

# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM



*Photo: Cory Potts*

*A Counter-Recruitment and Anti-Draft Outreach Packet  
for Lesbians and Gay Men*

*Produced by Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention (LAGAI)  
3543 - 18th Street #26, San Francisco, California 94110*





# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, 3543 - 18th Street, # 26, San Francisco, CA 94110*

## WHO WHAT WHY WHEN WHERE HOW WHO WHAT WHY WHEN WHERE HOW WHO WHAT WHY WHEN WHERE HOW

In November of 1990, hundreds of thousands of women and men from the u.s. and other countries waited, armed to the teeth, in Saudi Arabia and other parts of the middle east to attack Iraq. The u.s. was clear that there would be no negotiated settlement. No one, except the highest levels of the u.s. government, had any idea that two months after the "war" began, it would be over, leaving maybe 200,000 Iraqis dead. Less than 200 americans were killed in that war, over half from mistakes or "friendly fire."

In November, 1990, we in LAGAI were trying to build an anti-war movement. At the same time, the issue of lesbians and gays in the military had taken the center stage in the gay community. A high ranking military official was outed. A military spokesperson stated that lesbians and gay men would be sent to the Gulf, and when they came back, they'd be thrown out. A week later it was clarified. Lesbians and gay men wouldn't be sent to the Gulf, the military declared (choosing to ignore that thousands had already gone). Assimilationist gay "leaders" demanded our right to be in the military. Meanwhile, conscientious objectors were taken in chains to the Gulf, or jailed.

There also seemed a strong possibility that if a protracted ground war developed, a draft might be instituted, at least for medical personnel. LAGAI decided to prepare to do draft and counter-recruitment counseling for lesbians and gay men. We attended a training put on by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCCO). While the training was very thorough about

people's rights versus the draft and military recruiters, the material available for lesbians and gay men was pretty sparse.

Like many other anti-war activists, we spent October, 1990, through May, 1991 demonstrating against the massive slaughter of the Iraqi people, and then against the terror the government of Kuwait inflicted on the Palestinian population after "liberation." At that point, we decided that we would continue with our counter-recruitment work in the lesbian/gay community. Frustrated with the lack of literature for lesbian and gay youth, we decided to put together this packet.

Young lesbians and gay men join the military for a lot of the same reasons other people do, to get out of Stockton. Or Dubuque. Or Weed, Bend, Indianapolis, Columbus, or even San Francisco or New York City. They join the military because there are very few options for young people who don't come from the middle class, especially if they're people of color. They join the military to get to somewhere where there will be other queers, or to get away from their families.

If the lesbians and gay men who join the military are lucky, they end up on a base with a gay counterculture. If they are unlucky, they may get caught up in a military witch-hunt, and may be thrown in jail or dishonorably discharged. All of them live with the constant fear of discovery. Some of their stories are included in this packet. We in LAGAI strongly oppose the harassment, intimidation,



**violence and terror that the military inflicts on lesbian and gay service people.**

But the military isn't a job program for young people. It's the muscle behind u.s. imperialism. The function of every single person in the military is to enable the u.s. government to send as many armed people as it wants anywhere in the world to enforce its policies. without this massive and totally frightening force, the u.s. wouldn't be allowed to use 60% of the world's resources.

In May of 1992, the show of military force (this year's invasion) was in Los Angeles, where thousands of u.s. marines and soldiers were sent to put down the rebellion after the Rodney King verdict. That wasn't the first time troops have been used as a police force in this country. The army was called out against riots in the African-American communities in the 1960's, against anti-war demonstrators in the 1960's and 1970's. The army and national guard have often been used against strikers, including the Hormel strike in 1986 and the post office strike in 1970.

Not only are the military used as police, but the police are being militarized. Big city police now have tanks, assault weapons, and SWAT teams. Although gay people may not be allowed to be open in the military, they are recruited by the police force in some big cities, including San Francisco. We do not believe "cop" is an appropriate or desirable occupation for lesbians or gay men. This packet includes a flier we wrote to put that out to our community.

This packet includes articles from a gay man who was kicked out of the military for being gay, and a lesbian who left. There are articles on the persecution of lesbians and gay men at Parris Island and elsewhere, and on the persecution of Gulf war resisters. There are articles from a Vietnam era draft-dodging drag queen, and a gay Vietnam veteran. There is a flyer from the American Friends Service Committee, which lists training programs and scholarships and some general counter recruitment material, including information about how to get out of delayed entry programs. There are some LAGAI fliers and articles about gays in the military.

We hope groups in other communities will find this helpful in doing counter-recruitment or anti-draft outreach to youth. We have done some tabling in the Polk District, an area where a lot of queer youth hang out, and have had pretty good response. We recommend having condoms, bleach and safer sex information to give out at your table, as well as this kind of literature. Please contact us if we can help you in doing this work.

