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KICKING AT THE CLOSET DOOR:
THE OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, AND EXPERIENCES
OF MILITARY HOMOSEXUALS

by

Rodney Lee Parks
B.S. May 1995, Old Dominion University


A Thesis Submitted to the Faculties of
Old Dominion University and Norfolk State University in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

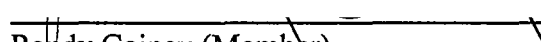
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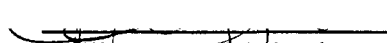
APPLIED SOCIOLOGY

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY AND NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY
May 2000

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ABSTRACT

KICKING AT THE CLOSET DOOR: THE OPINIONS, ATTITUDES, AND EXPERIENCES OF MILITARY HOMOSEXUALS

Rodney Lee Parks
Old Dominion University and Norfolk State University, 2000
Director: Dr. Mona J.E. Danner

The purpose of this study is to investigate the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of active-duty homosexual/bisexual military servicemembers. Very little research currently exists on this topic because the sample population remains hidden among the ranks of their heterosexual counterparts for fear of discrimination, harassment, and physical violence. Using a snowball sampling technique, survey analysis was conducted to analyze the relationship among homosexual/bisexual military servicemembers and assess their experiences. Most homosexual men and women serve effectively in the military and are proud of their military performance. Although many homosexuals join the military to suppress their desires, the majority (70%) felt that military service actually helped them accept their homosexuality/bisexuality. The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy has also had a positive affect helping to integrate homosexuals into military service, though many felt their performance evaluations were adversely affected by their sexuality.

Dedicated to Lynn E. Kim

For her love, support, and faith over the years.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A proper songfest has three parts. The first is the event itself, the experience which provides occasion for the singing. My experience has been rich because of the people I have walked with and the paths we have traveled. Like all experience though, it has also been at times both random and ephemeral. In the desire to make sense of it, in some way keep it, I have tried to sing about it, to research and tell the story of what happens. That is this thesis—the second thing. The third is the giving of gifts. Since, alas, I don't have enough champagne and spirits to go around, I can only offer instead a full measure of gratitude . . . to all with whom I have shared their life and their souls with me.

Thanks to my thesis committee, Dr. Danner, Dr. Gainey, and Dr. Agyei who helped me through this arduous project with their experience, strength, and hope. I remain indebted to the support of two close friends, Ken Coleman and Jeff Lunceford who gave their time and support over the years.

A reporter can only be as good as his sources. The people who most assisted me were the 113 survey respondents who took the time to share their experiences and knowledge with me. I'm grateful to the many people within the Defense Department and the military who helped administer surveys and propel the project forward. All of the respondents to the questionnaire were active-duty and Reserve personnel who worried that their cooperation might cost them their military careers. Yet they were there for me just the same. They cannot be publicly identified; you know who you are, and I thank you.

Last of all, I wish to thank my parents, who never stopped loving me regardless of circumstance. Their encouragement throughout life has kept me moving and motivated me to achieve goals well beyond my dreams. . . . Thanks Mom and Dad.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the past four years, the debate about gays in the military has been dominated by the goals and lifestyles of the two major protagonists—gays arguing for protection from employment discrimination and the military arguing for discipline, order, and security (Ray 1993). The issue of military service of openly gay, lesbian, or bisexual Americans has implications for the society at large.

As America's homosexual population struggles for civil rights, the general public remains weary concerning official changes in military policy. Successful integration into the military would establish a national precedent for the tolerance and acceptance of homosexuals that could quickly spread to every community in the nation.

Many military leaders claim that "social concerns, ideology and politics systematically override legitimate military concerns for combat effectiveness" (Ray 1993:9). On March 1, 1994, the United States military formally adopted its "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on homosexuals in the military. Under the new policy, military officials cannot question members about their sexual orientation, but overt homosexual behavior or open statements of homosexuality can lead to discharge. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was a compromise policy constructed in 1993 by the Clinton administration and Congress following the debate over gays being allowed to serve openly in the military. Proponents of gay rights legislation have disparaged the compromise, stating that the new

The format of this thesis follows the current style requirements of the *American Sociological Review*.

policy, “punishes service personnel for their words and not for their actions” (Hall 1995:8).

Although the new policy allows homosexual men and women to enter and serve in the armed forces, it is based on the ideology that service members may have a homosexual orientation but propensity to engage in homosexual behavior may still lead to discharge. If homosexuals do affirm their status, even by admitting that they are gay, they can be discharged, whether or not they have ever engaged in or intend to engage in homosexual acts (Moss 1997).

According to Peter Tatchell (1995:9), an opponent to allowing homosexuals to serve in the military, “the armed forces are the symbol par excellence of a straight male culture which exalts toughness, rivalry and aggression.” With this perspective in mind, many nonmilitary homosexuals wonder why gay men and women would subject themselves to a heterosexual, dominantly male culture that emphasizes a strong system of traditional patriarchy. This argument suggests that with experience of prejudice, homosexual men and women should be sensitive to the suffering of others, making them disinclined to militarism and war (Tatchell 1995). Many homosexual men and women claim a higher set of ethical values, given their own victimization, including the commitment to resolve problems by nonviolent means (Tatchell 1995).

Often, “military values are rooted in the bellicose demeanor of straight men” (Tatchell 1995:13). Through early fostering of male aggression as a consequence of conditioning, young boys are taught to be rough and tough, and to despise feminine nurturing qualities. This “conditioning ideology” is reinforced by cultural images and icons of heterosexuality. Inevitably, homosexual identity is devalued because only

rugged heterosexual masculinity is socially acceptable. Tatchell (1995:13) notes that “straight males tend to be those men who have been successfully socialized into a more aggressive, domineering mode of masculinity, whereas gay men are usually the ones who have not.”

Hypermasculinity in modern society often differentiates “real men from the homosexual other” (Tatchell 1995:13). The exaltation of aggressive heterosexual masculinity often leads to socially destructive norms of behavior such as mugging, rape, vandalism, domestic battery, racist terror, and queer-bashing (Tatchell 1995).

Many senior military officials and retired officers alike are concerned that “repeated accommodation and compromise due to political pressures necessary to increase the numbers of women in the Armed Forces have paved the way for a willingness to accept significant change in personal policies regarding homosexuals” (Ray 1993:9). “Military officials claim that homosexual conduct “seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission” (Schmitt 1994:8).

However, research indicates that many homosexuals who have broken the policy now serve openly in the military (Schmitt 1995). According to a new study compiled by the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, 180 cases were reported that violated current military regulations regarding homosexual behavior (Schmitt 1995). Commanders from all four armed services are now making personal judgments regarding whether or not an open homosexual servicemember may remain on active duty. On the one hand, many officers know about open homosexuals within the ranks, yet tend to look the other way when that member clearly benefits the command as a whole. On the other hand, evidence also suggests that “witch hunts” are still commonly practiced by some

commanders to rid the service of members who engage in homosexual conduct despite the new policy. "The military has long admitted that homosexuals have served successfully in the armed forces, however, much of the data indicates that the numbers of homosexuals in the military may actually be quite small" (Ray 1993:31).

◦ A comprehensive review of issues pertaining to homosexuals in the military (Ray 1993) found that military members report that they are less approving of homosexuality and homosexual conduct, as compared to the general population. Research also suggests that military members are less approving of homosexuality than civilians who have never served in the military (Weaver 1994). ◦

Gay America's struggle for acceptance has reached a new and uncertain level. Over the last several years, a series of modest gains in civil rights, national political clout, funding for AIDS research, and visibility in popular culture has provoked a powerful backlash (Wilson 1992). Leaders of the religious right claim the new visibility is "an intolerable gay advance out of the closet and into the social mainstream" (Wilson 1992:36). Conservative leaders also claim that homosexual lifestyles reflect moral decay and unraveling family life (Ray 1993).

The public remains ambivalent about the rise in social and economic aspirations of the homosexual community (Ray 1993). ◦ One *Newsweek* poll found that "an overwhelming 78 percent of the public believes gay men and women should enjoy the same access to job opportunities as heterosexuals" (Wilson 1992:36). On the other hand, 53 percent still do not consider homosexuality acceptable, and only 59 percent think that homosexuals should be hired as a member of the armed forces (Wilson 1992).

Attitudes about homosexuality in the military appear to have changed over time. In a 1977 Gallup survey, 51 percent of the adults over the age of 18 felt that homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the armed forces (Gallup Organization 1977). In a followup survey conducted in March 1991, 69 percent of those surveyed felt that homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the armed forces. Finally, a poll conducted by Penn and Schoen Associates (1991) concluded that “81 percent of the Americans surveyed stated that homosexual service members should not be discharged from military service on the basis of their sexual orientation, whereas only 14 percent felt homosexual service members should be discharged” (Jones and Koshes 1995:17).

With heightened media attention and the constant legislative challenges against the current ban on gays in the military, a softening of public perceptions about gays in the military from both military and civilian personnel seems to be occurring. What have yet to be thoroughly investigated, however, are the opinions of active-duty military personnel. This study fills the gap by exploring the following research questions: What are the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of homosexual active-duty military personnel with respect to issues pertaining to the question of gays in the military? And more specifically, how do active-duty military homosexual men and women assess the active-duty military heterosexual reaction to gay men and women serving in America’s armed forces?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

EARLY CONSTRUCTION OF THE ANTI-GAY POLICY

Since the Revolutionary war, government policies have regulated who shall serve in the United States military and under which prescribed conditions. Throughout history, the military has practiced widespread discrimination against people based on ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Before 1948, African Americans were allowed and sometimes required to join the military when White troops were in short supply (Herek 1993). Historically, they were segregated from White troops and commanded by White officers, who often considered such assignments to be stigmatizing, thus limiting potential advancement (Hope 1979).

Racial segregation remained an official policy until President Harry Truman's historic 1948 Executive Order 9981 which declared "the policy of the President shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin" (quoted in Burelli 1993:72). The armed services immediately began to institute a policy of desegregation, dramatically increasing the proportion of African-American servicemen by the time of the Vietnam war (Binkin and Eitelberg 1982).

