

## The (Queer) Year at War

As we look back at the year in review, it is unsettling to discover the number of U.S. casualties in Iraq continues to mount despite the "mission accomplished" edict given by President Bush in May 2003. Throughout 2004, the election often overshadowed the day-to-day horrors on the Iraqi battlefield, and soldiers and their struggles were trotted out as rhetoric at the convenience of politicians, rather than receiving the sustained inquiry and engagement their work and sacrifice deserved.

What does the war in Iraq have to do with us here at home and, more importantly, with us as members and supporters of the queer community?

Just as this paper profiles queer business owners, doctors or artists, the year in review gives us a chance to recognize the dedication of queer servicemembers, whose very existence is doubly threatened by both the perils of war and the ongoing discrimination faced in the military under "don't ask, don't tell." In addition, the system of enlistment in place targets low-income people and people of color at a far higher rate than the white, middle-class population. No wonder these lives fall below the radar in discussions of social justice issues like queer civil rights, but are consistently referenced by conservative war-makers in praise of their great sacrifices.

This month, Servicemembers Legal Defense Network launched another challenge to "don't ask, don't tell" on behalf of plaintiffs who have served during the war on terrorism, in direct support of operations in the Middle East. (See Page 12 for details.) More than 10,000 members of the armed forces have been discharged under "don't ask, don't tell" since its passage in 1993.

## We Look Forward

2005 challenges us with uncertainty and a new cultural/political landscape over which we must roam. The boomeranging tendencies of assimilation and revolution will continue to challenge the deeply held assumptions about our own identities and the identities of our communities. Yes, communities, plural. It is no longer sufficient to simplify our diverse existences into a unity. It may be expedient, but it is sloppy.

We are only one newspaper, and within our pages we hope to express and reflect the myriad we see outside our windows. In the coming year, as we strive to deliver the most useful and insightful news about the queer communities around us, we hope you will let us know what you think.

And from all of us at *Just Out*, we wish you a very happy and peaceful new year. ☐

Because of the restrictive policies of the U.S. military, we have no way of knowing if the casualties in the Iraq war are queer or straight. As reported Nov. 5 in *Just Out*, 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. On the other hand, casualties in Iraq are disproportionately male—almost 30 women have died in battle, according to CNN, as opposed to more than 1,100 men.

*Just Out* has chosen to list the servicemen from Oregon who have died in Iraq as a tribute to their sacrifice in this year of war, with the hope that the coming year will see an end to this senseless loss of the sons and daughters of U.S. citizens, both queer and straight.

- Jan. 27: Sgt. Travis A. Moothart, Brownsville
- Feb. 11: Spc. Philip G. Rogers, Gresham
- April 4: Pfc. William C. Ramirez, Portland
- April 8: Staff Sgt. Robert Anthony Stever, Pendleton
- April 17: Lance Cpl. Gary F. Van Leuven, Klamath Falls
- May 8: Spc. Chase R. Whitman, Unknown
- May 17: Lance Cpl. Bob W. Roberts, Newport
- June 4: 1st Lt. Erik S. McCrae and Spc. Justin W. Linden, Portland, and Sgt. Justin L. Eyerly, Salem
- July 2: Lance Cpl. James B. Huston Jr., Umatilla
- July 13: Spc. Eric S. McKinley, Corvallis
- July 16: Lance Cpl. Bryan P. Kelly, K Falls
- July 28: Pfc. Ken W. Leisten, Warrenton
- Sept. 13: Staff Sgt. David J. Weisenburg, Portland, and Spc. Benjamin W. Isenberg, Sheridan
- Sept. 25: Spc. David W. Johnson, Portland
- Dec. 4: Sgt. David A. Mitts, Hammond
- Dec. 5: Spc. Edwin Roodhouse, McMinnville

## You Are Invited

Please join us for our Holiday Season Events with our families and yours.

Christmas Eve Celebration  
Friday, December 24th; 11 p.m.

Holiday Music Celebration  
with Special Guest John Nilsen  
Sunday, December 26th; 10–11:30 a.m.

Sunday Church Service 10 a.m.

Both events will be held at the University Park United Methodist Church, 4775 N. Lombard (@ Fiske)

Phone (503) 289-7843

E-mail info@upumc.net



Keep up to date on activities and events sponsored at University Park United Methodist Church by regularly visiting our web page: [www.upumc.net](http://www.upumc.net)

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*Happy Holidays  
from the Just Out staff.*

*We'll see you in the  
new year on January 7.*



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*"1,500-year-old Buddhas."* —Family Ties actor Michael Gross  
writing in *The Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 14. Compiled by Rex Wockner