means to join the military, [and give them]...important facts, such as only 12% of people who come out of the military can use their job training in their career. Most people join the military because of jobs, or college, or money."

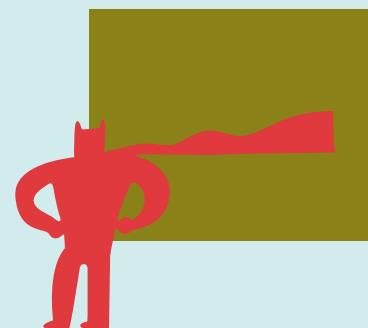
One of the most important things he learned, Josh says, is that student activism can make a difference.

"A lot of the time, students don't really go to the school board meetings. But when they actually do show up, the school board members are really surprised...One of the major things I learned is that students really can have a positive impact on things going on in the district.

Josh, who graduated from high school in 2003, plans to continue his activism at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where he will do "counter-recruitment" organizing and work on a campaign to demilitarize universities by getting the board of regents to not renew Department of Defense research contracts.

Go to www.afsc.org/youthmil/nochild.htm to learn more about military recruitment and the "No Child

Left Behind" Act and to download "opt-out" and "opt-in" forms. ■



GOTCHA!

Military Recruiters Have Your Number (and Name and Address)!

Congress has passed an education bill called "No Child Left Behind" that affects schools, and their access to federal funding, in a lot of different ways. One of the things this law does is force school districts to give the names of and contact information for juniors and seniors in high school to military recruiters if the recruiters ask for it. Many students and parents have started to complain about harassing phone calls from recruiters, floods of slick recruitment brochures sent by mail, and recruiters who show up uninvited at students' homes.

According to the government, the only way you can get out of this is by having your parents or guardian sign a certain form saying they "opt out" of having their child's information given to recruiters. But some people are working to replace "opt out" with an "opt-in" form, so that school officials will only give military recruiters access to those students whose parents have given written permission for this to happen.

Read on!



Josh organizes an "opt-out" campaign

released to recruiters unless parents said they wanted the information [about their sons or daughters] released. We went to the [Santa Cruz] school board and proposed a resolution, and they voted on it, and it was passed unanimously. This includes three high schools."

According to Josh, the school district agreed to prepare an "opt-in" letter that would be sent to the parents or guardians of the students.

"Most people don't know about the opt-out clause, nor do they take advantage of it,"

"The letter that the district administration sent out was translated into Spanish, but it's still confusing, so we're gonna work on it. We're developing a packet of information that the parents can look at. We have to develop that and give it to the district, and hopefully they'll put something about that in the letter, on the website or something like that"

Josh points out that successful organizing takes a lot of follow-up.

"It's not the kind of campaign that you start up and stop once you achieve a victory. You gotta keep on goin' or you don't get too far. It's just the follow-up aspects. Informing people is the main concern right now, since we already have the 'opt-in'

WHAT A SURPRISE!

School Anti-Bullying Policies Don't Cover the Pentagon!

The military uses serious bullying tactics and coercion to force high schools and colleges to go along with what the Pentagon wants, and to punish them if they don't.

- High schools can lose federal funding if they don't give military recruiters open access to student names and contact information.
- Young guys who don't register for the Selective Service can be fined, imprisoned, and lose the opportunity to get federal financial assistance for schooling or get a federal job. Some states may also restrict access to state funding for school or the right to obtain a state job.
- Federal law (the Solomon Amendment) denies Department of Defense funds (grants and contracts) to colleges and universities that don't allow military recruiters on campus.
- Congress expanded the Solomon Amendment to also deny funding from the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Transportation to schools that don't allow military recruiters.

■ Schools and universities are threatened with loss of federal funding if they don't allow military recruiters or ROTC on campus because of the military's anti-LGBT policies.

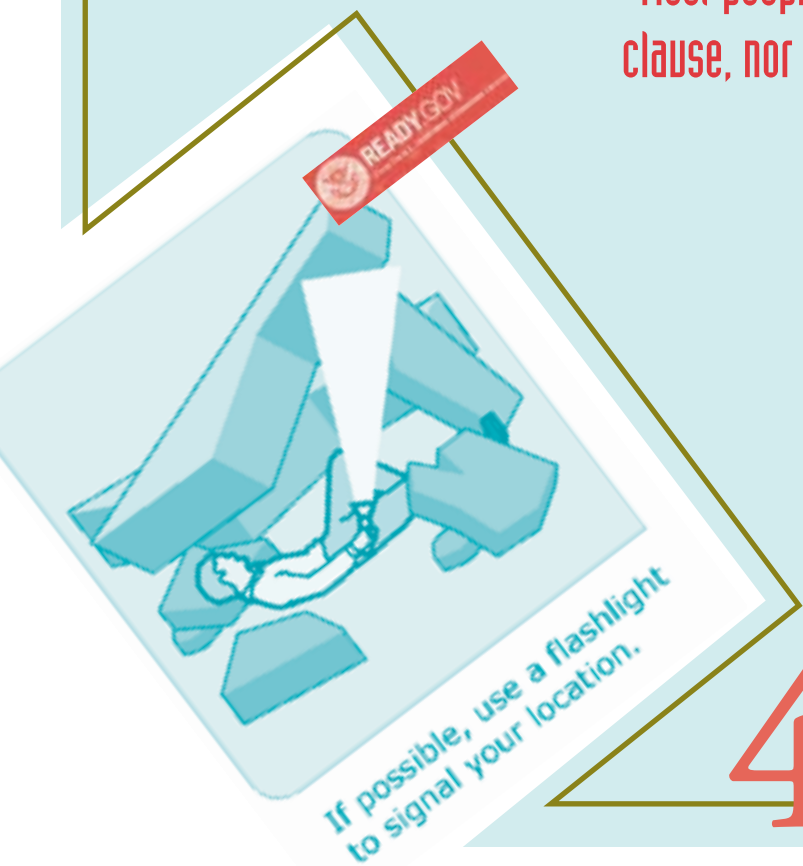
Student activists are challenging all of these forms of military bullying.

For more information, check out these websites:

www.solomonresponse.org (Information about the Solomon Amendment and college/university organizing against it)

www.afsc.org/youthmil/ (Information about counter-recruitment organizing)

www.sldn.org (Information about the homophobic "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy of the U.S. armed forces) ■



School Daze: High School Students Oppose War

Jimmy Quinn, 16, Caucasian, attends Northport High School in Long Island, NY, and has served as a Day of Silence Assistant/Student Organizing Intern with the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN). He is an anti-war organizer and was suspended from school because of his stance against war on Iraq. He was subsequently featured in a cover story for Newsday, a major New York newspaper. Jimmy was interviewed by Joseph Truong of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition.

Activism is extremely important to me, not only with LGBT and safe schools, but also in anti-war movement. Iraq was the first time I've been educating myself [about war], through national media reports as well as independent and European media. I went to teach-ins, watched videos, and read books. That's when I met up with other students at our school and started talking and organizing.