Following racial desegregation, in 1948 Congress passed Public Law 625, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act (Binkin and Eitelberg 1982). The new policy allowed women to serve in the military, although many conditions restricted their ability to serve. For example, women could constitute only 2 percent of the military's active-

duty force and could not serve in combatant roles. Since 1948, the role played by women in the armed services has increased dramatically. Political pressure from various women's organizations, Department of Defense (DoD) initiatives, and legislation helped women gain admittance into military academies, ended the policy that discharged women because of pregnancy, and allowed female naval personnel to go to sea.

In contrast to the armed services increasingly less restrictive policies based on race and gender, opposition to admitting and retaining homosexual men and women intensified after World War II (Herek 1993). Overall, there have been three policies regarding homosexual conduct within the military. Before 1940, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) considered sodomy a criminal offense, and crusades had been conducted periodically to purge military units of persons suspected of engaging in homosexual acts (Chauncey 1989). During the 1940s, psychological screening also became a part of the military indoctrination process with the formal adoption of the American Psychiatric Association's view of homosexual behavior as an indicator of psychopathology (Herek 1993). Throughout World War II, some 5,500 military persons were admitted to hospitals with a diagnosis of pathologic sexuality, primarily homosexuality (Jones and Koshes 1995:17). It has been estimated that the actual number of homosexual men and women serving in the armed forces during this time frame may have been five to ten times the number of homosexuals hospitalized (Jones and Koshes 1995).

With the continual expansion of the war effort, the military had an increasing need to use all available personnel. Screening procedures were consequently relaxed allowing many homosexual men and women to enlist and serve (Herek 1993). During

World War II, “the military examined nearly 18,000,000 men and rejected only 4,000 to 5,000 as homosexual” (Singer and Deschamps 1994:51). Overall, “an estimated two million lesbian, gay and bisexual people enlisted in British and American forces during the Second World War” (Tatchell 1995:39). Toward the end of the war, antihomosexual policies were reinstated, forcing many service members to be involuntarily discharged for suspicion of engaging in homosexual acts (Chauncey 1989). The homosexual men and women who served during WWII returned to democracies where homosexuality was still illegal.

During the Vietnam war, the urgent need to build up America’s armed forces allowed for the integration of homosexuals within the ranks. Draft boards were only obligated to reject individuals who could prove their homosexuality (Tatchell 1995). Following the Communist Tet Offensive in 1968, when American forces were in desperate need of additional personnel, the draft boards unofficially accepted “all but the most effeminate gay draftees” (Tatchell 1995:40).

A NEW FACE FOR AN OLD POLICY

In 1982, the military’s policy concerning homosexuality was revised. According to the General Accounting Office, the revision of the homosexual policy was undertaken primarily to establish a uniform policy concerning homosexual conduct throughout all branches of the U.S. military (U.S. General Accounting Office 1993). The new policy stated that: “Homosexuality is incompatible with military service. The presence in the military environment of persons who engage in homosexual conduct or who, by their

statements, demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct, seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission” (U.S. General Accounting Office 1993:10).

“Between 1980 and 1990, 16,919 men and women were discharged for homosexuality” (Singer and Deschamps 1994:52). Of this group, most were enlisted (99 percent), White (83 percent), and male (77 percent). However, White women were discharged at a disproportionately higher rate than all groups of men. “Although they constituted only 6.4 percent of all military personnel, 23 percent of those discharged for homosexuality were White women” (Herek 1993:540). In addition to this statistic, the Navy was disproportionately represented, accounting for 51 percent of all discharges for homosexuality even though it comprised only 27 percent of the active military force during this period (U.S. General Accounting Office 1993).

During the second phase of military policy regarding homosexuality, separations from the military reached a high of 2,000 in 1982 and a low of about 1,000 in 1990 (Jones and Koshes 1995). The costs associated with the continual loss of military personnel are extremely high. Although data on costs associated with administering the policy of the Department of Defense and the specific costs of investigating alleged cases of homosexuality are unavailable, “the cost for recruiting and training an expelled service member is about \$120,772 for each officer and \$28,226 for each enlisted troop” (Jones and Koshes 1995:16).

◦ Homosexual men and women were allowed to serve in America’s armed forces during the 1991 Persian Gulf war. As the Gulf war approached, the military found an increased need for more Arab-speaking personnel. Desperate to increase the numbers within the ranks, the National Security Agency attempted to reenlist the homosexual

translators who had previously been discharged from the services due to violation of the military's homosexual policy (Tatchell 1995). It is estimated that approximately 50,000 lesbian and gay military personnel (Tatchell 1995), out of 412,000 total personnel (Allen, Berry, and Polmar 1991:76) served during Operation Desert Storm in a variety of military specialties. ^c

During the early stages of preparation for the Gulf war, the official "Stop Loss" policy adopted by the Pentagon was aimed at maximizing military personnel levels for the forthcoming war by minimizing discharges. In November 1990, "the Secretary of the U.S. Army ordered an end to the release of personnel in all but the most exceptional circumstances. This paved the way for thousands of lesbians and gay men, many of them open about their homosexuality, to be sent to fight in Operation Desert Storm" (Tatchell 1995:40). ^c According to Lieutenant Commander Ken Satterfield of the U.S. Army Reserves, "discharge proceedings against lesbian and gay soldiers may be deferred until after the war, depending on the operational considerations of individual units" (Tatchell 1995:41). ^d

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

In 1992, legislation to overturn the ban was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representative Patricia Schroeder and in the Senate by Senator Metzenbaum. National opposition to the military's ban excluding homosexuals from the military appeared to be increasing and many colleges and universities had already banned military recruiters and Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) programs from their campuses in protest of the policy (Herek 1993).

The issue of homosexuals in the military finally came under renewed debate when newly inaugurated President Clinton announced his intent to follow through with his pledge to the gay community to put an end to the current ban on homosexuals in the military (Herek 1993). The 1993 controversy involved the possible removal of the Pentagon's ban on gay people in the military. Discussion surrounded the goals and lifestyles of two major protagonists: gays fighting for unrestricted personal rights and freedoms, and the military's perception of discipline, military necessity, and security (Ray 1993).

During the spring of 1994, the United States military entered its third phase with regard to its policy on homosexuals in the military when it formally adopted "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Under the new policy, adopted after extensive congressional hearings, homosexual men and women may serve in the armed services as long as they keep sexual orientation a private matter (Schmitt 1995).

The new "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was a compromise policy that was constructed in the hope of quieting the issue of whether gays should be allowed to serve in the military (*Washington Post* 1995). Under the new policy, services cannot question members about their sexual orientation, although overt homosexual behavior or statements of homosexuality may still be grounds for discharge (*Washington Post* 1995).

This new policy is not without contradiction; individual identity rather than a member's conduct became the focus point. Military personnel "who are found to have engaged in homosexual behavior but who deny that they are gay can be retained if the behavior is shown to have been an isolated event" (Herek 1993:540). Justification for this rationale included members of the armed services who performed homosexual acts

while intoxicated or members motivated by youthful curiosity. On the other hand, service men and women with exemplary service records have been discharged for simply declaring that they are homosexual, even though no indication was given that these individuals engaged in any homosexual behavior during their military career.⁶ Recent attention to the issue of homosexuals in the military focuses on military personnel who are openly gay rather than those who are “closeted.” The general public seems to believe that “closeted gay people can function well in the military” (Herek 1993:540). In a 1992 *Newsweek* national poll, 72 percent of the 663 adult respondents believed that “gays can serve effectively in the military if they keep their sexual orientation private” (Wilson 1992:59).

ONWARD QUEER SOLDIERS, MARCH THAT “STRAIGHT” LINE

Since the prohibition on gay men and lesbians in the military was instituted in 1943, nearly 100,000 men and women have been discharged from the military for alleged homosexuality (Singer and Deschamps 1994:51). Throughout history, the ban on members of the armed forces who openly display their homosexual behavior has been supported by a variety of rationales. The main assertions include: gay service members will place heterosexual men and women in danger of sexual harassment; there is no civil right to serve in the military; morale among heterosexual service members will be lowered; insubordination will destroy military cohesion; sharing living quarters will invade a heterosexual individual’s right to privacy; the military’s ability to recruit heterosexual men and women will be affected; and homosexuals represent a security risk (Herek 1993).

The military's chief concern regarding whether or not lesbians and gay men can serve effectively focuses on the issue that gay men and lesbians have a propensity to engage in sexual harassment (Herek 1993). As Vice Admiral Donnell noted, "particularly for our young, often vulnerable, female sailors, subtle coercion or outright sexual advances by more senior and aggressive female sailors can be intimidating and intolerable, impacting negatively on work performance and mental state" (Donnell 1990:2). The Department of Defense believes that gay people are more apt to engage in sexual harassment of their heterosexual peers, show favoritism, and fraternize with junior officers and enlisted personnel thereby putting the chain-of-command style leadership in danger. Although the Department of Defense lacks any statistical data to confirm this hypothesis, professional judgement is often quoted as the basis for this fundamental discrimination. Indirect evidence suggests just the opposite, that homosexual men and women are no more likely to engage in harassment than their heterosexual counterparts (Herek 1993). Data from studies using a variety of psychological measures do not indicate that gay men and lesbians possess any psychological characteristics different from the heterosexual population that would give them the propensity to abuse power, disobey rules or laws, be unable to interact effectively with others, or be unable to use good judgement while exercising authority (Gonsiorek 1991). Thus, sexual orientation is not associated with impaired psychological functioning nor with propensity to engage in sexual harassment.

Military leaders often cite the exclusion of homosexuals because the military also bars the blind, the deaf, the handicapped, paraplegics, and murderers from enlisting. Military officials claim that because there is no civil right to serve in the military the

armed services are not a civil rights realm (Gropman 1993). Many people across the United States cannot enlist, and many of those who may enlist cannot serve in designated specialties. People who do enlist in the armed services automatically relinquish some of their civil rights. Unlike a civilian occupation, an individual cannot quit the military or leave it for another occupation until their contracted tour of duty is completed. Failure to follow orders in the military can lead to harsh punishments, possibly even death for failure to carry out orders during wartime.

