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Gays in the Military

Is ban necessary or rooted in fear?

By Mike Latona
Staff writer



The U.S. armed forces have stated emphatically that Uncle Sam's finger does not point at homosexuals when he declares, "I want you."

But gays no longer want to be treated differently in this regard than are their heterosexual counterparts. And they may soon get their wish, now that President Bill Clinton is settling in at the White House.

According to a policy statement issued by the Clinton/Gore Transition Office in Little Rock, Ark., President Clinton "will issue executive orders to repeal the ban on gays and lesbians from military or foreign service and to prohibit discrimination in federal employment, federal contracts and government services."

But such words are not music to the ears of Commander Eugene T. Gomulka.

"I would hope and pray that (Clinton) not act precipitously (by issuing an executive order to lift the ban)," Father Gomulka remarked in a telephone interview with the *Catholic Courier* from Washington, D.C., where he serves as the deputy chaplain for the U.S. Marine Corps.

"If the policy changes, that's going to impact recruitment and retention," added Father Gomulka, who oversees approximately 250 Navy chaplains serving the Marines. "I'm not passing moral judgments — it's just that these will be the results."

Father Gomulka estimated that about 15,000 people have been separated from the U.S. armed forces in the last 10 years for allegedly exhibiting varying degrees of homosexual tendencies. These discharges, Father Gomulka asserted, have fallen under guidelines established by the Department of Defense.

Homosexuality as a reason for denial of admission, or as grounds for expulsion, is cited in two Department of Defense directives:

- DOD 6130.3 cites homosexual behavior as a cause for rejection for appointment, enlistment and induction. The only exceptions would be adolescent experimentation, or a single occurrence of homosexual behavior while intoxicated.

- DOD 1332.14 states that a person may be separated from

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