I was suspended after the March 5th march. My friends and I created a flyer asking students to walk out [to protest the war]. I was told I was distributing materials without approval. Close to 100 youth walked out, and 20 more [walked out] throughout the day. I was placed in suspension because I was a key organizer.

There were ten [anti-war] youth overall who were suspended. [But also t]here were kids who threw balloons and hot coffee on us who were never suspended. The administration said they were being taken care of, but I know for a fact they weren't.

Military Recruitment in the Schools

I've always felt leery about the military, because in the military you don't have many rights, like with "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." There's been a lot more military recruitment at my school. A couple of times I've tried to stand near the military recruiters, because I think



they're giving false images and information to people, such as info about college money. I wasn't allowed to stand in front of them, because the military recruiters were a 'guest of the high school', and the administration gave them a warm welcome.

Response from Other Queer Youth

Mostly, it's been "Oh, yeah, you do that too? When's the next rally?"

A lot of people are starting to question what our government is hiding under [the guise of the "widening war on terrorism"], such as the Patriot Act. LGBT youth are starting to realize that what our government is doing is not all about anti-terrorism.

Challenges and Lessons

[The] biggest challenge is folks not educating themselves and listening only to the media. The media can make anything sound good for their side. With the media primarily sculpting in the government's favor, most people are pro-war without first being educated. Their attitude is, "I don't care, it doesn't affect me."

Another challenge is that, within any movement, there are people with different views. Sometimes it's hard to organize a rally and have everyone's view being expressed. Within the anti-war movement, it's hard to incorporate all of the

views without other people feeling they're being told how to feel.

I've been learning as an individual how to be a better organizer, how to organize events which represent various people...You never want to just preach to the choir. You want to reach the neutral folks. You need to reach people on the gray part of the scale. ■

Know your rights.

"Don't let school officials say you can't do it, because you probably can. Know who you can be in contact with, such as your local ACLU chapter. In the United States, students are being silenced way too much. At my school, they've tried to silence me, but I actually read the policies and know when what they're doing is unconstitutional."

DO YOU REALLY HAVE TO

GIVE UP YOUR RIGHTS

just because the principal says you don't have any?

The U.S. Supreme Court first acknowledged that students have the right of free speech in 1965. The case centered on the right to protest a war in a public school setting.

THE CASE: Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District (1965)

WHO: Mary Beth Tinker, 13 years old, junior high school student in Des Moines, Iowa, her brother, John Tinker, 15, both Quakers, and Christopher Eckhardt, 16.

THE ISSUE: Students wore black armbands to school to protest the U.S. war in Vietnam. School officials

ordered them to remove the armbands. The students refused, and were suspended.

WHAT HAPPENED: The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the suspensions, ruling that the armbands did not disrupt school



functioning, were "symbolic speech," and therefore, the wearing of armbands was protected under the First Amendment.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR ALL STUDENTS: The majority court opinion said, "Schools may not be enclaves of totalitarianism. Students and teachers do not shed their constitutional rights to free speech at the school-house gates."

For more information about the case, check out these websites, or just google "Tinker v. Des Moines":

<http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org>

<http://www.landmarkcases.org> ■



BE PREPARED!

Know Your Rights!

For more information about student rights and organizing, check out these websites:

STUDENT PRESS LAW CENTER
<http://www.splc.org>

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE YOUTH & MILITARISM PROGRAM
<http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/studrts.htm>

NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY COALITION
<http://www.nyacyouth.org>

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
<http://www.aclu.org/StudentsRights/StudentsRightsMain.cfm>

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD
<http://www.nlg.org>

Queer & Considering Military Service

Tae self-identifies as a queer youth of color. She is 20 years old. Tae came close to enlisting in the Navy, but for the moment has decided not to join. In an interview with Emma Schutz Fort, she talked about her decisions, questions, concerns, hopes, and fears.

What first interested you about the Navy?

Militarism runs in my family ... I grew up in that environment, that structure. Also, the travel part, and [the chance to] gain independence.

What kind of information did you have?

I actually went to the recruitment office and talked to them. They gave me several different options I could choose from, and I am still in touch with them. It is just that I wasn't ready and I had other issues going on I had to take care of first, so I basically just put it aside for a moment. [I met] Grethe

Cammemeyer. I talked to her a few times [At one political event, she told me] "By the way, I put a card at your table, where you're sitting, with my phone number."

[Ed Note:

Margarethe Cammemeyer is a much-decorated veteran whose military career spanned 31 years. A former Army

colonel. she served in the Army reserves and the Washington State National Guard. After seeking a top secret security clearance, and revealing that she was lesbian, she was discharged. She challenged the military's anti-gay policy in court. Her story is documented in her autobiography, *Serving in Silence*.]

What did you and Grethe talk about? What kind of stuff did she tell you?

How to be safe inside the military, me being out here, and then going there, how I can actually be comfortable with the military, but also be safe with my personal life. She gave me a lot of good advice.

[She was] basically telling me how to be careful, especially [about] discussing my private life with people. That is something she told me that I wasn't aware of, having a [separate] military life and a personal life and family life. If I had a partner, [I should] just be completely aware of all the things that can happen and might happen.

Was there any other specific information or were there tactics that the recruitment office used in trying to appeal to you?

My big thing is school, [so they are] basically saying I can go to school and get all these benefits, and that is all really cool. But at the same time, I am still trying to figure out if I can actually [keep] my personal life and military life separate. I'm not sure if I could actually do that.

As a queer person, a woman, and a person of color, what were your thoughts, when you were thinking about going into it, about being involved with an institution that has a history and reputation of homophobia and racism?

There is going to be sexism and homophobia everywhere. If I fought it here, why can't I fight it there? I am thinking if I do go into the military, I want to change it. It is completely ridiculous; do you know how many queer people are in the military, especially in the Navy? Basically, I am thinking of a way I can change it.

What was your vision of what you wanted to get out of it, what you could gain for your future, what were your visions or aims of what you could get out of the Navy?

Do your homework, you gotta know what you're up against, and you gotta be aware of everything. Do your homework, research, you gotta know the latest information, know if it is safe for you to come out yet or not, if it is OK for you to talk to your fellow soldiers about if you're queer or not. —Tae, 20

A house, use them for the benefits, because when you are in the military your money stacks up because you are not spending it. They are giving you your food and all that. Basically, taking care of my family, that is my number one thing ... [They are also] basically saying I can go to school and get all these benefits, and that is all really cool.

Why did you decide not to go in?

Because my mother got in sort of a bind, basically her and my stepdad decided to get a divorce and my mom needed a job, and I'm the only one with a job, and that is still the situation right now. So I am paying rent there and helping her with the bills and stuff.

Because I also have a younger sibling, and I don't want that sibling not having any support ... I got a discharge like a week before I was supposed to leave.