Like many of America's other minority groups, gay people have historically been stereotyped as "sexually predatory and threatening, unable to control their sexual urges, and bent on molesting unwary heterosexuals and satisfying their own sexual desires" and have been severely punished based on these assumptions (Herek 1993:542). For centuries, heterosexuals' anti-queer hatred has led to homosexual men and women "being stoned to death in the Middle Ages, hung from gallows during the Age of Empire, and incarcerated in mental asylums for much of this century" (Tatchell 1995:36). Even during the 1970s, gay men and women were still being castrated and given electric-shock aversion therapy to cure their "perversion."

Many countries throughout the world still retain harsh policies for punishing homosexual behavior. For example, Iran and Saudi Arabia retain and enforce the death penalty for homosexuality (Tatchell 1995). In Mexico and Brazil, right-wing death squads hunt down and execute those suspected of engaging in homosexual behavior, and in Western democracies, queer bashing and legal discrimination remains a serious homosexual concern. Western law deprives homosexual men and women many of the basic human rights that heterosexual people take for granted (Tatchell 1995).

In recent years Western industrial democratic societies have experienced a growing awareness and tolerance of homosexuality (Segal, Gade, and Johnson 1993). During the past decade the number of nations where homosexuals are excluded from military service has actually been declining. Most NATO countries do not exclude homosexuals as a general policy, although many countries still consider open homosexuals unfit for military service and they are usually discharged on those grounds. Regardless of policy, most homosexuals choose to “remain in the closet,” keeping their sexual orientation a private matter. Even in Western nations where policy and practice allow homosexuals to serve, very few soldiers “come out.”

Policies and practices concerning acceptance of homosexuals in the military seem to follow national social norms (Segal, Gade, and Johnson 1993). Fifty years after the end of WWII, gay sex is still unlawful in nearly half the states of the union and open homosexuals continue to be barred from the military due to negative attitudes (Tatchell 1995). In twenty-three states sodomy statutes “criminalize certain sexual practices, specifically oral and anal sex, that both homosexuals and heterosexuals engage in” (Nava and Dawidoff 1994). In the 1986 decision *Bowers v. Hardwick*, the Supreme Court held “that these laws are valid when applied to homosexuals but not when applied to heterosexuals” (Nava and Dawidoff 1994). According to the court, the sexual behaviors of homosexuals are not constitutionally protected because they are not heterosexuals, even though the practices are identical. Therefore, given the existence of widespread hostility toward gay men and lesbians among U.S. civilians, “it is reasonable to assume that negative attitudes also exist within the military” (Herek 1993:542), possibly to a higher degree.

° Camaraderie has always played an important role in the U.S. military. The Department of Defense expresses fear that “unit cohesion and morale will be lowered because heterosexual personnel will be unable to establish close interpersonal relationships with lesbian or gay male service members” (Herek 1993:542). However, survey data regarding this subject indicates that heterosexual personnel are capable of establishing such relationships, and that approximately one in three soldiers knows someone who is openly gay or lesbian (Herek 1993). Heterosexuals who have a close-knit relationship with a homosexual man or woman often express favorable attitudes and opinions toward gay people as a whole (Schneider and Lewis 1994). °

The military also contends that heterosexuals will be less apt to take orders from someone within the chain of command who displays the propensity to engage in homosexual acts, and will be unwilling to trust and work with lesbians and gay men who are known to be homosexual. Shilts’s (1993) historical analysis of individuals serving during World War II indicates that homosexual orientation was often known to many heterosexual comrades, and effective service was provided to those comrades with respect and admiration. Since World War II, published works and legal challenges against the military’s ban on homosexuality have demonstrated that many gay people have served the military honorably with at least some of their peers and superiors knowing of their sexual orientation.

One of the biggest areas of concern regarding homosexuals being allowed to serve openly within the armed services is the issue of sharing living quarters and the effect it may have on military personnel. According to the Department of Defense, “heterosexual personnel would be so resistant to living and working in close quarters

with openly gay women and men that unit cohesion would be dangerously lowered” (Herek 1993:543). Military values are often rooted in the bellicose demeanor of heterosexual men (Tatchell 1995). As a consequence of conditioning, young boys are raised to be rough and tough, and to despise the “sissiness” of being gentle or tender. The fostering of male aggression associated with the concept of straight men is reinforced by society’s view of masculinity and heterosexuality (Tatchell 1995). “Straight males tend to be those men who have been successfully socialized into a more aggressive, domineering mode of masculinity, whereas gay men are usually the ones who have not” (Tatchell 1995:13). “Thus, following this ideology, heterosexuals would be unwilling to share sleeping quarters, latrines, and showers with lesbians or gay men out of fear that homosexuals will find them sexually appealing, thereby endangering their gender identity. ◊

Although some researchers agree that this issue is problematic, others argue that out of necessity, homosexual men and women have developed the same behavioral patterns generally used by heterosexuals in settings where men and women must share the same lack of privacy. Using techniques like gaze aversion, homosexual men and women avoid placing themselves in confrontational situations. Fear of violence or harassment has also led many gay men and lesbians to be exceptionally cautious in such settings (Herek 1993). Although gay men and lesbians may discreetly look at a comrade’s unclothed body, they probably do not do so anymore often than do straight men and women, and when they do look, they do so in an unobtrusive manner, possibly with greater discretion than the many heterosexuals who also look at others’ bodies (Herek 1993).

For heterosexual men, “the concern about sharing showers might reflect an unwarranted assumption that gay men are likely to behave toward them in a manner analogous to the way heterosexual men would be expected to behave toward women in a comparable situation” (Herek 1993:543). Historically, heterosexual men have victimized women and gay men to sustain their social privilege and power (Tatchell 1995). Social institutions like the military encourage men to develop their machismo personality since it is considered essential for war (Tatchell 1995). It is not surprising therefore that the U.S. military revolves around the core values of domination, hierarchy, authoritarianism, and conformity.

◦ According to Zeeland (1995:ix), “there is the assumption that homosexuals are attracted to heterosexuals and will lust after and uncontrollably pursue them given the limitless opportunities provided by their showering, dressing, and sleeping together.” The main assumption is that homosexual males retain the predatory sexual instinct of heterosexual males and therefore cannot be trusted not to sexually pressure straight men and women into engaging in homosexual acts. ◦

◦ The Department of Defense also expresses concern that public acceptability of the military and its values would decrease if gay men and lesbians were allowed to serve openly. Military officials argue that reversal of the current ban on homosexuals who serve openly would inhibit the military’s ability to recruit and retain heterosexual members (Herek 1993). ◦ Senior military officials claim that since many young people are antipathetic to homosexual men and women, many will consider careers among the civilian population. Possibly worse, mothers and fathers may discourage their sons and daughters from joining the military if they believe that their children may end up

subordinate to homosexual service people (Gropman 1993). Presently, no data exist to test this assumption directly. However, data on public attitudes toward allowing lesbians and gay men to serve in the military are available. According to a *Time/CNN* poll conducted on January 13–14, 1993, 57 percent of the sample stated that gays and lesbians should not be banned from the military. This statistic was consistent with an earlier Gallup Organization (1991) poll that found increasing support for employment rights for lesbians and gay men in many fields, including the military.

The final justification used to keep homosexuals out of the military is that homosexual service members are security risks “since they would be subject to blackmail or seduction” (Jones and Koshes 1995:19). Thus far, no connection has ever been made between the presence of homosexuality in an individual service member, and the way sexual preference would interfere with job performance. Under this justification, the general population fails to realize that heterosexual service members have the same potential for blackmail or seduction, a situation that has existed throughout military history (Jones and Koshes 1995).

MILITARY BUDDY LOVE

Male bonding within the military setting is often necessary to foster the unit cohesion needed to win wars. Boundaries that are often drawn in the civilian sector segregating homosexual acts from heterosexual acts, and what is sexual and nonsexual are often subject to disagreement within the military (Zeeland 1995). Often when soldiers are “facing death together before their time, they somehow discover the frailty of human contact, the preciousness of a buddy’s touch” (Scott 1993:4). Some acts that take

place throughout the heterosexually dominated military include initiation rituals involving cross-dressing, spanking, simulated oral and anal sex, simulated ejaculation, nipple piercing, and anal penetration with objects or fingers (Zeeland 1995). The U.S. military does not want these things to be labeled as homosexual, thereby maintaining the illusion that the military is heterosexually pure. According to Randy Shilts (1993:44):

Straight guys had a hundred reasons why [sex with other men] did not make them queer. They were just horny. . . . As long as they were not having sex with a woman, they were staying faithful to their wives. Getting a blow-job from a guy wasn't real sex, anyway. Sexual contact between two males might not be called "gay," provided that certain conventions were observed.

"The determining criterion in labeling a man as straight or queer was not the extent of his homosexual activity, but the gender role he assumed" (Zeeland 1995:9). Some evidence actually suggests that "young male sailors are more inclined to exercise sexual fluidity than their civilian counterparts" (Zeeland 1995:10). By engaging in homosexual acts only under certain conditions, heterosexual males often avoid homosexual stigma. Such conditions often include reciprocating in limited ways or not at all, such as refusing to kiss, and playing only the top role in anal intercourse. As Zeeland (1995) notes in one interview, Marines say, "I'm not gay, I just want you to fuck me." Zeeland explains this phenomenon by saying that Marines do not see anal intercourse as feminizing, but on the contrary they view it as a test of manly endurance.

A study conducted by Albert Reiss (1987), which describes the sexual relations between delinquent adolescents and adult male homosexuals, demonstrates the importance of context to straight men who engage in homosexual acts. The study describes the role that boys undertake with a homosexual man solely as a way of making money. The focus is on male adolescents who play the recipient role in acts of fellatio.

Although these acts are often considered homosexual by society, the boys did not consider themselves or their peers as homosexual. Self-gratification is permitted in the sexual act, although the adolescent must maintain neutrality and show no positive emotional commitment to the homosexual as a person. To these boys, “the reactions of the larger society, in defining the behavior as homosexual is unimportant in their own self-definition” (Reiss 1987:360).