We chose the packet format because it gives us, and you, flexibility. Please add material about local

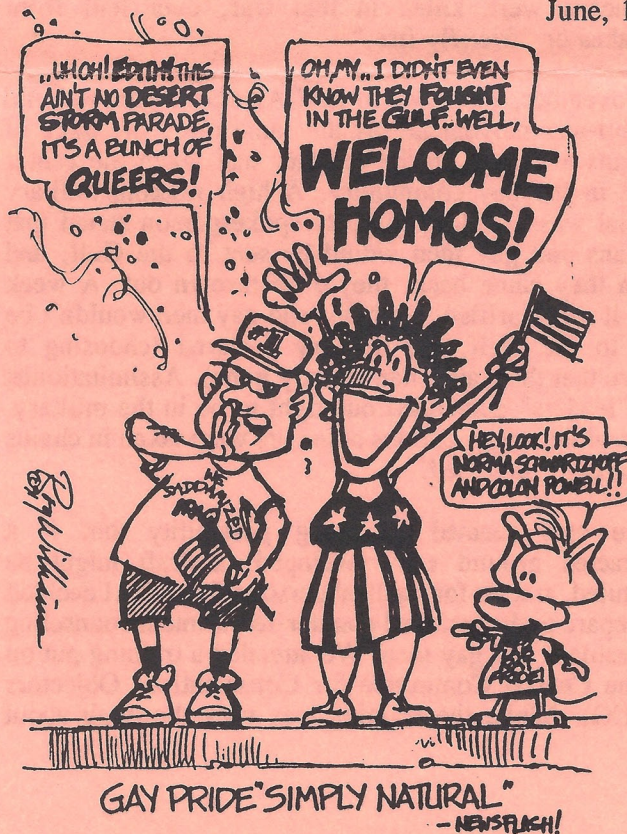
resources, or about what your group is doing, or thinking. We are open to including new articles in the packet, so send them to us.

We want to thank the Resist Foundation which provided us a grant of \$600 to help with the cost of the packet. Because of this grant we are able to offer the packet for a suggested donation of \$3.00, which represents our costs. The packet is free to individuals who need it, and can't pay \$3.00. (To request money from Resist, or to give them some, you can contact them at One Summer Street, Somerville, MA 02143 (617/623-5110).

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention (LAGAI) was started in 1983 as a Central America solidarity group. We have since taken on a more general gay liberation focus, although we still do a lot of anti-intervention, anti-imperialism work. We also do a lot of AIDS work, and work against racism, sexism, union-busting, and other oppressions, as well as trying to put a more gay liberation perspective into the gay community and into the left. We are, and always have been a group of independent gay leftists, of the anarchist or anarcho-communist type, and we look forward to making a revolution soon, so we can have considerably more fun than we're having now. We are not affiliated with any left sectarian group, and frankly we doubt that they would want to be affiliated with us.*

LAGAI publishes a newsletter every two or three months. The article "Real Queers Don't Follow Orders" was first published in the LAGAI newsletter, *Out*. To subscribe (free-\$1,000,000) or get sample copies, write to us at 3543-18th Street, #26, San Francisco, CA 94110.

June, 1992





# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, 3543 18th St.,  
Box 26, San Francisco, CA 94110*

## I Was A Teenage Draft Dodger

by Tede Mathews

In 1970 I passed over a threshold that marked my departure from the ranks of the politically clueless. The year commenced with my folks and me glued to the TV, watching the obscene life-and-death game of the draft lottery unfold before our panic stricken eyes. It as a lottery with no winners except the military-industrial complex. My birthdate was selected in fourth place, i.e. young men born on my birthdate would be swept up in the first call to service of the new year. Before the first spring blossoms had budded, I travelled northward to begin my underground life as a draft dodger.

Up to that point, I had been one of the few young men in West Palm Beach, Florida to be publicly, actively opposed to the Vietnam War. I had stood in front of the courthouse reading the litany of the war dead, joining the elders of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I was writing a draft advisory column for our underground hippie rag "The Different Drummer." I had been known to enter the local Selective Service offices to lecture the receptionists on why they should refuse to work for a death machine.

All this time, I was profoundly closeted, both to the world and to myself. Many of my straight hippie friends had opted out of the draft by declaring themselves homosexuals. Ironically, I chose not to take this option.

My folks were very supportive of me throughout my ordeal. They helped me pack up my belongings and my mutt Karma one late January night. I had been advised by local Quakers to utilize their underground railroad to Canada. Instead, I decided to settle in Boston, adamant in my justification that my refusal to be a murderer should not deny me my right to live in (and change) the land of my birth.