What did your family and friends think about you joining?

When I first came home, [I] was like, "Guess what I just did!" [Members of my family] weren't too thrilled ... I had a talk with my family, telling them I really want to do this, and either you guys are going to support me or you guys don't. Either way I am going to do what I want to do ... when I decided not to go, oh my God, they were extremely happy, instead of a good-bye party, they threw a [staying home] party.

[My friends said] "You are insane! You're crazy!" I mean maybe I am, so be quiet!

I know all the pros and cons, my god, I took the oath ... they have like two pages right before you take the oath to sign saying like how homosexuality is totally prohibited. I was reading it and I was like laughing because I know so many gay people in the military. Like if you are caught, like just holding hands with a person of the same sex, you could be like holding their hand, looking at their hand, but they will totally do an investigation on you. It was weird

because I was under investigation for three months, because they talk to everybody. I was a little paranoid, because I had a girlfriend.

When you were telling friends, they freaked out because, of course, you could get killed. But what else do you think they were freaked out about?

Because of ... well, you might be living a lie. They were worried because sometimes some of the guys take advantage of the women. ... They really worried about a lot of things, and I was like reassuring them, you know, it's OK, it's me, I can take care of myself...

Do you know what the laws are right now?

Before they sent [a friend of mine] to Iraq, he told them he was gay. They told him, it's the new millennium, who gives a sh--? But when he comes back, since he stated that he's gay, and it's in the contract that he signed, that you can actually go to prison for being gay ... But they are saying it's OK.

Because they wanted a body to fight?

Yes, exactly ... It's your body, you're a soldier, and you're out there, you're going to sacrifice your life. That's all they see. When you come back ... you gotta be totally prepared for everything. They can just start doing an investigation on you. You gotta be cautious 24/7.

So how are you feeling about it all now? Do you know what you're gonna do?

I am still trying to figure out if I can actually [keep] my personal life and military life separate. I'm not sure if I could actually do that. I still don't know. I mean, everyday I change my mind. I am really indecisive. What do I want to be when I grow up? I'm almost there. ■



CHECK OUT

Alternatives to Military Service

The military isn't the only game in town. Although the military may tell you they have the resources you need to accomplish your goals in life, the truth is, there are a lot of other ways you can get the resources you need to move forward. And these options don't require that you be willing to kill, destroy, and colonize others.

Want a job?

Contact your local Job Corps office, a Federal program to help youth, ages 16-24, learn really good job skills that will help you settle into a successful career. To find the location nearest you, contact:

U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20210
1-866-4-USA-DOL
<http://www.jobcorps.org/>

There are also some specific places to look for LGBTQ-youth friendly jobs:

- * Online Job Forum of the National Youth Advocacy Coalition
<http://www.nyacyouth.org/> (click on "NYAC OnlineForums")

This free Job Forum is a running bulletin board updated frequently of LGBTQ and other progressive job opportunities.

- * HIV/AIDS Job Bank of the National Minority AIDS Coalition
<http://www.nmac.org/> (click on "Resources," then on HIV/AIDS job Bank)

Check out job, employment, volunteer, and activism opportunities in organizations doing socially conscious work in different locales and arenas

- * Action Without Borders
<http://www.Idealist.org/>
Check out the site's Career Center.

- * Moving Ideas
<http://www.movingideas.org/jobs/>
Primarily jobs at policy, research, and advocacy organizations.



“Fatima” continued

We haven't liberated them, we've thrown [women in Afghanistan] into a deeper economic [crisis]. I think the feeling now is that [if] you're wearing hijab, (a head scarf worn by Muslim women to cover their hair that has become a symbol of Islam in the West), you're being oppressed—or that Islam is itself oppressive 'cause they've bought into the media [stereotype of Islam]. While it is true that the hijab has been forced on women under Taliban and Saudi rule, it should not stand as a symbol of oppression alone. Allowing the hijab to symbolize women's oppression creates the false notion that all women have to do is simply convert, and our troubles would be over ... and that Muslim men are our main enemies, as if Western women were free from sexism, and as if militarism had nothing to do with sexism and economic oppression. I have friends who wear the hijab who are so down, who are so cool and so empowered.



Muslim woman wearing hijab

[Harm is also caused by stereotyped] racial riffs... David Letterman has always made fun of South Asians. Lately I've noticed it's a lot worse. My little cousin hates the fact of who we are and where we come from. These are things I grew up hearing occasionally, and [when they were said, the people saying them were] reprimanded. But now it's justified, and I don't hear it being reprimanded, and that's bull----. [People here are] using anger to justify racism in a lot of ways.

You have to defend yourself and other people and other cultures, and I'm constantly in the defensive/education mode. I've heard very stupid questions, such as “Do you speak Muslim?” and I have to explain that, despite what you think, “Muslim” is not an ethnic group or a country. And people really don't know (and these are college kids I'm talking about), and that's the point where we're at.

I've been seeking a lot of military training information on my own, and a teacher at school mentioned she had a video once of a military training exercise and how it related to women. And it was basically dehumanizing women. The one point I remember is of a soldier being told to kill someone because he should “think of Suzy Rottencrotch [the fictional name given

in the video of your wife or girlfriend] back home...Think you're killing this person for Suzy back home.”

Men are taught to be hyper-masculine ('cause we equate masculinity with strength, and with the inability to question orders, and the inability to feel for other people). Sexism is used to make men able to kill.

But all wars end at one point, and some [soldiers] will come home and will spend so long thinking of people as “Suzy Rottencrotch,” or of Asians as “gooks,” and thinking of people in Afghanistan as being so appreciative of “being liberated,” and now [they] will have to face women and Asians and Afghans every day. I'm wondering if we're not teaching sexism and racism to our soldiers as a survival technique.

Calling someone gay is a way to put someone down in society, but in a hyper-masculine society like the military, it's a way of calling someone weak. What falls into the category of weak is anything remotely feminine, such as crying, questioning orders, being unsure, and being unsure of wanting to kill someone.

I have friends in the military...One of my best friends in high school went into the military 'cause of lack of money. As you know, people of color are heavily recruited with the promise of college education. He's 27 and he's more in debt than when he went in. The wage they get isn't enough to do what they want in life, and he's supporting a family and kids now. One of the things that I noticed that's put a strain in my friendship is [that I'm] constantly correcting him, like him using the word “bitch” all the time or thinking of women in sexual terms. And it was not in his nature before, but it is now. He's pretty open about how everyone in military talks to each other this way.

In your view, how has militarism affected queer youth??

I think the main target audience for [military] recruitment is people of color, and there are LGBT people of color. And if you're LGBTQ/Two Spirit in the Army, you have it extra tough. You probably have more self-hatred piled on you than [other] people.

One girl I know wasn't accepted by her family and needed to go to college and was recruited by the military. She decided she could go through boot camp, and if she lied, she could go to college and wouldn't have to work a [lousy] job. She was approached by a recruiter, and she actually bought into it, and it broke my heart.