Many men who engage in this sort of activity often wish to preserve their identity and do not want to be classified as gay. This concept of engaging in acts considered homosexual yet not being labeled homosexual parallels military ideology. Men may engage in homosexual acts when legitimate access to the opposite sex is unavailable without obtaining the stigma of being a homosexual. In his classic study of men seeking sexual gratification in prescribed public meeting areas, Laud Humphreys (1976:92) noted that there was “no indication that these men seek homosexual contact as such; rather, they want a form of orgasm-producing action that is less lonely than masturbation and less involving than a love relationship.” Humphreys (1976) classified these men as “trade,” men who were or had been married, were normally masculine in appearance and mannerism, and considered themselves straight.

With acts occurring throughout the military that may be classified as being homosexual, increased awareness that gays serve in the military may inhibit such covert homosexual expression among straight military personnel (Zeeland 1995). Originally, homosexual acts upon seagoing vessels were commonplace for heterosexual men as a sexual outlet when women were not around. Hazing and initiation ceremonies commonly included acts that many people in this society would consider homosexual.

However, with more homosexual sailors being suspected of entering the military because of the new policy, the common naval saying “It’s only queer when you’re tied to the pier” no longer works when “out” gay sailors are present to equate any male-male sex with the gay identity (Zeeland 1995:14). Uncertainties about their own sexual identity for self-proclaimed heterosexuals might, for some men, stand in the way of military buddy love. In fact, many men who already had strong homosexual feelings often claim that “the military actually helped them to shape a gay identity” (Zeeland 1995:6).

Zeeland (1995:15) does note that “gay and straight men found that they were able to be close friends once they realized that the imagined barrier of sexual identity is not a hard line.” A recent survey of American voters showed that 53 percent of respondents who know someone gay are inclined to be more favorable to gay rights than the 47 percent who report that they do not know any gays (*U.S. News and World Report* 1993). This is in opposition to the claim by military officials stating that recruits will react with various forms of discomfort to the presence of an identified homosexual person, eventually leading to acts of violence among the ranks.

JUST ONE OF THE BOYS

The question remains, what are gay men and women serving in America’s armed forces saying about serving on active duty in today’s military? From interviews conducted with gays and lesbians serving in the armed forces, we can attempt to gain an understanding of the complex issue of what it is like to serve in an institution that denies their existence. The following describes some qualitative comments from gays and

lesbians in the military. According to “Anne,” a lesbian serving in the U.S. Army

(Webber 1993:5):

The Army’s policy towards gays in the military is an enigma. The old boys who say being homosexual is incompatible with military service have got some strange notion of what homosexuals are going to do in close quarters with members of the same sex. It’s a bunch of crap. We (homosexuals) have been proudly serving in the military ever since there were militaries. We are the invisible minority. Homosexuals have fought and died for their country—the same as other soldiers. It really pisses me off that because I love women, feel closer to women emotionally and spiritually, and I am more psychologically attuned to women, the Department of Defense says I’m a threat to military discipline and shouldn’t be allowed to serve my country.

Active-duty homosexuals generally agree that a strong sense of camaraderie does exist throughout the military. Many military homosexuals enjoy the regimental lifestyle that the military provides. According to “Anthony,” commenting about the U.S. Navy (Zeeland 1995:21):

There is a strong sexual overtone to this camaraderie. You’re all in close quarters and your beds are on top of one another. You’re all getting undressed in front of each other. There’s an incredible lack of privacy on a ship, unlike a shore command where you have your own room. There’s a lot of joking around, patting the butts, “Look who has a hard-on!” And they’ll go and try to grab it or whatever. Sort of similar to a football team in a locker room. But I tend to shy away from that kind of stuff, as probably would most homosexuals, because of the fear that straight people have of homosexuals. I don’t even acknowledge or give any sort of answer to anything like that.

Although the military assumes that homosexual men and women are sexually predatory and intent upon the molestation of heterosexuals, the military experience of most gay men and lesbians has been quite the opposite. According to “Louise’s” (Webber 1993:54) experience regarding harassment:

Louise says that when she joined the Marines she was told that only three kinds of women did so: “women who were out to snag a husband; women

who were so ugly and dumb they couldn't get a husband or job; and women who were queer.”

“For years women throughout the armed forces have found themselves the brunt of jokes, name calling, sexual harassment, and sexual discrimination” (Webber 1993:54). Louise had spent her entire military career attempting to ignore sexual harassment by male Marines, including the verbal harassment of calling women Broad Ass Marines or BAMS.

Finally, with regard to the military's claim that homosexuality will affect “morals and values,” Zeeland (1995:71) describes an interview he conducted with an officer in the U.S. Navy that challenges the morality issue that is held in such high regard by military officials. For Lieutenant “Tim,” bigotry exists among leaders (Zeeland 1995:71):

The Navy is an organization of whoremongers and other types of deviants. It's kind of hysterical whenever you hear the military talk about morality and maintaining a standard, especially when they talk about gays being promiscuous. Well, I'll tell you. Everyone from the captain on down, on most ships, is going out when they get into port to carry on and get laid. And it's well known. The captain on my first ship would get up and remind us going into port how many days we had until we got home and what the incubation period was for various venereal diseases.

Nowhere is job discrimination more evident than in the story of Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer. A model career woman with an impeccable military career, Colonel Cammermeyer was ousted from the Army National Guard, when during a routine clearance check she told military officials the truth about her lesbianism. Although at the time she was being considered for the job of Chief Nurse of the National Guard, declaring her lesbianism ended her military career. After twenty-eight years of

“patriotic loyalty and distinguished service” (Tatchell 1995:31), Colonel Cammermeyer was discharged.

For centuries homosexuals have been excluded from military service and denied the basic civil rights and responsibilities of citizenry. The presence of homosexuals in the military is an area lacking an abundance of research. However, past research has implied that homosexual men and women have served the military successfully and retain the same potential to excel in military service. For many homosexual men and women, hiding one’s self-identity is worth it to gain access into the military. This research expands upon the small number of interviews with retired and active-duty gay military personnel currently available. The project investigates two research questions. What are the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of homosexual active-duty men and women with respect to the issues pertaining to gays in the military? How do active-duty military homosexual men and women assess the active-duty military heterosexual reaction to gay men and women serving in the U.S. military?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The percentage of gay men and lesbians in the United States military is impossible to measure accurately because military regulations officially prohibit overt homosexuality. Homosexuals in the military are, by necessity, invisible. This enforced suppression of their identity presents a host of methodological as well as ethical problems to anyone wishing to study their attitudes and behavior. When doing research on any population that is labeled as deviant, whose members are forced to go underground to protect themselves, a random sample is impossible to obtain. Although earlier studies of active-duty gay men and lesbians in the military exist (Shilts 1993, Webber 1993, Zeeland 1995), they involved only a few individuals who came forth to be interviewed and a majority of the interviews performed involved individuals who had already left military service. This research explores the experiences of gay men and lesbians on active duty in the U.S. military to gain a better understanding of the experiences of homosexuals hidden among the ranks of a heterosexual male-dominated organization.

This study concentrates on two primary research questions. First, what are the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of homosexual active-duty military personnel with respect to issues pertaining to the question of gays in the military? Several issues are examined under this main topic including: What are the specific characteristics and attributes of gay men and lesbians who go into the military? Why do they join the service? What aspects of the military are especially attractive to gay men and lesbians?

The second research issue addresses the following question: How do homosexual men and women assess the heterosexual reaction to gay men and women serving in America's armed forces? Secondary research questions under this main heading include: How open are gay men and lesbians in the military with their sexuality? How do heterosexuals react if they are "known to be out"? Does being "out of the closet" with co-workers affect discipline, morale, and promotion?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of opinions and the experiences of homosexuals in the United States military. Because of the limited research in this area, this is an exploratory study. According to Babbie (1995:84), "exploratory studies are essential when breaking new ground, and they can almost always yield new insights into a topic for research." Survey research methods, using a snowball sampling strategy, were used to explore the experiences of homosexuals in the military.

Survey Research

According to Babbie (1995:xvi), "survey research is probably the best known and most widely used research method in the social sciences today." Survey methods may provide a search device when an inquiry into a particular topic is initiated. Three general objectives guide the use of survey research: description, explanation, and exploration. Although the survey on homosexuals' opinions, attitudes, and experiences is primarily aimed at exploration, some information will be gained in reference to the other two categories. Thus far, the issue of homosexuality in the military, although rather popular

in the media, has not been researched quantitatively. Military officials often discourage this type of data collection and data sets are currently unavailable. Although some qualitative research in the field of homosexuals in the military does exist, interview techniques were used and only a few individuals responded to the interview process. A majority of the respondents who did come forward to be interviewed had already been discharged from active-duty military service (Shilts 1993, Webber 1993, Zeeland 1995).

In general, behavior may serve as a gauge of criterion validity for the many attitudinal measures made in social research (Babbie 1995). Criterion validity directly relates to the study of attitudes, opinions, and experiences of active-duty homosexuals in today's armed forces. Whether or not the survey is construed as reliable depends on the how often a particular technique has been applied to study a population. Because homosexuality in the military is a relatively new field of study, no comparison study may be used to gauge this research. Therefore, we cannot be certain of the degree to which the questionnaire correctly describes the population under study, or correctly identifies all potential areas of interest.

Survey Pre-test

In order to ascertain the reliability and validity of the survey instrument constructed to explore the research questions, the questionnaire was pre-tested using gay men and lesbians who had recently been discharged from military service and were familiar with the network of homosexuals within the military. Some active-duty reserve members were also used to pre-test the survey instrument. Using only reserve personnel and people who had previously been discharged from the military allowed me to pre-test

the questionnaire while not using up my sample. Although differences may exist between the two military groups (active duty and reserve), reserve personnel do serve a significant proportion of active-duty time during basic training, reserve drilling, and attendance at advanced military training schools. This extraneous group represents an appropriate population to use in pre-testing the survey but will not be included in the final sample.

Pre-testing the survey indicated that the design was possible, provided an assessment of its difficulty, and gave a rough estimate of the time and costs involved with conducting the research (Babbie 1995). Because studying the attitudes and behaviors of the homosexual military population is a relatively new field, pre-testing the survey instrument uncovered hidden problems within the survey's structure that were resolved prior to distribution.