Once in Boston, I began working in a Xmas ornament factory run by a Scrooge-like foreman in South Boston (Southie). I assumed an alias and resolved to keep a safe distance from other human beings and their prying questions. I found it increasingly difficult to maintain my safe distance. After all, the "Revolution" was erupting all around me. Actually, it seemed to be centered mostly in the area university campuses and the periphery communes of white upper-middle class kids dropping in and out of their class identities. The front line of the struggle had not made it Southie. On weekends I would attend teach-ins at Harvard or love-ins on the Boston Commons. I'd read the Black Panther paper in the factory lunchroom, thereby earning the ire of my Southie co-workers, generally a militantly racist crew.



I was also becoming increasingly aware of the gay liberation movement's flaming faggots. My first close encounter of the queer kind was when I was solicited to purchase a copy of Fag Rag near Harvard Square. After I recovered from my heart tremor, I did buy one.

About that time, I was finding my isolation to be both personally and politically confining. I answered the call to go to Washington D.C. on Mayday to "shut down the government." I found the spectacle of thousands of like-minded radicals running wild past the symbols of war and repression to be an empowering experience. It was the stuff of great (anti)war stories. For the first time in my life, I felt connected to something that might be considered "a community."

When I returned to Boston I jumped head first into activism. I volunteered at The Red Book Bookstore and the People's Media Center. I helped to organize rent strikes through the Cambridge Tenants' Organizing Committee. I joined a "men's group." I got food stamps as a revolutionary act. Then I slipped into my first meeting of Gay Male Liberation.

The next period of time sped by at a dizzying pace. I left the Red Book and started to work with Fag Rag and the Gay Hot Line. Our men's group transformed into a gay rap group. I was Janis Joplin at the Halloween dance. I started living in drag, passing as a "woman" in the eyes of the straight world. I had started the year with an assumed identity and ended it with an assumed gender. I tell you, it was one hell of a year!

About that time an individual came to live at our Gay Liberation Front commune. He seemed to have not past but, then again, neither did I. The Freaking Fag Revolution accepted all refugees from Amerika with open arms. At one point his camera, containing photos of all of us, mysteriously disappeared. Also, at house meetings he subtly sowed discontent between the various housemates. The commune eventually disintegrated and he moved on, his work in Boston accomplished.

Throughout this whole period, my folks had refused to speak to the FBI men haunting their house. To maintain contact, I would periodically hitch to various surrounding towns and states to call them. Although my right-wing siblings wanted them to turn me in ("country before family"), they remained steadfast in their support.

One hellish night I was up with an underage gay runaway who I had befriended. He had attempted an overdose, and we spent the entire night giving him hot and cold baths, and walking the hallway of my apartment. We finally dozed off in my bed at the crack of dawn.

A couple of hours later a loud knock came at the front door, followed by a very butch "Open up, this is the FBI." My roommate squawked at them to leave us alone, but they eventually convinced him to open up. They barged into my room, pointed at me and pulled me naked from my bed, and handcuffed me between two of the three agents present. The whole time they were letting loose with every antigay remark





they could think of. I retorted that if they hated fags so much, why did they have a naked one handcuffed between them.

They whisked me off to the Boston FBI headquarters. By the time they paraded me through a large office full of secretaries, my teeth had stopped chattering. I was put in a small dark room with a single white light glaring in my eyes. It was the hour of my interrogation. An FBI agent threatened me, threatened to arrest my folks, offered me mercy, etc. if only I'd cooperate with them. I only said that I refused to say anything until I spoke with my lawyer. I was hoping that my dizzy roommate had heard my departing plea to call my friend, the professor. The professor had contacts with local pacifist groups who aided draft dodgers.

When I proved to be too discreet for mon agent, they tossed me in a holding tank with several unsavory mafioso types who began a litany of what should be done to faggots. I promptly took off one of my clogs and set to clanging it across the cell's bars. I refused to stop until they moved me and allowed me my phone calls.

That night I was removed to the Charles Street Jail. I had heard too many horror stories about gay men being picked up for cruising in the parks and thrown into the drunk tank to be repeatedly raped. My ravishingly feminine appearance set off quite a ruckus with prisoners banging the bars, yelling for "her" to be thrown to them for a little "pussy." I prayed for an army of amazons to rescue me, but instead I had to suffer through several strip searches by several obnoxious cops as they searched my ass for "contraband." Finally I was led to my cell. I was relieved to find out that federal prisoners had a separate wing. I ignored my cell mate and quickly went to sleep, throwing my maxi-coat over my henna-red tresses.



The next day, several of my Gay Liberation Front friends showed up with a lawyer. The FBI tried to get my bail raised to some ridiculous level, but the judge refused their arguments of my danger to society. I felt like blowing him a kiss!