She was specifically going to the military because of the homophobia she experienced, and went into a situation with even worse homophobia. She got herself discharged. It was too much to bear, and she is sort of at the point where she doubts herself in a lot of ways.

How does militarism affect your Muslim and Afghan communities?

Militarism has made racism in this day and age OK. It's gotten to a point where people can say on TV



that they want to kill, they want to bomb someone of this ethnic group.

It affects the younger generations. They're not very happy with the ethnic group they were born in. We've also noticed an increase in violence in our own community. We had to send one young person off to private school 'cause he was so angry. When asked why he was so angry, he said, “People make fun of me.” They weren't necessarily making fun of him, but they were making fun of his family, his ethnic group, his country. He's 13, and didn't know how to express any of this, and internalized the hatred. I fight that constantly, this feeling that all Muslim men are my enemy, or that Islam is bad, because it's hard to fight the same message 24 hours a day.

How do you respond to folks who say being anti-militarism is anti-patriotic?

My most common response is that I'm not anti-America. America as a country is fine. I think I am pro-human. I don't believe in human suffering, and I don't believe I can get ahead or fix my problems by putting other people down. My religious belief is that there's no justification for social advancement by screwing others. I think America as an institution I don't agree with, and my sympathy with people hurt on 9/11 won't cloud my dislike of foreign policies, certain economic policies. NAFTA [Ed. Note: NAFTA is the North American Free Trade Agreement] didn't lose any momentum after September 11th. It was strengthened, and free trade became almost synonymous with anti-democracy. I am distressed with Western attitudes toward Iraq, Afghanistan, and all Third World countries. I am distressed with the fact that the West benefits so greatly from and consumes so much of the natural resources produced by the rest of the world. I'm distressed that [people in] these parts of the world are still starving despite the reliance of the West on products they produce. I'm very angry about the way the West introduces dictatorships to countries and backs regimes that are harmful to people. We didn't like militarism before Sept 11, and it's still not OK. And it's OK to say you don't agree with foreign policy. Militarism, and the notion that “we have to have patriotism”, have been very closely tied, especially in this regime. The whole notion of patriotism has

screwed LGBT [organizations] up in many ways. We used to stand for the little guy.

What can local and national queer organizations do to support you and other young queer activists like you?

I think the main thing...is giving up leadership positions. It's one thing to go in and say “I want to help you,” but

another to go in and have people say “I want to show you how to do it my way.” If LGBT organizations want to work to dispel Muslim or South Asian stereotypes or want to [do internal work], work directly with Al-Fatiha [LGBTQI Muslims] and other South Asian and Muslim organizations. ■

WE'RE FAILING TO SEE OUR OWN ROLE IN OTHER PEOPLE'S OPPRESSIONS.

I'M WONDERING IF WE'RE NOT TEACHING SEXISM AND RACISM TO OUR SOLDIERS AS A SURVIVAL TECHNIQUE.

Want to go to school?

Having a high school degree and a college degree is a great investment in your future.

For general information about the various funding opportunities the Federal government offers, such as grants and loans, contact: The US Department of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-0498
1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327)
<http://www.ed.gov/index.jsp>

For scholarships for LGBTQ youth, an excellent Safe Schools Coalition website that will connect you to various resources is:
<http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-scholarships.html>

See also:
<http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/gay.phtml>



Marine reservist resists war machine

Sentenced to 6 Months in Military Prison

Stephen Funk, 21 at the time of this interview, self-identifies as gay and "mixed race...I'm Filipino and Chinese; my dad's Irish and Native American."

Stephen refused to deploy when his Marine Reserve Corps unit was mobilized for active duty in Iraq. Instead, he engaged in anti-war work. After 47 days, he turned himself in. The



Marine Corps promised it would quickly process his claim as a conscientious objector. Instead, the Corps court-martialed Stephen, con-

victing him of unauthorized absence (a higher charge of desertion didn't stick), and sentencing

him to six months in prison and a bad-conduct discharge.

As this publication goes to press, Stephen has completed a six-month sentence in military prison at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, and is back home.

What affect did military recruiters have on your decisions, what tactics did they use to appeal to you?

I was in a really low, vulnerable time in my life, and I think recruiters know how to target people like that because they are more susceptible to joining. My recruiter encouraged me to come in and talk about what type of things I can learn

from being in the military, and it still wasn't working. He invited me to go along on these trips that they had and because I was feeling a sense like I didn't belong, didn't have a direction, those were the things that he talked about the most. You get a sense of belonging, you're part of the team. I went to these places and they were trying to make me feel part of the team. Also, the recruiter tells people what [others] will say when you tell them you've joined the military. I didn't talk to my family about it because I was depressed, and I didn't tell them until two weeks before. But in a way my recruiter really encouraged me not to talk about it very much with people...they are gonna discourage you from doing it, they'll say, well that's not really you, that's not what you're really like." He was trying to make it seem like it was my decision to begin with, that I made a good decision, and that I should stay with that feeling.

What was it like, being gay in the military?

When people asked me in boot camp if I was gay, I didn't say "no," you know. I was just like, "well, I'm not gonna say." Even if I didn't say it, everybody thought I was gay, and I didn't try to act straight or anything. And even though [they're] really not supposed to, drill sergeants referenced it. One time there was a guy, the platoon leader, who was a recruit like everybody else. He was supposed to get everybody out of the chow hall — that's like the cafeteria — and I had gotten there last, so I was still hungry. I wasn't gonna leave, I was being defiant. So the drill sergeant says to this guy, "Oh look, [you] can't even scare the limp-wristed recruit from San Francisco into getting out."

There was other stuff, there was stuff against Asians. And the two Asian recruits in our platoon, were the "laundry recruits" — you know like the Chinese laundry [stereotype]. So first [the drill sergeant's] like, "Let me see where my Chinese recruits are at, let me try to figure out who is gonna be laundry recruits." No one raised their hands, and then he said, "OK, Asian." There were two of us, so we were the laundry recruits. And it was weird, there's so much of that stuff that you start forgetting it, because it just seems so normal [that you forget that it hurts].

Boot camp is a normalization of violence and hate. Everyone goes through a process of dehumanization, where they hate themselves and they hate everybody, so [the soldiers] won't feel so bad when they have to kill [others], or they won't feel so bad when they have to hate "the enemy."

Did you feel like you went through that process of dehumanization?

Did I learn self-hatred? No. Actually, it had the reverse effect on me, because when I went into boot camp, I was still in the closet to a lot of people, just because I didn't want to tell some people in my life. So then I went into boot camp and it made me realize how idiotic that was. At first I was really afraid, apprehensive, like, what if they think I'm gay, so I tried to be not obvious or anything. Then I was, like, "This is stupid." By the end of boot camp I was more myself, and then I was more resolved to be honest about everything, because I was able to see the stupidity of [the lies].