The pre-test consisted of administering twenty surveys and asking respondents to provide feedback about the survey and any questions that they found to be unclear or not applicable. One survey question was deleted following the pre-test: a low response rate to the question and a judgment of relevancy to the study precluded admission.

Survey Administration

Administering the final survey consisted of two methods. First, using my own personal network of active-duty homosexual friends and acquaintances, I asked that they each fill out one survey. Second, I requested assistance from these individuals to help me further distribute the surveys by passing them along to their friends or asking their friends to contact me to request that a survey be sent directly to them.

For those people asking that a survey be sent directly to them, questionnaires were mailed to the individual's home or passed through the network of friends for circulation. Under no circumstances were any of the questionnaires mailed to a military installation or passed to other active-duty military members while on military property. A cover letter was enclosed that explained the purpose of this project, assured confidentiality, and specified that surveys must not be distributed on military property. A self-addressed stamped envelope to return the survey was also enclosed. No names or any other identifying information were obtained that may jeopardize the confidentiality of any member surveyed.

Sample Selection

The sample consisted entirely of homosexual and bisexual men and women collected via the "snowball" technique. Answering the research questions requires information about a broad range of gay male and lesbian experiences. My sample included gay men and lesbians whose years of active-duty service and military experience varied considerably. For clarity of definition, I included in my analysis only those men and women who identified their sexuality as homosexual or bisexual.

The primary concern of this research project was how to reach the men and women I needed in order to do this project well. Using the snowball technique of data collection, I began with some individuals who were appropriate informants and then asked them to contact others asking them to contact me.

Snowball sampling is a method that has been widely used in sociological research. The method yields a study sample through referrals made among people who

share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest (Babbie 1995). This method is well suited and particularly applicable when the focus of study is on such a sensitive issue as homosexuals in the military. In sociology, snowball samples are necessary when the target population is rare and there are no lists of its members or other efficient ways of finding each person separately (Flynn 1970).

In discussing the benefits of snowball sampling, Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) noted that the snowball sampling method is well suited to studies that focus on a sensitive issue of private matters. They also saw an advantage to snowball sampling in that “natural interactional units” are tapped through chain referrals. The researcher may thus gain an idea of how the homosexual military community interacts within established networks.

Because homosexuality in the military is a relatively private matter, and snowball sampling is network-dependent, one problem that may arise is the extent to which the method will reveal possible variations in the population. The researcher has no real way of knowing the extent of homosexuality in the military, and testing relative social networks may reveal only those cases discovered through existing social networks. Since the snowballing method depends on particular social networks, it may not generalize to the entire population (Kowalewski 1988).

In this study, snowball sampling allowed me to gain access in order to sample gay men and lesbians. However, this sample reflects only a small proportion of the homosexual military community, and the results cannot be generalized to the whole population. Because the sample selection method is a nonrandom sampling strategy, selection bias is likely to have an impact on the results of this research. Unfortunately,

neither the direction nor the degree of bias in the results may be determined. In addition, some individuals may have declined to fill out the survey for fear of risking their military jobs or careers. Thus, the results of this study will be interpreted cautiously. A sample size of 113 homosexual active-duty men and women returned surveys for my study out of 250 surveys originally sent out. Surveys were distributed throughout the Norfolk metropolitan area and the San Diego metropolitan area. These two regions were chosen because of the high concentration of military personnel located in these areas. Data was collected from January through December of 1998. My ability to present myself as a military veteran proved to be a crucial element in recruiting respondents. Most people were willing to participate because I was a veteran and because they believed that a study of this kind was important. In addition, the fact that I established contact through a friendship network helped me gain access.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

This section addresses the protection of human subjects and covers issues relating to voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. The risks of being “out” in the military cannot be overstated. The pre-test sample included active-duty reservists, and the final sample was composed entirely of U.S. active-duty military homosexual men and women. Some potential repercussions of participating in this research if one were to be “outed” to the military included: involuntarily discharge from the military, being stigmatized by friends and family, and the potential loss of health benefits, financial, and emotional welfare. Given this, the protection of identities and responses of the participants were of great concern and the utmost importance.

According to the American Sociological Association (1989:3) guidelines, “the process of conducting sociological research must not expose respondents to substantial risk of personal harm.” Informed consent must be obtained especially when the risks of research are greater than the risks of everyday life; even when modest risk or harm is anticipated, informed consent must be obtained.

This research project abided by Old Dominion University’s guidelines on protection of human subjects, American Sociological Association guidelines, and federal guidelines. As with any research at this university involving people, prior to beginning the research, approval was secured from the College of Arts and Letters Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects.

Informed Consent

Attached to each survey was a letter explaining the project, its importance, and the potential risks involved with filling out the questionnaire. The letter explained to the respondent that he or she was participating voluntarily in the project which provides anonymity and confidentiality. There was also a sentence regarding termination of the questionnaire at any time, making it clear that subjects may choose to terminate the project at any point.

Social research can represent an intrusion into people’s lives, and often requires that people reveal personal information about themselves—information that may be unknown to their friends and families. Many military members might have been concerned about their identity or responses becoming known should the data be obtained by military leaders or other hostile authorities. The fear of this information falling into

the wrong hands is fully understandable and it remains crucial that careful steps are taken to protect all members participating in this survey. A large part of the survey consists of detailed questions investigating sexual behavior over given periods of time, therefore it was important that the survey was sealed in a confidential envelope and given or sent to the member away from any military installation. In order that all homosexual military members should feel comfortable, and be given time and privacy for revealing of this sensitive information, surveys were completed and returned at the member's discretion.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study was strictly voluntary. Although the goal of generalizability is often threatened when respondents are only those who maintain the personality traits that make them willing to participate, the potential harm to the respondents required that the participants voluntarily comply with the research project.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Confidentiality of data may pose a problem in social science, but becomes especially acute when dealing with sensitive areas like homosexuals in the military (Coxon 1993). The research becomes even more sensitive when the behavior may be proscribed and/or illegal, and when the sexual orientation of the individual being surveyed is often a closely-guarded secret. Any research that analyzes homosexuals in the military must be matched with project procedures that safeguard secrecy. The surveys had a statement of confidentiality as well as anonymity included in the letter to the respondent.

To ensure anonymity, no list of names or other identifying information was kept on file. Collected data will never be placed on any public computer, rather, the researcher's own personal computer was used and statistics were calculated using a personal copy of the PC version of STATA. In a confidential survey, the researcher is usually able to identify a given person's responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly (Babbie 1995). Because of the sensitivity of this data, no names or other identifying information were collected, providing anonymity and thus protecting all subjects from potential harm.

The respondent may be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent (Babbie 1995). By using a survey with no identification numbers, I have no record of the person from whom the survey was received. By assuring anonymity I hoped to increase the likelihood and reliability of responses. No names were gathered from individuals filling out the questionnaire, thus rendering the survey completely anonymous. In one particular case an individual identified himself by leaving his name and address on the cover letter attached to the questionnaire. The cover letter was immediately removed from the questionnaire and destroyed.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Chi square and fishers exact tests were used to analyze categorical variables. A t test was used to compare continuous variables. A probability value of 0.05 was considered significant on two-tailed testing. Data analysis was conducted using the PC statistical software STATA.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of data analysis of the survey exploring the attitudes and experiences of homosexual and bisexual men and women in the United States military. The study investigates the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of homosexual active-duty military personnel with respect to issues pertaining to gays in the military. Additionally, active-duty homosexual men and women were asked to assess the active-duty military heterosexual reaction to gay men and women serving in America's armed services. Descriptive statistics are first reviewed to provide a picture of the sample. The results of the analysis on the two research questions are then explored.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE

Data analysis was conducted on 113 surveys returned by active-duty military personnel from all five branches of the United States military. Most of the survey sample were servicemembers in the Navy (68 percent), followed by Army (15 percent), Air Force (5 percent), Marines (10 percent), and Coast Guard (2 percent). Enlisted men and women represented 87 percent of the sample, officers were 13 percent of the sample.

Demographic statistics of the population are presented in Table 1. There are 113 respondents; 83 percent are males and 17 percent are females. Most of the respondents are White/European American (82 percent), while the remaining 18 percent of the sample fall into the following categories: 6 percent Hispanic, 6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 5

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Percentage
Gender (N=113)	
Male	83
Female	17
Ethnicity (N=113)	
White/European American	82
Black/African American	5
Hispanic	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	6
Native American	1
Highest Level of Education (N=113)	
High School Diploma	42
VOTEC Certificate	1
Some College, No Degree	31
Associate Degree	9
Bachelor Degree	9
Some Graduate Classes	4
Graduate Degree	3
MD	2
Current Sexuality (N=113)	
Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian	71
Bisexual	29
Marital Status (N=110)	
Single	61
Married	22
Divorced	15
Separated	1
Widowed	1
Rank (N=113)	
Enlisted Grade E1–E3	30
Enlisted Grade E4–E6	49
Enlisted Grade E7–E9	8
Officer Grade O1–O3	11
Officer Grade O4–O9	2
Branch of Service (N=113)	
Navy	68
Army	15
Marines	10
Air Force	5
Coast Guard	2

percent Black/African American, and 1 percent Native American. The age of respondents ranged from 17 to 46 years old with a mean age of 27 years.

The majority of the respondents held only a high school diploma (42 percent), although many (31 percent) had taken some college classes but not completed a degree. Nine percent of the respondents had completed an associates degree and another nine percent had completed their bachelors degree. Respondents overwhelmingly classified themselves as homosexual/gay/lesbian (71 percent), while the remaining 29 percent considered themselves bisexual. Most of the respondents were single (61 percent); the remaining minority were married (22 percent), divorced (15 percent), separated (1 percent), or widowed (1 percent).

