

**NATIONAL news**

# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

**New report estimates 65,000 gays and lesbians are serving in the military** by Bob Roehr

**A**n analysis of data on same-sex couples from the 2000 census has produced the first-ever estimates of the number of gays and lesbians who are serving or who have served in the military. Perhaps most surprising are the differences between men and women.

Released Oct. 20, *Gay Men and Lesbians in the U.S. Military: Estimates from the Census 2000*, was written by Gary Gates, a researcher at the Urban Institute and author of *The Gay and Lesbian Atlas*. The report says 36,000 gay men and

Gates adds, "To the extent that 'don't ask, don't tell' was a political compromise between a group that essentially didn't want gay people to serve and a group that did, there is evidence to substantiate that both groups have had some success with that policy."

There also is evidence that "the policy still filters gay men out, but their service rates are starting to get more similar over time. It suggests that 'don't ask, don't tell' has made it a bit easier for gay men to serve. The problem with that analysis is that it doesn't fit for women."

Gates acknowledges a possible alternative explanation for the shifts. "It could say something about society changing and being more accepting and gay people feeling they can make these choices" to stay in the military, form coupled relationships or report them on a census form.

The analysis drew upon self-reporting of same-sex couples in the census data, the same pool of data that was culled for a recently released study on black same-sex couples. Most experts use this as the best census marker of gays and lesbians.

"An interesting aspect of this is that we derive the estimates having never asked anybody in the censuses whether they are gay or lesbian," Gates said. The question can be even more complicated with young people in their late teens and early 20s who may not yet have a clear sense of their sexual identity and are much less likely to be in a coupled relationship. That population constitutes the greatest portion of those in uniform.

Gates acknowledges "it is a difficult and challenging question" to try to figure out how representative same-sex couples are of the gay and lesbian community overall. "The short answer is, it depends on the characteristic you're looking at."

On the simple question of geography, they appear to be similar. "Where you find a lot of gay couples, you're likely to find a lot of gay people in general," Gates said.

**"The number of lesbians and gays in service today is equal to half the total force strength currently serving in Iraq and is more than twice the 30,000 additional troops the Army chief of staff says he needs to fight the war on terrorism"**

—C. Dixon Osburn

terrorism." He added, "There is no doubt that America needs her lesbian and gay patriots fighting on the front lines...they should be able to do so openly."

More than 10,000 members of the armed forces have been discharged under "don't ask, don't tell" since its passage in 1993. [M]

BOB ROEHR is a free-lance reporter based in Washington, D.C.



**A new national ad campaign highlights the large number of young men ages 18 to 25 who are fired from military service because of their sexual orientation**

lesbians—2.5 percent of the total active duty military—are serving in the armed forces. Including those serving in the National Guard and Reserve boosts that total to 65,000, or 2.8 percent of all military personnel.

Gay men are underrepresented among active duty personnel, at only 1.4 percent of the total, while lesbians are greatly overrepresented at 9.3 percent. Many surveys have found that gays constitute roughly 5 percent of the population, with a ratio of about 2 to 1 male to female.

Other striking findings are that lesbians are on average four years older than their gay male counterparts and are more likely to be white than African American. This suggests to Gates that many minorities are using the military as a way out and to access benefits such as education, while for white lesbians with greater economic options, it is more of a career choice.

"Especially given that it is the opposite for men," he said.

"The important take away is that there is a nontrivial portion of women in the military that are lesbian. The other story is, given the kind of invisibility of 'don't ask, don't tell,' you can show for the first time that gay and lesbian people have been serving in the military for as long as we have had a military. Up until this time we have not had the data to prove that."

## "CARVING SANTA" - AN ARTISTS' DEMO

DEMO DATES AND LOCATIONS:  
 NOV. 20: 2-5PM  
 WASHINGTON SQUARE  
 NOV. 28: 10-3PM  
 PORTLAND AIRPORT  
 DEC. 2: 4-7PM  
 (1ST THURSDAY)  
 DOWNTOWN PORTLAND



## The Real Mother Goose

Fine American Craft  
 901 SW Yamhill • 503.223.9510  
 WWW.THEREALMOTHERGOOSE.COM

photo  
eric  
griswold

### AMERICAN EXPRESS FINANCIAL ADVISORS

**Longtime relationship recognized.  
 Long-term planning required.**

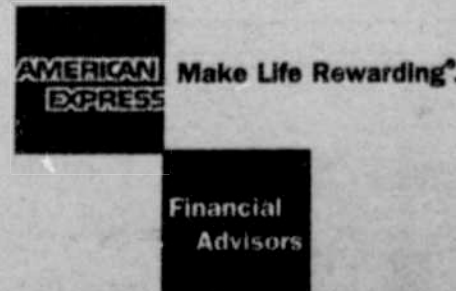
**For a complimentary  
 initial consultation  
 call me today at  
 503.924.1990.**



American Express Financial Advisors understands how one event can impact your broader economic picture. With our unique Personal Economic Forecast, we can help you take control of your economy with the right combination of advice, insight and solutions. As a longtime leader in providing domestic partners with financial advice, we understand the unique challenges that affect your economy.

**Managing the economy that means most: yours®.**

**Tamar Boussi & Associates**  
 8625 SW Cascade Ave., Suite 100  
 Beaverton, OR 97008  
 503.924.1990  
 tamar.x.boussi@aexp.com



FINANCIAL PLANNING INVESTMENTS INSURANCE RETIREMENT

The nature and cost of the service varies and will be determined by an American Express financial advisor. All Personal Economic Forecast illustrations are hypothetical and are not forecasts.