How did the other recruits react to you?

The more hard-core recruits really hated me. I never really went along with the program, mainly because I

thought what we were doing was immoral, having to yell "Kill!" all the time, having to be totally aggressive, and robotic in what we do, and [having] no individuality. That's what was praised, things that I am really against. I was being challenged so much about holding onto my values, holding onto what I believe is right and wrong. I had to defend that so much that my defenses and my convictions grew stronger.

At what point in boot camp did you realize that you didn't want to be there, that you started thinking about doing something about it?

One time, when we were shooting rifles, I shot "expert" and I'd never shot a gun before. And the person scoring me said on my card that I had an attitude. And I don't know what he means... so I asked him. That was weird in itself because you never challenge authority, but I asked

him, I said, "What do you mean, I have an attitude? I shot well, didn't I?" And he goes, "In a real life situation you wouldn't score as well." I say, "You're right, I think killing is wrong, I don't want to kill. I don't want to be a part of that, I would not shoot." It was like I had actually vocalized what I had been thinking. And at that point, it's sort of like a "coming out of the closet" moment. It's a realization [that] you just said it, you can't take it back. After that I was like "Wow!" It was a relief, but it was

Think about... what the military does, and how you are helping to perpetuate a bad situation for your people here at home, and who is benefiting from it.



Stephen Funk

"Don't Ask, Don't Tell" perpetuates anti-gay sentiment.

also hard because I had to actually deal with the fact that I was a hypocrite. I'll just admit it.

Would you comment on "Don't Ask, Don't Tell?"

I think ["Don't Ask, Don't Tell"] is an awful policy, because it perpetuates anti-gay sentiment, it helps people hate gay people. [But] I don't really advocate gay people serving in the military, because I don't believe in the military mission as it is now. I think that if they just lifted ["Don't Ask, Don't Tell"] right now, the way things are, I think it would [still] be really bad for gay people in the military. Unless they unteach homophobia, and unteach the hatred toward gay people that they do teach in boot camp, unless they have something like that implemented as well, I don't think it's safe.

I got attacked by some gay newspapers... They were saying that not addressing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was a sin of omission. But, like I said, that wasn't my focus.

My focus was to get the information out that you can be a conscientious objector.

And so I got out that message, and lots of people wrote newspapers saying, "How do I get that information to my son or daughter?" And people in the service themselves wanted to know more about it, and I was able to get that information out and bring attention to conscientious objection. I think more stories started coming out about it

afterwards. And then I was glad there was a voice of dissent, finally, because everything else by our own media had been downplayed and censored. Lots of people abroad wrote me,

Stephen Funk is still fighting for justice. Please support him. Donate, if you can.

Steven Funk Legal Defense Fund
1230 Market St. #111
San Francisco, CA 94102

because it got international coverage, and they felt it was great that an American was standing up to this. But, I was glad to do that, that's the part in history that I think is the coolest, people standing up for what they believe in, in the face of ... you know, standing up to the powers that be, saying something is wrong, and they won't stand for it. People don't really do much of that anymore.

Did you want your sexual orientation to be known when you first went public about your conscientious objection?

It is in my conscientious objector application, that being gay is a part of what my beliefs are ... it's obviously a part of who I am, as somebody that is misunderstood by many people, who has experiences with hate. You can learn that that's wrong or you can react and do it back [to those who hate you], and I learned that it was wrong. I experienced that as a minority, I experienced that as a poor person.

What advice would you give to other young folks, especially queer youth, who might be interested in joining the military or are currently serving?

As far as queer people, especially, this is what I would say

to people that are gay or a minority or female or oppressed in other ways: Think about really what you are, what the military does, and how you are helping to perpetuate a bad situation for your people here at home, and who is benefiting from it. Who is benefiting from it are usually the people that are directly oppressing you. And that is why I would

Boot camp is a normalization of violence and hate.

because they want money for school, [because] you don't get very much money.

[The military is] a culture of non-thinking, it's a culture that's violent, it's a culture of aggression, it's a situation

encourage people to think about it.

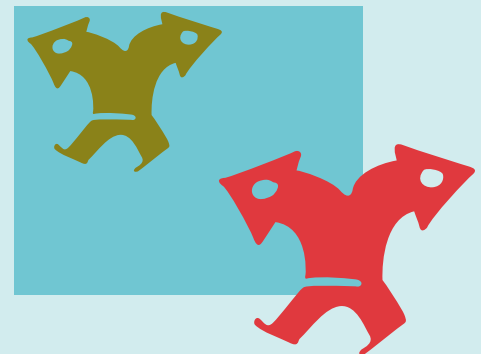
I would also encourage people not to join if they are in a depression, if they are joining because they want to escape something. [I would encourage people not to join if] they are joining



that promotes alcoholism, and things like rape often occur because of that.

What was it like to decide to go against the U.S. military?

It's obviously made it harder for me, but I'm glad I did. It wasn't something that I wanted to think about for the rest of my life, knowing I was part of the invasion of Iraq. I was extremely oppressed by being in the military, being gay, and I was oppressed because I didn't go along with the program, and I was punished for that. And I think it is easier when you've experienced it, it gives you more momentum, something like that. Yeah, I'm glad I did it. ■



NATIONAL YOUTH & STUDENT

PEACE COALITION

Youth Organize to End State Violence, Fight Racism, Protect Democratic Principles & Support Human Needs

Want to know more about getting involved in the rapidly growing student movement for peace, demilitarization, and social and economic justice?

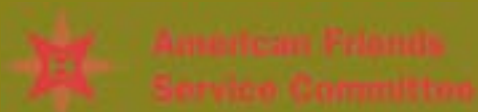
Check out the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition (NYSPC). Composed of 15 national student and youth organizations (including those serving LGBTQ youth), NYSPC was formed in response to the events of September 11, 2001, and has worked to build strategic, long-term student and youth opposition to war that is waged abroad, with bombs and bullets, and at home, with racism, cuts to education, and freedom-limiting "anti-terrorism" policies.

Check it out at <http://www.nyspc.net/> ■



Izzy, Sonia, and Emma, three queer youth from Seattle, show their queer pride at the Showdown, a peace rally in Austin Texas, May 3, 2003 (left)

Sonia, shows her support for peace at the Showdown (below)



The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that includes people of various faiths who are committed to social justice, peace, and humanitarian service. Its work is based on the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice.



The National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) is a social justice

organization that empowers its members to fight injustice against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth; and advocates to ensure their physical and emotional well-being. It is the only national organization focused solely on improving the lives of LGBTQ youth through advocacy, education, and information.

Be Informed about Military Service Options!

If you want to consider your options with regard to military service, or want information about conscientious objection, check out these sites...