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA USING GENDER AND RANK AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Although the survey design used for this study gathers a wide range of dependent variables for analysis, only rank and gender are used as independent variables in the analysis. Gender was chosen to determine whether or not survey responses would differ between active-duty gay men and women. Gay men are often perceived as “feminine” and lesbian women are perceived as “masculine.” These gay stereotypes are often intensified in the military setting. Throughout the military, women are stereotyped to be lesbian because they perform the same “masculine” duties as men, wear the same uniforms, and adhere to the same level of physical fitness standards. Straight military personnel may react to these gay stereotypes which may affect their treatment of “known” or “suspected” gay military personnel. Therefore, we would expect differences in experiences between gay men and women serving in the military.

Coupled with gender, rank was also used to draw conclusions about the population under study. Military rank exists on a hierarchical chain of command that can be subdivided into three distinct classes. The majority of personnel entering military service enter within the pay grades E1–E3 depending upon experience, education (some college), or service within ROTC. Commonly known as “junior” personnel, they begin their careers spending many hours attending classes to be proficient at their assigned job function. Junior personnel have limited responsibility while they learn and develop the skills necessary to be independent in their job. Military personnel between the ranks of E4–E6 may be considered middle managers. Much of their time is spent overseeing the junior personnel, completing detailed paperwork, and executing orders from military officers. The final echelon consists of those personnel at or above the rank of E7. These personnel have most likely spent many years in the military, being subject matter experts in most military matters. Military officers acquire that rank by attending a four-year university, completing a degree that allows them to perform a job function that would require similar qualifications in the civilian arena (i.e., pilot, engineering, business, etc.).

Differences in rank are expected because the power structure within the military is solely based on rank. Respect and assimilation into the military way of life is compounded with the level of achievement of the individual soldier. Greater responsibility is granted to those soldiers achieving in the rank structure and supposedly equal access is granted to everyone. Rank thus provides a picture of those currently serving in the military, their attitudes and their experiences.

In Tables 2 through 8, responses to each question are reported for the sample as a whole and then separated by gender and rank. Statistically significant differences, at the

0.05 probability level, may be expected on the basis of gender or rank. Gender is classified as the respondent's self-reported gender as male or female. Rank is classified as Enlisted E1–E3, Enlisted E4–E6, and Enlisted and Officer E7 and above.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A HOMOSEXUAL IN THE MILITARY

Respondents' reports of personal experiences as a homosexual in the military are presented in Table 2. Most homosexual/bisexual men and women (96 percent) agree that joining the military was the right choice to make, and almost all (98 percent) are proud of their work performance in the military. Only 10 percent of the sample considered that their performance evaluations have been affected by their sexuality. There was a statistically significant difference based on respondents' rank: 18 percent of E4–E6's reported that their performance evaluations have been effected by their sexuality, in contrast to 3 percent of E1–E3 personnel, and 0 percent of respondents E7 and above ($p < .05$).

Although only 16 percent of the sample had ever been investigated regarding their sexuality, 37 percent of women and 12 percent of men stated that they had been investigated or asked to declare their homosexuality ($p < .01$). An overwhelming proportion (85 percent) of active-duty homosexual men and women know someone who's been investigated or kicked out because of homosexuality. Approximately one-quarter of the respondents reported that their commander/department knew that they are homosexual. Many respondents (36 percent) considered themselves "out of the closet" in their military life. Women (61 percent) were significantly more likely to consider

Table 2. Percent Stating “Yes” to Statements Assessing Personal Experiences as a Homosexual/Bisexual in the Military

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
Do you feel that joining the military was the right choice for you?	96	96	100	97	95	100
Are you proud of your work performance in the military?	98	98	100	100	96	100
Have your performance evaluations been affected by your being gay?	10	9	16	3*	18*	0*
Have you ever been investigated regarding your sexuality or asked to declare your homosexuality by a military investigator or other military personnel?	16	12**	37**	12	18	17
Do you personally know anyone in the military who has been investigated or kicked out because of homosexuality?	85	84	90	68	93	91
Does your immediate Unit Commander/Department Head know that you are homosexual?	24	22	33	29	22	22
Are you “out of the closet” in your military life?	36	31*	61*	47	33	26
Do you plan to make the military a career?	56	52	77	27	56	82

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p≤.001

themselves “out” than men (31 percent) ($p < .05$). Fifty-six percent of respondents stated that they are still planning on making the military a career.

Tables 3 and 4 present the results regarding openness about homosexuality in the military. Respondents indicated a mean of 26 percent of “their co-workers in their department knew they were homosexual or bisexual.” Respondents were then asked to assess how comfortable their co-workers were with their sexual orientation. Sixty-three percent of respondents stated that their co-workers were somewhat comfortable or comfortable with the respondent’s sexual orientation. In order to gain a clearer picture of openness in the military compared to civilian life, questions were asked about openness among straight friends and family. Forty-one percent of the total sample stated that “they are open with many, nearly all or all of their straight friends,” and 43 percent agreed that “they are open with many, nearly all or all of their family members.”

ATTITUDES ABOUT THE “DON’T ASK, DON’T TELL” POLICY

Attitudes about the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy reported in Table 5 were investigated via a series of agree/disagree statements. The new policy is generally viewed as successful; however, attitudes indicate that lifting the current policy would not make homosexual men and women more likely to come “out.” Seventy-four percent agree that homosexual relations between military members are more prevalent today than they were before the policy was implemented. Seventy-nine percent agree that homosexual relations between military members are more accepted today than they were five years ago. Sixty-two percent of the sample agree that violence against homosexuals has decreased since “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” policy was implemented. However, 40

Table 3. Summary Statistics Assessing Personal Experiences as a Homosexual/
Bisexual in the Military

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
In general, about what percent of your military co- workers in your department know that you are homosexual/ bisexual?	R=0-100 \bar{x} =26 std=36	R=0-100 \bar{x} =25 std=35	R=0-100 \bar{x} =32 std=40	R=0-100 \bar{x} =31 std=40	R=0-100 \bar{x} =22 std=32	R=0-100 \bar{x} =28 std=38

*p<.05 R = Range

**p<.01

***p≤.001

Table 4. Questions That Assess Personal Experiences as a Homosexual in the
Military

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
In general, how comfortable are most of your co-workers with your sexual orientation? (% answering somewhat or very comfortable)	63	62	72	65	64	61
How open are you with your homosexuality among your straight friends? (% answering many or nearly or all know)	41	38	53	41	41	39
How open are you with your homosexuality among your family? (% answering many or nearly or all know)	43	39	57	32	46	48

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p≤.001

Table 5. Percent Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statements Assessing Attitudes about the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” Policy

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
Homosexual relations between military members are more prevalent today than they were before the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was implemented.	74	76	68	79	68	65
Homosexual relations between military members are more accepted today than they were 5 years ago.	79	77	89	74	82	78
Violence towards homosexuals in the military has decreased since “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”	62	63	58	62	63	61
Verbal harassment about homosexuality has increased since the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was implemented.	40	39	42	53	38	26
Most closeted homosexuals in the military would “come out of the closet” if the government would lift the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.	12	13	5	6	18	4
President Clinton has done enough to support homosexuals in the military.	12	14	0	6	18	4

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p≤.001

percent of the respondents agree that verbal harassment has increased and only 12 percent of active-duty homosexuals say that closeted gays would come out of the closet if the government lifted the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy. Only 12 percent of respondents agree that President Clinton has done enough to support homosexuals in the military.

ATTITUDES REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF HOMOSEXUALITY ON THE MILITARY

Tables 6, 7, and 8 present the results of data analysis of questions exploring the opinions of active-duty military homosexuals regarding the effects of homosexuality on the military. Questions also asked respondents to assess heterosexuals’ knowledge of and attitudes towards homosexuals and their effects on the military.

Table 6 reports the results of a series of agree/disagree statements regarding respondents’ opinions about the effects of homosexuality in the military. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents agreed that “for the good of the military, homosexuals should not be open about their sexuality.” According to 82 percent of respondents, “Unit commanders commonly bend the rules to protect some homosexual servicemembers.” Twenty percent of respondents agreed that “homosexuals in the military who are ‘out of the closet’ are bad for unit cohesiveness.” Statistically significant differences for this last question were found on the basis of gender: one-quarter of men and no women agreed with the statement ($p < .05$). According to 89 percent of the sample, “it is common for straight men to engage in homosexual acts in the military.” In contrast, thirty percent of respondents agreed that “after coming out to their straight co-workers, homosexuals in

Table 6. Percent Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statements Assessing Attitudes Regarding the Effects of Homosexuality on the Military

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
For the good of the military, homosexuals should not be open about their sexuality.	39	41	26	47	36	35
Unit commanders commonly bend the rules to protect some homosexual service members.	82	83	79	79	84	83
Homosexuals in the military who are "out of the closet" are bad for unit cohesiveness.	20	25*	0*	27	18	17
It is common for straight men to engage in homosexual acts in the military.	89	92	79	94	91	78
Straight men and women often cover for homosexual military personnel.	81	81	84	85	79	83
After coming out to their straight co-workers, homosexuals in the military are frequently harassed by them.	30	30	32	38	30	17
Homosexuals in the military frequently sexually harass their straight co-workers.	4	4	0	3	4	4
Straight service people often refuse the orders of military superiors who they suspect are homosexual.	3	3	0	0	4	4

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p≤.001

the military are frequently sexually harassed by them.” However, only 4 percent agreed that “homosexuals in the military frequently sexually harass their straight co-workers.” While it is commonly argued by opponents to homosexuals in the military that “straight service people often refuse the orders of military superiors who they suspect are homosexual,” only 3 percent of the sample agreed with the statement.

Table 7 reports the results of homosexual/bisexual military members agreeing or strongly agreeing with statements assessing attitudes about homosexuals in the military. Attempts to protect their identity may explain why most respondents (69 percent) agreed that “active-duty gay men and lesbians commonly engage in verbal abuse of homosexuals in order to protect their own identity.” The relationship between gay men and lesbians in the military appears to be strong. Very few of those surveyed (6 percent) agreed that “gay men and lesbians in the military have almost nothing in common.” Most respondents (96 percent) agreed that “gay men and lesbians look out for one another in the military.”

Many homosexual servicemembers in the survey (81 percent) agreed that “the proportion of homosexuals is higher in the military than in civilian life.” The majority of respondents (90 percent) agree that “homosexual military men and women can easily find safe areas to get together with other military homosexuals.” However, nearly everyone (99 percent) still agreed with the statement, “most homosexuals in the military are serving in the closet.”