So I was out on the streets again, thanks to the Quakers who fronted my bail money. The FBI and the State of Florida wanted to extradite me back to the Sunshine State, so that they could have a show trial. My lawyer finally worked out an agreement that they would drop all charges against me if I would go through another physical and comply with the results. I readily agreed and soon I was on the South Boston bus on my way to the Army base. I can safely wager that the South Boston Army Base had not seen the likes of me before. After removing 90% of my body hair (use your imagination as to what hair I left), I put on my best black lace garter belt and fishnet hose with matching panties. Over that I wore a fetching coral crepe pantsuit, my black fur coat (what becomes a legend most?) and every rhinestone I could borrow. To add to the effect, I applied long fake fingernails, and had my hair done up like a Dolly Parton wig.

As I sashayed into the waiting room full of fresh cannon fodder, all eyes were upon me. The prudent military decided to put me through my physical alone. After a lavish strip tease, I teetered about on my lavender pumps, refusing to go barefoot unless the Army replaced my fishnets. Finally, I was led to a bench in the hallway to wait my turn with the psychiatrist. I could see into the changing room and it was full of men taking their clothes off. To ensure my classification, I flew into the room and took hold of a very shocked young man's "member." I blurted out that it was the most beautiful cock in God's creation, and could I please kiss it? Before my blushing suitor could respond, two burly MPs carried me into the psychiatrist's office.

Suffice to say that the poor shrink had trouble maintaining his composure. He was the last act in my performance piece, and I planned to leave that army base in a blaze of glory. I flirted with him shamelessly. When he asked me if I had ever had homosexual fantasies, I laughed out loud and exclaimed, "Dahling, I am a homosexual fantasy!" With that note, the curtain dropped and I was escorted back to my drag and shown to the bus stop.

Thus ended my divorce from Uncle Sam. Although I feel in my heart that being gay was linked with my refusal to be a murderer in a racist war, that obviously is not true for all lesbians and gay men.

Now, more than ever, gays are fighting to stay in the military. There are many reasons, economic, political and psychological, why this is so. If that's what they want to do, so be it. I know that I can never align myself with any move to support the existence of the murderous military machine. I remain proud, to this day, of my resistance to that machine.



# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, 3543 - 18th Street, # 26, San Francisco, CA 94110*

## MANY WERE CALLED, SOME DIDN'T ANSWER

In October 1992, two months after the first military troops were sent to the Persian Gulf region and in response to a flood of applications for conscientious objector status, president bush signed an executive order which effectively cut off access to conscientious objector status. Prior to the issuance of this order, any person applying for C.O. status would be held in their present location pending the outcome of the application. The new executive order required that any C.O. applicant be sent on to their next duty assignment and the application handled "when time permitted." Generally, in "non-hostile" times, 50% of the applications would be denied. During this new period, 90% were denied.

More than 2500 men and women applied for C.O. status during the Persian Gulf war. This was a 350% increase over the number of applications that would have been expected during "non-hostile" times. One factor for this increase may have been that when enlisted personnel saw that the u.s. government clearly intended to bomb the hell out of Iraq, the likelihood that they would have to kill and/or die greatly increased. This was not likely to be a repeat of Grenada, Honduras or Panama. Enlisted personnel saw and experienced first hand the determination of the u.s. government to use the massive weaponry that was being transported to the Persian Gulf and 2500 of them said "NO."

Because of the executive order, the processing of all C.O. applications stopped and most of the applicants were forced onto transports to Saudi Arabia, some in chains. People practiced many different types of resistance. Some of those whose applications for C.O. status were denied went ahead and reluctantly carried out their duties. Others went AWOL (absent without leave), joined the protest movements or refused to follow orders. The military admits that 4,000



*Photo: Jane Philomen Cleland*

enlisted personnel went AWOL. A group of marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina organized a one-day work stoppage for which they were court-martialled (and initially charged with mutiny). During that time, national guards at Fort hood, Texas were arrested for holding meetings about forced overtime and racial harassment.

150 resisters were ultimately charged with a variety of offenses including

Desertion with Intent to avoid Hazardous Duty, Missing Troop Movement, Assault (for resisting forced transport), Conspiring to Strike and Solicitation to Desert. The 150 who were court-martialled were primarily the most outspoken on their commitment not to kill, or were attempting to organize within the military. Others, however, had maintained a low profile. Commanding officers used intimidation tactics against resisters on a regular basis, suggesting that perhaps they might need to be "beaten into line."

In military prisons, the resisters were subjected to "reindoctrination," which meant constant harassment and efforts to destroy their commitments and their spirit. This meant, among other things, being forced to repeat odious chants such as "2, 4, 6, 8, rape, kill, mutilate."