AFSC Youth & Militarism Program
<http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/>

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
<http://www.objector.org>

Center on Conscience and War
<http://www.nisbco.org>

G.I. Rights Hotline
1-800-394-9544 (toll free)

Citizen Soldier
<http://www.citizen-soldier.org/> ■

WHAT YA GONNA DO ABOUT

SELECTIVE SERVICE?

Thought about Selective Service registration lately? Maybe you should...

Here's the deal: U.S. law currently requires all men who are citizens or permanent residents of this country, and between 18–26 years of age, to register for the Selective Service. Yeah, queer guys have to register, too, even though the military doesn't want any queers, and sometimes goes on anti-gay witch-hunts. It's hypocritical, but it's the law.

The Selective Service is part of the government machinery used to register guys and select guys for involuntary service in the armed forces. If the government decides that there aren't enough voluntary enlistments for military needs, then the government sets up a military draft. The draft is whatever process the government decides on to actually choose who's going to be called up for service. The government could also decide to include young women in Selective Service registration and a military draft.

Right now, there's no formal military draft, and although it's not very likely one will be put into place soon, you never know. Depending upon circumstances, political winds can shift really fast.

Some guys refuse to register with the Selective Service because they're opposed to war in general. If they were drafted into the military, they would consider themselves conscientious objectors, or people who are not willing to kill or otherwise harm others.

Unfortunately, you can't say on your Selective Service registration form that you're a conscientious objector, or that you object to registration for other reasons. What happens if you don't register? You can be put in prison or fined up to \$250,000. You can lose federal financial aid that would help you go to college or get vocational education. You wouldn't qualify for federal jobs or job training programs. In addition, some states also restrict your access to financial aid and state jobs. ■



WELCOME TO

THE TWILIGHT ZONE!

Do Trans Youth Have to Register with the Selective Service?

Good question. Even the Selective Service is confused...

Here's some guidance and good advice from the people at the National Center for Lesbian Rights. But a word of caution is in order. Because the Selective Service System doesn't have any written policy on any of this, administrators may be confused, and you may encounter problems. If you do, get legal help as quickly as possible.

If designated female at birth

If you were designated female at birth and have had sex reassignment surgery, you do not need to register with the Selective Service. However, if you are applying for federal benefits (including federal loans for education) that require proof of Selective Service registration, you will need to show that you were never required to register. People designated female at birth are never required to register[at least for now]. You can prove this by requesting a "Status Information" letter from the Selective Service System ('Request for Status Information Letter' form, which can be downloaded from www.sss.gov). You must explain in detail why you believe you were not required to register for the selective service (you were designated female at birth, were diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder or an intersexed condition and have now completed sex reassignment).

You should also include supporting documentation, such as a letter of affidavit from your treating physician and a copy of your original birth certificate (with female gender marker).

Complete the "Request for Status Information Letter" form and submit it, along with all supporting documentation, to:

Selective Service System
Attn: SIL
P.O. Box 94638
Palatine, IL 60094-4638

If designated male at birth

If you were designated male at birth, even if you had sex reassignment surgery, you must register with the Selective Service. However, in the event the draft is resumed, you can file a claim for exemption from military service if you receive an order for an examination or induction. Additional information can be obtained at the Selective Service System's website at: <http://www.sss.gov>. ■

TRANS YOUTH COLLIDES

WITH SELECTIVE

SERVICE SYSTEM

Jasper, 22 years old, identifies as queer, FtM (female to male), and mixed race. We asked him to share some of his experiences.

I received a letter a few years ago from the Selective Service stating that if I didn't register I would be fined \$25,000 and sent to jail. I didn't know what to do with [this letter], so I tossed it.

I got recruited when I changed my sex on my driver's license. But if I lived, like, in Ohio, I wouldn't have been recruited because I couldn't even change my sex on my driver's license

Later on that same year, I decided that it was time for me to go back to school, so I went to find out about financial aid. I was told that I couldn't apply because I wasn't registered



with the Selective Service. I started to realize that, as a young man, I now had responsibilities to the world that I hadn't had as a young woman. I found out that I could send in proof that I was a transsexual and they couldn't push for me to join the military. They never responded; instead

they sent another letter giving me ten days to register or I would be sent to jail. Out of fear I registered. I wonder sometimes what will happen if I'm called to duty, but at least now I can go to school.

It totally is different for trans folks. If I had been a bio[logical] guy, I would have been recruited when I was 18. But because I was trans, it didn't happen until I was 21. I got recruited when I changed my sex on my driver's license. But if I lived, like, in Ohio, I wouldn't have been recruited because I couldn't even change my sex on my driver's license. It's really different depending on what state you are in. If you live in a state where you can't legally change your gender, then you wouldn't be identified as an FtM. But if you were MtF, you probably would be asked to register.

Also, once in the military, it would probably be different for trans folks because they wouldn't know where to put you. Like which bunks would they put you in, or which bathrooms would you use? ■

BE PREPARED FOR THE

SELECTIVE SERVICE!

Know Your Rights & Consider the Risks

If you don't want to register with the Selective Service and know that military service is not for you, you have the right to consider all your legal options. There are groups that can help you. But you should also know that there are serious risks and possible penalties for failing to register with the Selective Service. Be prepared with accurate information before making any decisions.

For more information, check out these websites:

AFSC Youth & Militarism Program
<http://www.afsc.org/youthmil/resources>

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
<http://www.objector.org>

Center on Conscience and War
<http://www.nisbco.org>

Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft
<http://www.comdsd.org> ■



Rainbow Revolutionaries Challenge Role of Military in Hawai'i

Robin Nussbaum of AFSC's Hawai'i Gay Liberation Program spoke with three members of the Rainbow Revolutionaries LGBTQ youth group about the impact of the military on Hawai'i. The three students are 15 years old. Two are juniors at Kamehameha High School and one is a junior at Kalaheo High School. Two are male; one is female. Two identify as gay, the other as "heterosexual until further notice." One is Filipino; two are Kanaka Maoli (native Hawaiian)-Filipino. Two have been in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC). Because their schools are near military bases, and many of their friends come from military families, it's risky to speak out about the military in a critical way. They are identified by pseudonyms: EvilestEvilBunny (EEB), PerpetualBubble (PB), and Rainbow Fairy (RF).

On the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC):

EvilestEvilBunny (EEB) The way that I think about it is that ROTC taught me to shut up and just follow orders. Because whenever I would question anything or whenever I went out of line, it was just, like, bad.

PerpetualBubble (PB): In our school, it seems, like, just kinda a tradition thing, because, like, all the boys had to do it. So it seemed like a sexist thing.

On Gays in the Military:

Rainbow Fairy (RF): They suppress homosexuality in the military. But you know, there are gay people in the military and they can't be open about it, 'cause the military thinks gay people will kinda like...um...upset the order of the military and it won't be able to function as well... I live near a gay couple and one of them, he was in the Marines, and knew people who were beaten or killed just for being gay in the military. I wanted to be in the military when I was a freshman, but sophomore year I changed my views on the military.