Although stereotypes about homosexual behavior throughout society often influence attitudes about homosexuals in the military, many common assumptions do not hold true for homosexual military personnel. In fact, few of those sampled (16 percent)

Table 7. Percent Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statements Assessing Attitudes about Homosexuals in the Military

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
Active-duty gay men and lesbians commonly engage in verbal abuse of homosexuals in order to protect their own identity.	69	70	63	68	77	52
Gay men and lesbians in the military have almost nothing in common.	6	5	11	6	7	4
Gay men and lesbians look out for one another in the military.	96	96	95	97	95	96
The proportion of homosexuals is higher in the military than in civilian life.	81	82	79	91	79	74
Homosexual military men and women can easily find “safe” areas to get together with other military homosexuals.	90	91	84	91	89	91
Most homosexuals in the military are serving “in the closet.”	99	99	100	100	98	100
In the military, gay men are more promiscuous than straight men.	16	15	21	21	16	9
There are very few masculine lesbians in the military.	4	2	11	6	4	0
There are too many effeminate gay men in the military.	11	10	16	15	11	4
Being in the military helps homosexual men and women accept their homosexuality.	70	70	68	82	64	65
Military service provides an outlet for gay men to disprove their queerness.	47	49	37	56	43	43

*p<.05

**p<.01

***p≤.001

agreed that “in the military, gay men are more promiscuous than straight men.” Very few (4 percent) agreed that “there are very few masculine lesbians in the military.” Few homosexual men and women (11 percent) agreed that “there are too many effeminate gay men in the military.” Seventy percent of respondents agree that, “being in the military helps homosexual men and women accept their homosexuality.” Only about half (47 percent) agreed that “military service provides an outlet for gay men to disprove their queerness.”

Table 8 reports the results of questions asking respondents to report percentages. Many active-duty military homosexuals think that homosexuality is generally recognized and tolerated, even accepted, by heterosexuals in the military. Respondents indicated that a mean of 55 percent of “active-duty straight military personnel . . . know someone in the military who is openly homosexual.” In addition, respondents felt that a mean of 49 percent “of straight military personnel are comfortable with the idea of homosexuals in the military.” Only 25 percent “of straight military personnel are hostile towards the idea of homosexuals in the military.”

Table 8. Percent Responses Regarding Assessing Heterosexual Awareness of Homosexuals in the Military

	Total Sample	Gender		Rank		
		Male	Female	E1-E3	E4-E6	E7+
About what percent of active-duty straight military personnel do you think know someone in the military who is openly homosexual?	R=0-100 \bar{x} =55 std=24	R=0-100 \bar{x} =55 std=24	R=10-80 \bar{x} =55 std=21	R=1-90 \bar{x} =59 std=22	R=0-100 \bar{x} =55 std=23	R=0-100 \bar{x} =50 std=28
In your opinion, what percent of straight military personnel are comfortable with the idea of homosexuals in the military?	R=0-100 \bar{x} =49 std=20	R=0-100 \bar{x} =49 std=20	R=0-85 \bar{x} =51 std=22	R=1-85 \bar{x} =50 std=20	R=0-100 \bar{x} =49 std=18	R=0-80 \bar{x} =47 std=24
What percent of straight military personnel are hostile towards the idea of homosexuals in the military?	R=1-100 \bar{x} =25 std=20	R=0-100 \bar{x} =25 std=20	R=10-76 \bar{x} =24 std=20	R=0-100 \bar{x} =25 std=21	R=10-90 \bar{x} =27 std=21	R=10-100 \bar{x} =21 std=15

*p<.05

R = Range

**p<.01

***p≤.001

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As America's homosexual military population continues to remain anonymous throughout the United States military, assimilation into the dominant culture and change in social acceptance is gradually growing across the nation (Wilson 1992). Although slow, the change in governmental policy has allowed active-duty gay men and women to serve in the United States military honorably, as long as they do not engage in any homosexual behavior.° Often, military strategists and conservative political organizations complain that homosexual conduct “impairs the military mission” (Schmitt 1994), but no conclusive data exists to support this assumption.¶

On the contrary, according to the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, many homosexual men and women serve openly in the military while unit commanders allow the activity to go “unnoticed” (Schmitt 1995). Coupled with the growing acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle throughout the country, sexual orientation in the military has become much less of an issue than earlier media attention has suggested.

Although studies indicate that homosexual men and women have served effectively in the United States military, little or no research exists exploring servicemembers' attitudes and perceptions while being on active duty. This research study addressed the following research questions: What are the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of homosexual active-duty military personnel with respect to issues pertaining to the question of gays in the military? And more specifically, how do active-

duty military homosexual men and women assess the active-duty military heterosexual reaction to gay men and women serving in America's armed forces?

Honor, discipline, and courage have always been traditional values held in high standard by all military personnel and the country as a whole. Young men and women are socialized early in life to "act" a particular way and "engage" in gender-specific activities. Therefore, it is not surprising to find many homosexual men and women desiring military service in the hope of suppressing "homosexual" behavior while developing a "rough" persona. The fact that most homosexual/bisexual men and women agreed to the question that military service was the right choice may reinforce the belief that military service does in fact help develop aggressive personality traits. Furthermore, nearly all of those surveyed (98 percent) were proud of their work performance in the military, reiterating the positive influence of the military in a homosexual servicemember's life.

Being "out of the closet" also appears relatively prevalent within the military. With one-third of respondents (36 percent) answering that they considered themselves "out of the closet" in their military life but only 24 percent reporting that they are "out" to an immediate boss, some concern exists about being fairly evaluated at work. Also, with a majority of respondents (82 percent) stating that they are "out of the closet" in their personal life, it is not surprising to find a greater degree of feelings of acceptance at all levels of military service. Although men and women may initially join the military to suppress their homosexual desires, the greater degree of acceptance and camaraderie in today's military may allow homosexual men and women to come to terms with and accept their sexuality.

One servicemember wrote on the survey, “I believe the military fosters and supports a gay environment, especially for Navy men.” Another servicemember wrote, “My first experience was with a Navy guy who said to join the Navy to meet many gay men, so I did.” These quotes come from unsolicited written responses to the survey instrument and are often general in nature. The responses obtained do not come from specific questions and were chosen simply because they further illustrate how homosexual servicemembers view the heterosexual reaction to gay men and women in the military.

Still, 18 percent of those surveyed felt their performance evaluations were adversely affected by their sexuality. Although no documented evidence exists, younger soldiers who are rumored to be gay may be singled out with adverse evaluations. These adverse evaluations may be caused by inexperienced evaluators, guidelines that are less strict with junior personnel, or senior officials who have not had direct contact with the person being evaluated and rely solely upon hearsay. Additionally, nine respondents took the time to relate a personal experience or story on the survey instrument. Demands for sexual favors, witch hunts, and verbal harassment were all elements relayed through their stories.

The “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy appears to have had some degree of success integrating homosexual men and women in the military. Many soldiers plan on making the military a career (56 percent), especially most senior personnel (82 percent of those E7 and above) plan on making the military a career. Although the military has always admitted to having homosexuals in the military, it was always believed homosexual men and women were a significant minority (Ray 1993). Now legal to serve, it appears that

many homosexual men and women hide their sexuality until they are comfortable with their co-workers, and eventually share their sexual preferences after a strong personal relationship has developed. Misconceptions about homosexual men and women who join the military for sex or to prey on heterosexual men and women remain abundant throughout the branches. However, as heterosexual men and women develop respect and a good working relationship with homosexual men and women, less hate and discontent occurs, as evidenced by the 49 percent of those surveyed who reported that straight active-duty co-workers were comfortable with the idea of homosexuals in the military.

Even with the positive consequences of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” social acceptance still has a long way to go. Many (40 percent) agreed that verbal harassment had increased following integration of the new policy. With heightened media attention, continuous study and policy changes taking effect coupled with personnel downsizing, it is not surprising to find many soldiers weary and uncomfortable with the amount and rate of change. Although many verbally harass and argue against the idea of gays in the military, homosexual active-duty men and women overall (62 percent) agree that violence has decreased.

Many homosexual men and women are well aware of the consequences of divulging their sexuality and strive to “set the example” within their chain of command. Experience and seniority has taken its toll on active-duty homosexual men and women with 85 percent of survey respondents saying they personally know someone who was kicked out for being gay. The fact that nearly everyone (99 percent) agreed that most homosexual men and women are serving “in the closet” may indicate that sexuality is not the main reason for joining the military. Throughout the “gay subculture” it is rumored

that the military is full of gay men and women. Eighty-one percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement that “the proportion of homosexuals is higher in the military than in civilian life,” which further proves that many homosexuals join the military for a variety of reasons. This concept coupled with the 70 percent who agreed that “being in the military helps homosexual men and women accept their homosexuality” further reinforces the benefits of military service.

The United States military spent decades developing a strong chain of command and military hierarchy. Soldiers willing to fight for freedom, their homeland, and each other helps to form strong bonds between one another. This “soldier bonding” not only allows homosexual men and women to recognize and act on their true feelings, but also opens heterosexual men and women to diversify their sexual experience by having same-sex encounters. With 89 percent of active-duty gay men and lesbians agreeing to the statement that it is common for straight men to engage in homosexual acts in the military, all facets of sexuality are explored by military servicemembers, allowing a more educated choice to be made when choosing a relationship.

Although this study provides an interesting look into the lives of active-duty gay men and lesbians, it is important to state some limitations to this research. Because the data was gathered using snowball sampling, little diversity among branches of service is represented. The majority of the respondents were active-duty Navy, male, White, and most were in their early twenties, preventing any general conclusions about the population as a whole. The sample size gathered in this study is also relatively small, although it is considerably larger than any existing research.

Gradual change in attitudes and perceptions has allowed gay men and women across the nation to “come out” without fear of reprisal. Legal challenges across the country have gradually caused changes in legislation, allowing homosexual men and women to serve in the armed forces honorably. Many countries throughout the world now allow homosexual servicemembers to serve openly and few problems have been reported. As more and more people become familiar with the homosexual lifestyle and develop relationships with gays and lesbians, fear and hate may be replaced by acceptance.

