

DOD defines "Don't Ask; Don't Tell"

by Dan Van Mourik
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WASHINGTON, DC—Outgoing Secretary of Defense Les Aspin held a press conference on Wednesday, December 22 to give gays in the military an early Christmas present—one akin to a lump of coal in their Christmas stockings. The Department of Defense (DOD) has begun to define the "Don't Ask; Don't Tell; Don't Pursue" policy regarding homosexual service members.

On October 29, 1993, the Supreme Court granted the Justice Department's request for a partial stay of a lower court's ruling that the new DOD policy could not be enforced. While the DOD continues to move that decision through the appeals process, the Supreme Court has given them legal permission to enforce the policy.

When "Don't Ask; Don't Tell; Don't Pursue" was first announced, the language of the policy was vague and open to interpretation. The DOD has now clarified some of the grounds for discharge, clearly negating any advances gays may have thought had been achieved. While "Don't Ask" remains intact, meaning new recruits will not be asked their sexual orientation, the DOD has reverted to the stance on homosexuality taken before any of Clinton's efforts to change them.

Effective February 1, 1994, any homosexual service member can and will be discharged if:

- they engage in any homosexual act,
- they marry someone of the same sex,
- they openly admit to being homosexual.

To clarify "Don't Pursue," the DOD claims it will not investigate a service member for simply being in a gay bar. However, kissing a member of the same sex while there would prompt pursuit. The DOD considers same-sex kissing a "homosexual act" worthy of discharge.

In spite of what appeared to be a reluctant willingness on the part of the DOD to compromise on the issue of gays in the military, the witchhunt is back on with a vengeance.

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