Of the 150 who were court-martialed, about 50% were marines. Approximately 60% were people of color, mostly African-American, Latino and Native American, and 25% were women (who make up 10-15% of general membership of the armed forces). A half-dozen or so were medical personnel. Some resisters were threatened with death sentences or life terms for their acts of resistance. Everyone was convicted and sentences ranged from 90 days to 6 years. A handful were released early, but most have or will serve their entire sentence. As of June 1992, 17 are still in jail.

*The ANTI-WARRIOR is a newsletter by, for and about military resisters. For information or to subscribe, contact them at 48 Shattuck Sq., #129, Berkeley, CA 94704, 510-273-2427.*



# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, 3543 - 18th Street, # 26, San Francisco, CA 94110*

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE DELAYED ENTRY PROGRAM

If you joined the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard under the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and you've changed your mind about enlisting, there are groups and people who can assist you.

Getting out of the DEP is safe and legal. Once you are released from the DEP you will have no further military obligation, and you won't receive a bad record. The process isn't difficult, but you must act soon. After you report for active duty it will be very difficult to get out.

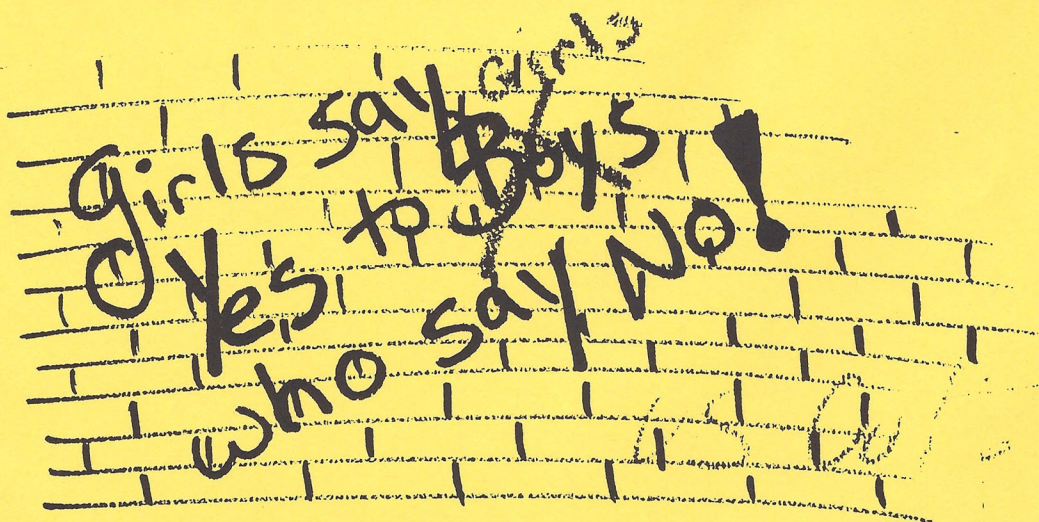
The DEP is a "sign now-pay later" plan for military service. You sign the enlistment agreement (which is not a contract), take an oath, and are assigned a reporting date for active duty. You aren't obliged to follow orders but your recruiter will probably keep close tabs on you. They have quotas to meet.

To get out of the DEP you simply write a letter to your recruiting commander saying that you want to be released (separated) from the DEP and the military. This letter is called your separation request. In your request you will explain why you want to be separated and give evidence to support your reasons. Next you will be interviewed by someone in your recruiting command. Then you will probably be separated. If you are not separated right away, there are a few more steps you can take. It's that easy.

If time is running out, if your reporting date is within 4 weeks (one month), you may want to request a delay in your reporting date first.

### Some Tips:

- *Don't ask your recruiter for help.* They'll try anything to keep you in.
- *Never go alone.* After informing the recruiting command of your intentions, always have someone with you.
- *Be firm about wanting out of the DEP.* They'll bend over backwards trying to get you to change your mind.
- *Read everything before you sign.* Only sign forms which are part of the separation process.
- *You are not legally or morally bound by any "enlistment agreement" which you may have signed.*