Future research in the area of homosexuals in the military is certainly needed to better understand the reasons for joining the military and what impact military service has on the gay community. Unfortunately, even with the change in policy to allow homosexual men and women serve in the armed forces, this “hidden” population continues to be difficult to access and study. With future assimilation and gradual changes in legislature we can only hope that the United States military paves the way for equal rights among all subcultures.

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APPENDIX

To the Participant:

My name is Rodney Parks and I am working on my master's degree in Sociology at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. My goal is to survey homosexual/bisexual men and women currently on active duty in the United States armed forces as my master's thesis project. This survey asks about the opinions, attitudes, and experiences of being a homosexual/bisexual in the military. Very little research has been done on gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals in the military. My interest in this topic began with my own experience as a homosexual Navy enlisted man. After eight years of active-duty military service, I was honorably discharged in February 1996 and presently remain on active reserve duty.

This survey is designed only for those individuals who identify themselves as either homosexual or bisexual. If you do not identify with either of these categories thank you for your time, however, this survey is not designed for you.

Your participation in this study of active-duty military homosexual men and women is **completely voluntary**. You may terminate participation at any time if you so desire.

The survey is **anonymous**. No list of people to whom the survey is distributed will be kept. You will not be identified in any way as a result of your participation. In order to protect the identity of all respondents, do not put your name or other specifically identifying information anywhere on the questionnaire. This way, no one will be able to know who answered any survey.

The survey is **confidential**. No one but myself and my thesis advisor will have access to any of the completed questionnaires. All results will be reported in the aggregate only.

Upon completion of the survey, please return it to me in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope as soon as you possibly can. Do not put your name, address, or other identifying information on the questionnaire.

I would like to involve as many men and women as possible on this project. I would also appreciate your help in distributing surveys and am happy to supply you with copies to give out to other homosexual military personnel. If you know other active-duty homosexual/bisexual military members, please either give them a survey or ask them to contact me. No surveys should be distributed on military property. Finally, if you have any questions, or if you would like information about the results of this research, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you very much for volunteering your time and energy to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Rodney L. Parks
P.O. Box 136
Sullivan, MO 63080
(619) 294-2991

Opinions Regarding Your Sexuality and the Military: For each statement below, please fill in the blanks or indicate with a checkmark the best response.

How many total personnel are in your unit/department? _____

In general, about what percent of your military co-workers in your department know that you are homosexual/bisexual? _____%

In general, how comfortable are most of your co-workers with your sexual orientation?

- No one knows
 Very uncomfortable
 Somewhat uncomfortable
 Somewhat comfortable
 Very comfortable

Does your immediate Unit Commander/Department Head know that you are homosexual?

- No Yes

If no, do you think your immediate Unit Commander/Department Head suspects that you are homosexual?

- No Yes

About what percent of active-duty straight military personnel do you think know someone in the military who is openly homosexual? _____%

In your opinion, what percent of straight military personnel are comfortable with the idea of homosexuals in the military? _____%

What percent of straight military personnel are hostile towards the idea of homosexuals in the military? _____%

As a member of the military, have you ever experienced discrimination due to your Homosexual/bisexual orientation?

- No Yes

If yes, please describe the discrimination:

Are you "out of the closet" in your military life? No Yes

Are you "out of the closet" in your personal life? No Yes

For each statement below, please indicate with a checkmark the response that best describes your point of view. Please check whether you *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *agree*, or *strongly agree* with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Homosexual relations between military members are more prevalent today than they were before the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Violence towards homosexuals in the military has decreased since "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For the good of the military, homosexuals should not be open about their sexuality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Active-duty gay men and lesbians commonly engage in verbal abuse of homosexuals in order to protect their own identity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unit commanders commonly bend the rules to protect some homosexual service members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homosexual relations between military members are more accepted today than they were 5 years ago.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay men and lesbians in the military have almost nothing in common.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal harassment about homosexuality has increased since the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy was implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homosexuals in the military who are "out of the closet" are bad for unit cohesiveness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gay men and lesbians look out for one another in the military.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The proportion of homosexuals is higher in the military than in civilian life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is common for straight men to engage in homosexual acts in the military.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homosexual military men and women can easily find "safe" areas to get together with other military homosexuals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most homosexuals in the military are serving "in the closet."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Straight men and women often cover for homosexual military personnel.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
In the military, gay men are more promiscuous than straight men.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are very few masculine lesbians in the military.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most closeted homosexuals in the military would "come out of the closet" if the government would lift the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
After coming out to their straight co-workers, homosexuals in the military are frequently sexually harassed by them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homosexuals in the military frequently sexually harass their straight co-workers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are too many effeminate gay men in the military.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
President Clinton has done enough to support homosexuals in the military.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Military service provides an outlet for gay men to disprove their queerness.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straight service people often refuse the orders of military superiors who they suspect are homosexual.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being in the military helps homosexual men and women accept their homosexuality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straight people in the military think that homosexuals are predators who constantly trying to seduce heterosexuals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

About Your Military Career: For each statement below, please fill in the blanks or indicate with a checkmark where appropriate.

What year did you enter the military? _____

What is your Rank/Rate? _____

What branch of service are you currently in?

- Army
- Navy
- Air Force
- Marines
- Coast Guard

At the time you enlisted, what were your reasons for joining the military?

Do you feel that joining the military was the right choice for you? No Yes

Do you plan to make the military a career? No Yes

Did you serve in Operation Desert Shield/Storm? No Yes

If yes, did any of your comrades know you were homosexual? No Yes

How would you classify your latest performance in the military?

- Below Average
- Above Average
- About Average
- Superior

Are you proud of your work performance in the military? No Yes

Have your performance evaluations been affected by your being gay? No Yes

If yes, please explain:

Demographic Characteristics: For each statement below, please indicate with a checkmark the best response or fill in the blanks where appropriate.

What is your gender? Male Female

What is your age? _____

What is your ethnicity?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White/European American | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Alaskan Native |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify _____) |

What is your highest level of education?

- High School diploma or GED
- Vocational-technical certificate
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate classes
- Graduate degree
- Other (please specify _____)

How would you classify your current sexuality?

- Homosexual/Gay/Lesbian Bisexual

Have you considered yourself heterosexual/straight? No Yes

If you are homosexual, have you ever considered yourself bisexual? No Yes

Have you ever been married to someone of the opposite sex? No Yes

If yes, why were you married?

What is your legal marital status? _____

Are you currently in a homosexual relationship? No Yes

If yes, are you living together? No Yes

What State were you in when you completed this survey?

- California
- Virginia
- Other (please specify _____)

In your opinion, what causes homosexuality?

Thank you for helping me with this project. Your time and efforts in completing this survey are greatly appreciated. Please feel free to include any information that you think is important for me to know about your experiences regarding homosexuality in the military.

VITA

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Education:

M.A. Applied Sociology
May 2000; Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

B.S. Criminal Justice
May 1995; Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

A.A. Liberal Arts
December 1991; City Colleges of Chicago (European Division), Sigonella, Italy

Related Experience:

- Database System Support, Automated Data Processing, Atlanta, GA, May 1999–Present.
- Programmer, Southwestern Bell Corp., St. Louis, MO, April 1998–May 1999.
Clinical Researcher, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, April 1997–April 1998.
- Surgical Assistant, Sharpe Memorial Hospital, San Diego, CA May 1996–April 1997
- Research Assistant, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA, January 1996–May 1996.

Activities and Awards:

Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society, 1996
Recipient of Graduate Assistantship, 1996
Recipient of Washington University Research Award, 1998

Peer Reviewed Presentations:

1. R. Parks, L. Kim, B. Freeman, D. Jeffe, S. Mutha, B. Evanoff, V. Fraser. "Knowledge and Compliance with Universal Precautions Among OR Staff." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Operating Room Nurses (AORN) Congress, Orlando, FL, March 30th, 1998.
2. R. Parks, B. Freeman, L. Kim, S. Meadows, D. Jeffe, S. Mutha, B. Evanoff, V. Fraser. "Knowledge and Compliance with Universal Precautions Among Surgical Staff." Presented at the 25th Annual Meeting of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc., San Diego, CA, May 13th, 1998.

3. S. Mutha, D.B. Jeffe, L.E. Kim, B.A. Evanoff, R.L. Parks, V.J. Fraser. "Health Care Workers' Knowledge of Blood-borne Pathogen Transmission: Ignorance Is Not Bliss." Presented at the 21st Annual Meeting of the Society of General Internal Medicine, Chicago, IL, April 23–25, 1998.
4. L. Kim, B. Evanoff, R. Parks, C. Haase, D. Andereck, D. Jeffe, S. Mutha, V. Fraser. "Prevention of Occupational Blood-borne Pathogen Exposure Among Emergency Department Personnel." Presented at the 25th Annual Meeting of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc., San Diego, CA, May 11th, 1998.
5. B. Freeman, R. Parks, L. Kim, D. Jeffe, S. Mutha, B. Evanoff, V. Fraser. "Knowledge of Risk of Contracting Blood-borne Pathogens and Compliance with Universal Precautions Among Attending Surgeons and Residents." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American College of Surgeons, Orlando, FL, October 25–30, 1998.
6. L. Kim, R. Parks, D. Jeffe, B. Evanoff, B. Freeman and V. Fraser. "Improved Compliance with Universal Precautions Among Operating Room and Emergency Department Personnel Following an Educational Intervention." Presented at the 4th Meeting of the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Baltimore, MD, March 11–13, 1999.
7. L. Kim, R. Parks, B. Freeman, D. Jeffe, B. Evanoff, V. Fraser. "Improved Compliance with Universal Precautions in the Operating Room Following an Educational Intervention." Presented at the 9th Annual Meeting of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, San Francisco, CA, April 18–20, 1999.
8. B. Freeman, R. Parks, L. Kim, D. Jeffe, B. Evanoff, V. Fraser. "Impact of Educational Interventions on Operating Room Safety." Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American College of Surgeons, San Francisco, CA, October 25–30, 1999.