On Impacts to the 'Aina (Land):

RF: I think the military is destructive. They damage our land and some of the plants and animals we have here are native and they don't grow anywhere else. If we destroy them, like kill them off, they won't come back. So we should treasure the land we have here... And I don't think they should own the land, like be able to just have it... I mean 'cause they test a lot of their bombs like on Kaho'olawe... The military used the island of Kaho'olawe as a test site for nuclear weapons for many years. And they destroyed everything. They still have garbage and all their radiation there. Whatever was on that island, any plants or animals that were indigenous to the island are now lost and not gonna come back. The government spent millions of dollars trying to clean it up, but only one-tenth of the island is safe to walk on.

EEB: Well, if 25% [of the island of O'ahu is controlled by the military]... there are so many better things that we could do with that land. I mean we could actually put it to better use.

PB: [The Makua Fire] made me angry because I am really into endangered plants and I volunteer at the Lyon Arboretum and there's always... (sigh)... all that hard work protecting endangered plants and something stupid like that can ruin their efforts. It's really hard.

[Ed. Note: The Makua Valley is a sacred valley that the Army took over by evicting the residents and bombing the houses. The valley is now used for training purposes. In the summer of 2003, a "controlled burn" went out of control. Fire raced over 2,000 acres, causing greater harm to already-endangered plants and animals.]

On Impacts to Hawaiian Culture:

RF: It's kinda taking away our Hawaiian culture, 'cause it's disappearing little by little. And more of the Western culture is coming here. You can see how Honolulu is. It's so urbanized, there's so many people here. Hardly any of the Hawaiian culture is left, like any of the rituals that they used to have. They only have some fish ponds and heiaus (traditional places of worship) left and all that's going away cause people are destroying it and stuff and leaving all their garbage and stuff. We're not gonna have it anymore. Other cultures have their own areas... but this is all we have, Hawai'i is all we have.

PB: I think the military helps to spread the ideas of the stereotype of Hawaiians because they are always coming and leaving... I think the military should learn more about the real Hawaiian culture not the stereotype of Hawaiians.

RF: Yeah, like we walk around in grass skirts and live in grass huts and that's how we dance. (Demonstrates).



U.S. soldiers in Makua Valley

[Ed. Note: The traditional Hawaiian hula is a sacred dance, not a stereotyped sexy dance for tourists.]

EEB: Exactly! They have had a huge impact on us though, especially the land and stuff. I remember my grandmother was telling me that Pearl Harbor used to actually be clean. Surprise! Now it is like one of the most of the polluted bodies of water in the United States, and it is all due to the dumping of the industry and the military coming in. I'm not saying it's just the military polluting... but it's like they're not giving the land the respect that it deserves. And it deserves a lot of respect... And like back in the day... it was so much more quiet and peaceful and then military and the industry came in and kinda screwed up Pearl Harbor. God, they used to call [it] Pearl Harbor because they actually used to have pearls there, like the oyster things. But I really doubt there's oysters living there now, and if they are, they probably have irradiated oysters!

RF: To find an example of how the military affected the Hawaiian people... look back to the downfall of the Hawaiian monarchy. In 1893, Queen Lili'uokalani was overthrown [by rich business owners] with the aid of the [U.S.] military. [She] was the last monarch to rule the islands.

On the Military as Protectors:

EEB: People say that we need... well, the military bases here protect us and stuff. I know that there's threats out there, but—

RF: Hawai'i?!!!

EEB: Exactly! It's like they're interested in instilling fear in us that shouldn't really be there... What are we really afraid of?... I mean that is a really good tactic, if you think about it. That way you can get the support of people... I'm not saying we don't need the military, because the military is a very important part of the way we live. It's just such a huge part, especially since we

live in Hawai'i, and there's so many military bases and so many military people, and like you said, that's 25% of the land. That's insane if you really think about it.

PB: And they bring their whole families and I heard, like, you know a while ago when that one ship came in and they increase our population by thousands. That's kinda insane!

On Hawaiian Activism:

PB: I think that since it has been a long time that the military has been here and doing what they do and affecting us, that a lot of Hawaiians have this kinda modest, "no make a big deal" about anything. But then, there's those certain Hawaiians who are really outspoken. Which is good for the rest of the Hawaiians that

have been affected by the military and been kinda having that "don't make a big deal about it" attitude for a long time. The outspoken ones are kinda speaking up for all of the ones that don't know how to use their voice.

EEB: But if you look at it, a lot of the outspoken ones are like the older ones. The kupuna (elders). 'Cause they know what's happened. ■



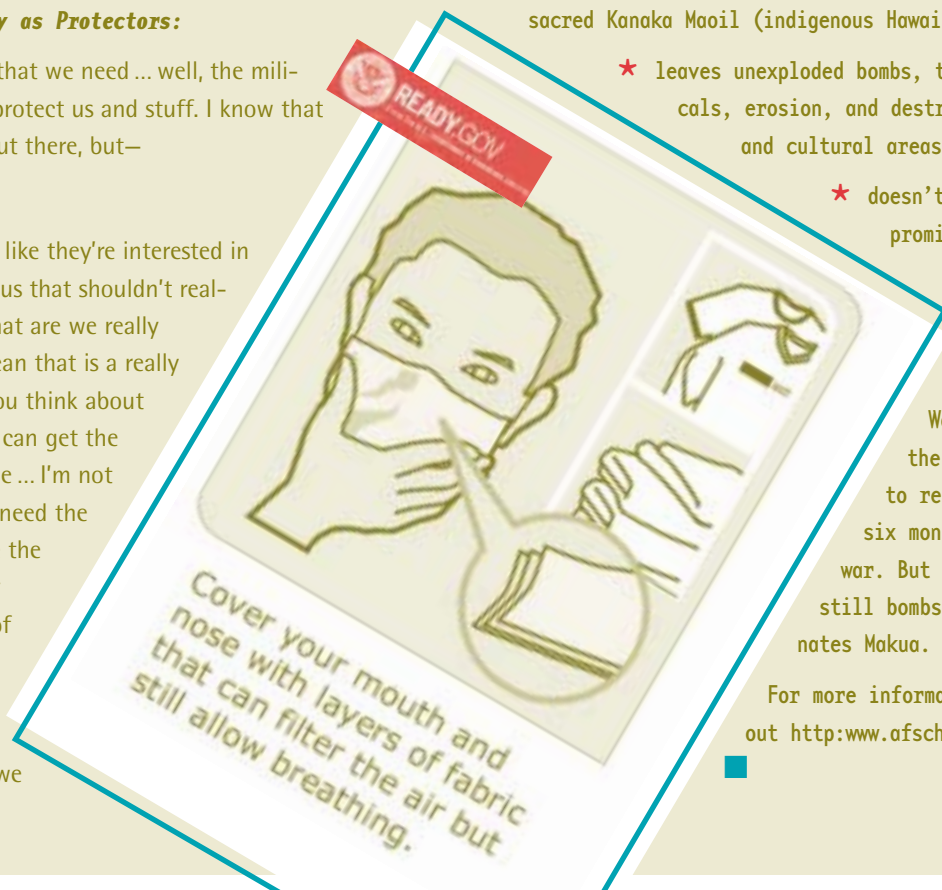
Military Presence in Hawai'i

Whose Safety? Whose Security?