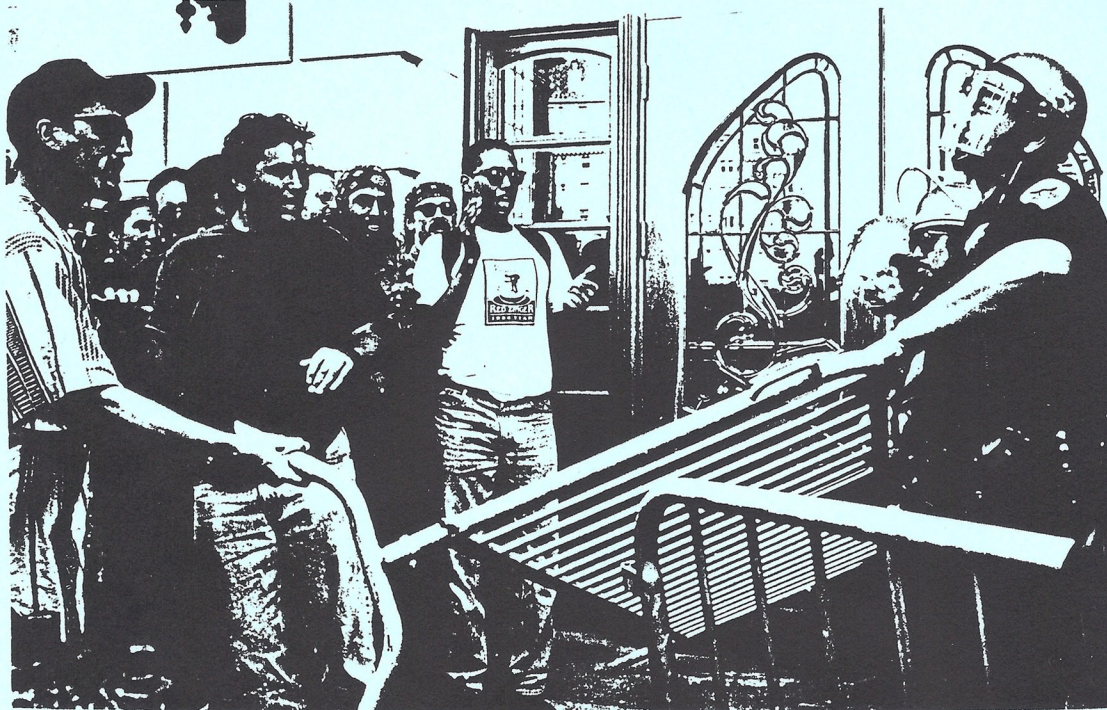
For more information contact:  
LAGAI (415) 921-5756  
CCCO (415) 974-3002



# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, 3543 - 18th Street, # 26, San Francisco, CA 94110*

## QUEER COPS? NO THANKS!



*Photo: Jane Philomen Cleland*

Bay Area police departments are trying to entice queers into their ranks. They say it's a good-paying, exciting job. We say it's bullshit. The straight ruling class has recognized the potential of a united queer liberation movement and they try to divide us amongst ourselves. By getting queers to join the police forces they are acting to protect a homophobic, heterosexist establishment.

If it weren't for the police, perhaps Lesbian/Gay liberation wouldn't have

had such a flaming beginning. But Stonewall was a riot against police violence. To invite the police into the queer community, and into a Lesbian/Gay Parade which commemorates a riot is bizarre and, insulting. It insults the memory of the Dyke who fought the police from the door of the Stonewall Inn to "car door to car again." It insults the Puerto Rican Drag Queens who fought back that summer night in 1969.

The reason the state wants to have queer cops isn't so they can be more sensitive to our issues. It's so they can exercise control over the Lesbian/Gay community. They use queer cops to infiltrate our groups, openly or secretly, as when Lea Militello and Sally DeHaven tried to infiltrate Queer Nation. People shouldn't have been shocked when Militello used the information she'd gathered from going to meetings to identify people for prosecution after the AB 101 riot in 1991. That's her job.

Queer cops prevent street merchants from making a living; queer cops arrest the homeless for hanging out in front of Castro Street businesses; queer cops carry out evictions so landlords can raise rents; queer cops try to sabotage queer movements. Before ACT UP's October 6, 1989 action, queer cops went through the Castro "warning" merchants that ACT UP was a violent group coming into the Castro to "make trouble." It was queer cops who organized to tear down activist fliers - the only kind of advertising grassroots groups can afford. Queer cops do everything het cops do - and it's still wrong.

During the recent uprising in L.A. following the Rodney King verdict, cops from all over were sent to L.A. to put down the people's expression of rage. Queer cops included.

No good is accomplished by having queer cops. Queer cops don't prevent queer bashings, like Black cops don't prevent racist attacks, like women cops don't stop rape.

## QUEER COPS $\neq$ QUEER LIBERATION



# WE LIKE OUR QUEERS OUT OF UNIFORM

*Lesbians and Gays Against Intervention, 3543 18th St.,  
Box 26, San Francisco, CA 94110*

## It Was a Big Mistake

*an interview with Janine Abernathy*

*Janine is a 27-year old Black woman from Oakland, CA. She spent six years in the Navy.*

I went into the military in 1983, the Navy. I wasn't out-out, but I knew my sexuality. I was eighteen at that point and I was going to clubs and I guess I looked around and I had no place to go and here it's like ok, you have no other options than to go into the military. That's what I did. I went into the Navy, and my first day, I knew it was the **wrong** decision. I knew I had made a mistake. I saw all these people, they were yelling and screaming and calling us names, and I'm like what have I done to deserve this. It was very intimidating, very threatening. So you know I had no place to go, I couldn't come back. You know, I could go home, but to what? What are you going home to? My mom didn't want me there. I had to have somewhere to go.

