

Select military bases see spike in 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' dismissals

Increasing number of women discharged

by Steve Rawls

Several U.S. military installations saw a significant increase in the number of troops dismissed under the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" ban on openly gay service members in 2005, according to new data obtained by Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN). Overall, 2005 dismissals increased from 668 in 2004 to 742 last year.

The sharpest increase in "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" dismissals occurred at Fort Campbell, Ky., where Pvt. 1st Class Barry Winchell was murdered in 1999 by fellow soldiers who believed Winchell was gay. In 2004, the base discharged 19 soldiers under the ban; that number climbed to 49 in 2005. Fort Sill, Okla., also saw a significant increase, from 8 dis-

thwarts a plot to blow up an airplane is gay. We care that our nation is secure. Congress should pass the *Military Readiness Enhancement Act* and repeal the archaic and counterproductive 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' law immediately."

Neither the Pentagon nor officials at the bases mentioned have provided an explanation of the increase in dismissals. Overall, gay discharges have decreased nearly 40 percent since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The FY2005 dismissals represent the first annual increase since the beginning of the war on terror.

"Those who serve our country deserve respect and honor, not pink slips and dismissals," said Osburn.

Women continue to be disproportionately impacted

Women continue to be discharged at twice the rate of their presence in the armed forces under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

While women account for approximately 15 percent of the armed forces, they totaled 30 percent of those dismissed under the gay ban in FY2005. In all, 219 women out of a total of 726 service members were discharged under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The Army reported discharging 146 women in 2005; the Navy, 31; the Air Force, 28; and the Marine Corps, 14.

"Women have a long and rich history of service to our country," said SLDN Executive Director C. Dixon Osburn. "Our nation is safer and

more secure because of the contributions made by all women, including lesbian and bisexual women, in our armed forces.

An October 2004 Urban Institute study revealed the long history of service by the lesbian community. The study revealed that not only do the rates of service by coupled lesbians surpass that of other women, but that they serve longer than other women. Of women ages 18-67 who served in the armed forces, over 80 percent of coupled lesbians reported having served more than two years, compared with 74 percent of other women. ▶

info: www.sldn.org



Discharges under 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' are on an upswing, with increasing numbers of women being dismissed.

missals in 2004 to 27 last year. Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., a large training facility for the Army, saw an increase as well, from 40 in 2004 to 60 in 2005. Parris Island, S.C., a Marine Corps base, discharged 22 service members in 2005, up from just 12 the prior year.

"When the Pentagon fires skilled service members for being gay, like former Arabic linguist Bleu Copas, it is being utterly irresponsible," said C. Dixon Osburn, executive director of SLDN. "No American cares if the person who

Need More Hours in the day?

Chores, Errands 'N More Can Help You Get More Out Of Each Day.

We will:

- Pick up your dry cleaning
- Grocery shop
- Wait for repair personnel
- Plan a dinner party
- Create a romantic getaway
- And much more

We take care of the menial so you have more time for the meaningful!®

Call 888.509.5533

or visit us online at www.choreserrandsnmore.com for more information.

Chores, Errands 'N More
A Lifestyle Management Company



GOOD TASTE Cake Designs

- Anniversaries
- Commitment Ceremonies
- Holy Unions
- Special Occasions

...because every occasion should be done with

GOOD TASTE

919.489.5778 • gtcd@aol.com
www.goodtastecakedesigns.com

GOOD TASTE CAKE DESIGNS, LLC DURHAM, NC

Charlotte's residential rental specialist featuring...

Se habla español.

Over 1000 properties at www.klutts.info

Live in Charlotte's Gayborhood.

See website for photo.

<3043 Uxbridgewoods Court . . \$950

2br, 2.5bt 2-Story Condo 1,100 sq. ft. Greatroom with gas log fireplace. Appliances included. Minutes to uptown. Located in Plaza/Midwood area

\$700 1107 Jensen Street >
2br, 1bt House, 800 sq. ft. Newly remodeled, C/A, gas heat, hardwood floors, screened-in porch. Nice neighborhood. Located in Plaza/Midwood area



Choose from over 1000 houses, condos and duplexes starting at \$375!



KLUTTS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

1433 Emerywood Drive
Charlotte, NC 28210

704.554.8861

Fax: 704.553.2256

Moving? Need Help?

Let Smooth Moves Orchestrate Your Next Move®

Smooth Moves® Provides:

- Stress-free packing
- Moving services
- Accessorizing
- Stress-free unpacking
- Interior design
- Organizing

Call Smooth Moves® Today 800.974.6035

Or visit www.stress-free-moving.com for more information.