Many people believe that the presence of the U.S. military creates safety and security, and is in "our" interest. But who really benefits and who is harmed by U.S. military domination in Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Okinawa, American Samoa, Guam, and other places in the United States and around the world? The Rainbow Revolutionaries describe many impacts of U.S. military presence in Hawai'i. In addition, the military:

- ★ occupied Hawai'i in 1898, in violation of international laws and treaties, when the United States annexed the Hawaiian islands. This move speeded up the domination of the islands' economy by five large, interconnected companies that controlled production of sugar and pineapples;
- ★ controls 200,000 acres of land, and says it needs much more for live fire training. Much of this land consists of stolen Hawaiian national lands, family holdings that are condemned, and sacred Kanaka Maoli (indigenous Hawaiian) sites;
- ★ leaves unexploded bombs, toxic chemicals, erosion, and destroyed habitat and cultural areas in its wake;
- ★ doesn't keep its promises. When residents of Makua were evicted during World War II, the Army promised to return the land six months after the war. But the Army still bombs and contaminates Makua.

For more information, check out <http://www.afschawaii.org>. ■



VETERANS LOSE,

WAR SPENDING WINS

For the military the priority is war, not human beings...

If you're considering military service because you've heard the military "takes care of its own," look at what's really happening to promised support and benefits for soldiers, veterans, and their families. When you hear "budget cuts," remember that phrase means funding cuts for human needs: education, health care, and affordable housing. While human needs funding is cut, billions of dollars are being shifted to pay for increased policing and war. That's the thing in a militarized society, human beings aren't priorities, even those who are soldiers and veterans. Check out what's happening to some of the promised benefits of military service.

Cuts for Active Duty GI's

The same government that's waging an ongoing "war on terrorism," has pushed through huge, permanent tax cuts that mostly benefit the wealthiest Americans, requested an additional \$87 billion in war-related funds in mid-2003, and supports:

- ★ cancellation of a plan to pay families of U.S. soldiers killed in the war \$12,000 instead of \$6,000;
- ★ cutting combat pay for troops from \$225 to \$150 a month;
- ★ dropping the family separation allowance from \$250 to \$100.

The administration also supports:

- ★ cutting \$200 million, or 30% of the total, for the program that funds schools near military bases attended by the children of soldiers, and
- ★ cutting \$1.5 billion for military family housing, a cut that affects military housing, barracks, child care centers, and other facilities. ■

Vanishing Benefits for Vets

The Veterans Administration says about 28 million vets are currently using VA benefits and millions more might be eligible to use them. (But, in order to save money, the government has not been publicizing the availability of these benefits and in January, 2003, suspended enrollment for some benefits. This affects thousands of vets.)

For 2004, the administration is proposing even bigger cuts that will hit those who are disabled, low-income, and homeless the most. The administration is proposing changes totaling \$15 billion over the next ten years that would:

- ★ Cut \$844 million in health care benefits and raising prescription drug fees for Veterans
- ★ Cut an additional \$463 million in other veterans' benefits, including disability pensions

Trans Veterans

Don't count on support for health services related to gender transitioning and pre- and post-op care for transsexual vets. The Veterans Administration is prohibited from providing treatments or surgeries intended to accomplish what is termed "Gender Alteration," "Gender Reorientation," or "Genital Identity Revision." ■



Rachael Kamel.



Binational demonstration at militarized U.S. - Mexico border

How have schools, services, and organizations been affected by a shift of so much government money to the military?

Our school has no money, we're broke. Half way through the year, we ran out of paper for classes. That's how bad it is. Funding is being cut all over the community, local youth programs are being cut, salaries all over the place are being cut, from people who work for the city, and that affects everyone. I know teachers aren't paid as much as they should be, I mean they are educating the future, and yet we find it more important to bomb other countries than educate our own. ■

MORE ABOUT MILITARISM

Check Out These Resources

Colonies In Question: Supporting Indigenous Movements In U.S. Jurisdictions, a Funding Exchange Report by Surina Khan (former Executive Director of the International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission)

This report documents ways in which the United States has deliberately undermined its territories (Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico) and other independent island nations who have signed compacts with the U.S. government, and forced an economic dependency that has allowed the Pentagon to use many of the islands as testing grounds for nuclear weapons, delivery systems, and space warfare technologies. It documents the devastating effects of colonialism and militarization on the health, well-being, and economies of local populations.

<http://www.fex.org/coloniesinquestion.html>

Militarized Zones: Gender, Race, Immigration, Environment, ed. by Ryn Gluckman, Rachael Kamel, and Betsy Harman, produced by the American Friends Service Committee, Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment, and the Population and Development Program, Hampshire College.

A series of brief, accessible activist resources that lift up women's voices to explore how war-making is linked to racism, the criminalization of immigrants, attacks on LGBT communities, the demonization of Arabs and Muslims, the portrayal of young people as a threat to the future, and more.

Download in pdf format from <http://www.cwpe.org>, or purchase for \$5 plus \$1 postage & handling. Order from AFSC/Community Relations Unit, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19102. Bulk rates available. Prepaid orders only. For more information, contact cruweb@afsc.org or 215.241.7126. ■

MILITARISM CHANGES

THE CLIMATE

Nikira Hernandez, a student activist at Santa Cruz High School in California, self-identifies as racially mixed and lesbian. She was interviewed by Emma Schutz Fort.

Could you talk about how, or if, the war on Iraq changed the climate at your school?

The amount of bigotry shot way up—homophobia, racism, classism. I noticed it in people's reaction in late winter. There were more slurs, more fights. People were less inclined to be generous.

WE FIND IT MORE IMPORTANT TO BOMB OTHER COUNTRIES THAN EDUCATE OUR OWN

Do you think queer youth are affected by militarism in our society?

The first thing that comes to mind with the thought of militarism and war is the possibility of a draft, and I think that's a lot harder for queer people in general, because they are not allowed to be who they are. It's kind of like, you want me to go do something for my country, but deny who I am at the same time. And then if I say anything contrary to that, then I get a dishonorable discharge, have trouble getting hired, and yada yada yada... So I don't think a draft in any case is fair, but I think it's less fair when people are denied their own identity in the process.

I think military action promotes violence, because that is what a lot of the root of the military is: killing people, and when violence is promoted by our country, then more violence occurs...and when violence is encouraged, queer youth just end up bearing more of it.



American Friends Service Committee

LGBT Program
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102