Most of the time in the Navy I was afraid. I was afraid someone would find out. I was smart enough at the beginning to know people must not know. But I remember the first time in my boot camp company there were lesbians all around. My company commander was a lesbian. As a matter of fact, after boot camp there was a bit of a scandal and a witchhunt. I believe seven women were kicked out. Unfortunately what happens when you're in the military is that they make an example out of you. They put you on legal hold. That means you're there for a month being processed out, or someone might be there for six months or eight months on legal hold. During that time, you're ridiculed. Your friends, people you thought were your friends, they abandon you, people are afraid to be seen with you because people might think they are [gay] too.

*What was your job?*

I was an electronic technician-cryptologic. I was technician with a top-secret clearance. I repaired computer systems, cryptologic gear, teletypes, anything usually on a base dealing with electronics. It could be from the light outlet to the microwave to a million-dollar computer system. I was trained in the military to do that.

The best I would probably be able to do outside is to get a job as a copier repair person. Just because the training that I was given is basically black-box troubleshooting, where you can get it down to a certain area, a certain board, but to really work out here in the civilian field, you really have to understand the technology theory. We were given that, but we were given the very basics of that, and it wouldn't get you very far in the outside world.

At the end of my career, I would say I was making good money, but the reason being the



fact that I married. It was a marriage of convenience; I married a gay man, and when you're married, you make more money. So at the end of my career, I was making about \$1600 a month, which is good money for a sailor.

Now, I'm back in school, I'm in Washington, D.C. at Howard University majoring in civil engineering. And it's wild, because it feels like I'm starting my life all over again.

*What about racism as you experienced it in the Navy?*

It definitely exists. I had a situation with this guy, he was an instructor of mine, and I was the only female in my class, it was a very small class, it was a class of six, and he was what you'd call a redneck, a good old boy. And he told me my first day there, you don't belong here, and I'm going to be sure you don't get through here. I made complaints about this man. Everyone was having a difficult time in the course, but for some reason they singled me out, so I just stuck in there. I stuck in there and I made it through his section of the school, and what happened afterward was that they were watching me, the school was watching me, it was like Abernathy has a problem, she has a learning problem. But in fact, I graduated top of my class.

The KKK is there. When I was in boot camp, the KKK was there, when I was in Pensacola, the KKK was there because people bring their shit with them. There was always a group of people you didn't socialize with because they were the good old boys, and you knew what they were about. They were racists and bigots.

*Can you tell us more about the anti-lesbian witchhunts that you talked about at the beginning?*

I guess the most horrible experience for me was when I was in Portugal. I would say I was no different from any other kid. You know when you're young you're wild, you go out to clubs and party and get drunk and you have a good time, the only difference is you have a different sexual preference. Because I think about it today and I wonder, what part did I have to play, and I think about it, and there was no part.

During that time I met a girl, a Portuguese girl, and we started going out and I got called in by OSI, they're like Air Force intelligence. They called me in and they say, "You're known to have relations with a known Portuguese national." And I say "What kind of relations could these be? What kind of national?" and they said, "Well, we can't say her name." And I pretended like I never even heard that gender, "her" and I said "Well I don't know what you're talking about, I can't help you." They said, "Well supposedly you've been selling drugs." It was a set-up. Sure I was sleeping with a known Portuguese national. But anybody could tell you I didn't do drugs. I drank a lot, which all sailors did, but I didn't do drugs and I didn't sell drugs, so it was really a big set-up. They searched my house, they searched my car, they gave me a urinalysis, they called my job. There are no secrets in the military so everyone knew. My reputation was ruined on my job. So I left that and basically I went into hiding for a while.

I knew these two women in Pensacola, Florida. I knew they were lovers and everyone else knew they were lovers. I didn't know them well. They were in different cliques, everyone has their



different gay clique. They were softball-playing, beer-drinking, and I was just beer-drinking, girl-chasing. So from what I know, they both got orders to Scotland, and I guess they got caught. They got actually caught in the act, and they both were discharged, but the catch was, if you give us names of other gays, we'll give you an administrative discharge. What an administrative discharge is, it really is an honorable discharge. You'd rather have that than a dishonorable discharge, so they gave names. They gave my name, they gave my roommate Ivy's name, and I'm sure they gave a number of other names. And what happens is, they pull you in, and they investigate you and interrogate you. And I had already been pulled in once.

