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**RAND, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, OFFER FIRST STATISTICAL TEST OF GAYS IN MILITARY
New Research Shows Openly Gay Service Not Linked to Unit Cohesion**

SANTA BARBARA, CA, November 10, 2009 - In the first ever statistical analysis of whether openly gay service has any impact on military readiness, a [new study](#) shows that knowing a gay or lesbian unit member has no bearing on the unit's cohesion. The study, "Attitudes of Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans toward Gay and Lesbian Service Members," appears in the prestigious journal, *Armed Forces and Society*, and was written by two prominent researchers, Bonnie Moradi of the University of Florida and Laura Miller of the Rand Corporation. Rand is a prominent, military-created think tank which has advised the Pentagon on national security issues for generations.

In 1993, Rand conducted the largest study of gays in the military and found that sexual orientation was "not germane" to military service, but resistance by the Joint Chiefs of Staff blocked the lifting of the gay ban and "don't ask, don't tell" was implemented as part of a compromise.

"This is the strongest evidence yet that homosexuality has no effect on military service," said Dr. Nathaniel Frank, senior research fellow at the Palm Center, which sponsored the new study. Frank said that large-scale non-enforcement of the policy in recent years has allowed researchers to conduct empirical studies on openly gay troops, who serve in large numbers despite the official ban. "We've known for years that the 'unit cohesion' rationale for excluding open gays was not backed up by research," he said, "but this goes a crucial step further: we no longer must rely on the absence of evidence supporting discrimination, but have proof-positive that gays serve openly without undercutting their units."

The new study analyzed war veterans' ratings of unit cohesion and readiness, and found that knowing a gay or lesbian unit member was not statistically correlated with either cohesion or readiness. According to the study, "the data indicated no associations between knowing a lesbian or gay unit member and ratings of perceived unit cohesion or readiness. Instead, findings pointed to the importance of leadership and instrumental quality in shaping perceptions of unit cohesion and readiness." The study also found that 40% of returning war troops supported the current "don't ask, don't tell" policy, 28% opposed it and 33% were neutral. In 1993, said the study, 75% supported the full gay ban, revealing a dramatic decline in anti-gay opposition in the last sixteen years.

In Frank's new book on "don't ask, don't tell," *Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and*



Weakens America, retired senior officers go on record saying that the unit cohesion rationale was never rooted in evidence, but in the personal morality and even prejudice of military brass. Retired Rear Admiral John Hutson, for instance, who became Judge Advocate General of the Navy, helped formulate “don’t ask, don’t tell” in 1993. “The decisions were based on nothing,” he tells Frank in *Unfriendly Fire*. “It wasn’t empirical, it wasn’t studied, it was completely visceral, intuitive.” Hutson said the policy was based on the “fears and prejudices” of military leaders and that they consulted virtually no research “so we hung everything on the question of unit cohesion. That was the catch phrase.” Frank said that today’s data confirms what many long suspected, that “‘unit cohesion’ was just the latest rationalization for a policy with no honest rationale.”

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The Palm Center is a think tank at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Since 1998, the Center has been a leader in commissioning and disseminating research in the areas of gender, sexuality, and the military. For more information visit www.palmcenter.ucsb.edu.