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NATIONAL news

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demonstrate how critical it is for the law to catch up with the changing American family." The report further showed that the average age of male partners ranged between 44.5 and 42.4 and that the average age of female partners ranged between 43.4 and 42.2. Comparatively, opposite-sex married couples have average ages in their late 40s, while unmarried opposite-sex households have an average age in the low to mid-30s. Finally, the new report gives insight into the number of interracial same-sex couples in the United States, with 11.5 percent of male and 10 percent of female same-sex households having multiracial partners. Comparatively, 5.7 percent of married couples are multiracial and 12.2 percent of opposite-sex partners are multiracial.

Barry Winchell at Fort Campbell, where he served as commanding general. Military watchdog and civil liberties organizations that opposed the nomination last session announced March 12 that they again will try to convince senators to reject Clark or, at the very least, hold a full, open hearing before voting on this important appointment to command the Fifth United States Army. A Department of Army Inspector General report found that he failed to order required training on "don't ask, don't tell" or on how to address anti-gay harassment. In a Jan. 16 letter to committee chairman Sen. John Warner, R-Va., and ranking member Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., Servicemembers Legal Defense Network noted other troubling facts about Clark's tenure at the base, including command-wide low morale; inadequate delivery of health care to soldiers and their fami-



As Secretary of State Colin Powell and President Bush prepare for war on Iraq, the U.S. military seems to be stepping up its witch hunt against queer soldiers

Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, a national organization assisting men and women harmed by "don't ask, don't tell," reported March 5 a significant increase in calls for assistance. The queer watchdog group fielded a record 170 requests for help between Jan. 1 and March 1, a 30 percent leap from the same period in 2002, when it received about 119. The upsurge comes as U.S. troops mobilize for a possible conflict in Iraq and amid continued reports of anti-gay harassment within the armed forces. "We project receiving a record 1,100 calls for assistance during the 2003 calendar year," executive director C. Dixon Osburn said. "As long as our military continues to discriminate against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans, SLDN will remain on the front lines, providing zealous legal assistance to our clients." Two full-time staff attorneys and a legal director field an average of 25 new calls for help each week. In 2002 the team responded to 913 requests for assistance and has seen demand for its services increase annually. Since 1993, the network has provided direct legal help to more than 4,300 men and women. In January it announced an increased focus on policy and grassroots activism aimed at repealing "don't ask, don't tell."

KENTUCKY
 This month President Bush renominated Maj. Gen. Robert T. Clark to lieutenant general, the Army's second-highest rank. During the last session of Congress, the Senate Armed Services Committee did not act on the nomination because of serious concerns about his leadership before and after the murder of Pfc.

lies; and widespread, leader-condoned underage drinking in the barracks.

CALIFORNIA
 In the nation's first ruling of its kind, a California appeals court March 4 said health care providers cannot discriminate against patients based on their sexual orientation. Lambda Legal, which fought on behalf of a lesbian who was denied insemination services by a Southern California clinic, said the decision will affect queers across the United States. In the 19-page decision, a three-judge panel of the state appeals court in San Diego ruled unanimously that doctors and health care providers are bound to follow state civil rights laws. California and 11 other states prohibit anti-gay discrimination in public accommodations, including health care services. "Health care is a vital issue to every person in America—it's one of our most basic needs," attorney Jennifer C. Pizer said. "Since this is the first ruling of its kind, it will be a powerful tool for fighting discrimination around the country and ensuring that health care providers meet their legal and ethical obligations." In the summer of 2000, the North Coast Women's Care Medical Group refused to inseminate Guadalupe Benitez. She had received 11 months of treatment from the clinic—but at the critical and brief moment when she needed to



Jennifer C. Pizer

PHOTO BY PAUL MORSE