They flew a guy in from Italy, and he interrogated me. You're in a padded room, beforehand they read you your rights, they show you a sheet which you have to sign which shows what you're being accused of. I was being accused of sodomy. The man did his homework so badly, this is how just incompetent NIS [Naval Investigative Service] is, he said, "So when were you in Edzell, Scotland?" Now this man had complete access to my naval record, and I said, "I was never in Edzell, Scotland. If you had done your homework, you would know I was never in Edzell, Scotland." And he said, "Well we need to do a polygraph," because he asked me if I was gay, and I said no, I'm not gay. And then I thought about it, and I thought Janine, what are you doing? You're lying. You're going to take a polygraph, and you're lying. So I said, no, I'm not going to take a polygraph.

It was a huge huge witchhunt. People were dropping names right and left. The way they convince you to drop names, they say we'll give you a dishonorable discharge. You'll never be able to work, no one will hire you, your career and your life will be destroyed. So they scare kids. They don't know their rights.

At that time I would do security rounds at my job. It was very funny how during all of these investigations, I had a top-secret clearance, and they never pulled my top-secret clearance, so I was still doing the security route. And in the commander's office were these interrogation books on the art of interrogation and how when you're interrogating you lie and you do anything to get the information that you need. So by that time I was an old pro and, honey, they would call me in and my attitude was like, "I can't help you. Sorry, there's nothing I can do for you. You have no proof, you have no pictures, you have nothing in writing, leave me alone."

Why didn't I say yes, and have it all over and the torture and everything? Well, listen to this, at my four years, at my four year point when you're supposed to sign the extension, I went to see a lawyer, and I said, how can I get out? He was a military lawyer, civilian, old guy, and I knew there was a way but he didn't help me. He said, it's a legal binding contract and you know, there's no way to break it. But I could tell he was pro-military, so he didn't help me out. So I just cried and decided to stick the two years out. It had something to do with what my roommate Ivy told me. I was very tired of electronic training school, and all my friends were just dropping out, all the women. I was one of the few women, the only Black woman; I think at the time there were only six Black women in the entire u.s. Navy in the same job grade, and I saw them dropping out and going to different classifications, so I started slacking up. And Ivy told me, she said, "You know what they're going to say, Janine? They're going to say, 'That Black dyke bitch couldn't make it.' That's what



they're going to say." And I thought about it, and I looked at her, and I thought, you know, you're right, that's what they're going to say. And I just stuck it out. It's like, no you're not going to get me, you're not going to get me in that way. I'm going to stick this out.

So my orders finally came up, I left Portugal, I went back to Florida, I went to another school and during that whole time I was very low, very closeted, very afraid. When I got back stateside, I didn't socialize with Navy people, I socialized with civilians. Then I got orders back to California. When I got back to California, I was stationed 35 minutes from Oakland, where I came from. I moved back to Oakland, I commuted to work. I didn't tell people about my life. When they asked me questions, I would say none of your business, until my orders came up.

A bit of information, for people who are in the military, I would tell you this, if they don't have anything in writing, if they don't have pictures, if they don't have your lover's testimonial, there's no proof. For those who are thinking about entering the military, you're not free. You're not free to live your own life, you're not free to be a person, you're not free to be real. That's one thing, I felt guilty for six years that I wasn't a real person, that I had to lie on a daily basis about who I was, what I did, just about my entire life.

*You sign on the dotted line and all of a sudden, you can't say, but I changed my mind.*

But really, you can, but you're so young, and you look at these people, they're adults, and you're just a kid, and they're very intimidating. When I first got there, a girl, she refused to get out of bed. She said, I've made a mistake, I want to go home, and she refused to get out of bed. She stayed in bed for two days. But do you know, what I heard, they took her to this holding company, and a month later, she was discharged. But, she was a very strong young girl. She was very strong-willed. They yelled at her, and screamed at her and called her all kinds of names, and she had all this peer pressure around her.

*What would you have done if you hadn't gone into the Navy?*

Knowing what I know now, I would have continued on in school. And too, in my adolescence I was really into the bar scene, and I would have gotten more connected with the gay community, such as support groups, groups for gay youth, very positive, moved out of my mom's place. That was a real unhealthy environment. She thought I was sick and I needed mental help. I was like, no I'm not sick, I just like girls, what's so sick about that? And then I put myself in the same kind of environment. A controlling environment where they labelled me as sick.

I've run into people we were stationed with in Portugal, and the ones that are out now are so happy, it's like I'm just so happy to be out, and they have lives. X and Y, who are friends of mine, they're still in, they want to get out, but they're really afraid. The whole time you're in the military, they tell you you can't do anything else. Nobody wants you, they're not going to hire you. When I went in, it was a recession, there were no jobs out there. I think it's an irony, it's another recession, and they're probably saying the same thing, nobody wants you, you can't do anything, just living in that closet, telling those lies, hiding.