

# Teaching Peace

Winter 2007

*A Newsletter for Teachers & Counselors* from the Peace Education Center Volume 1 Number 2

## Focus on Women & Minorities in the Military

### Teacher, I'm going to Enlist! So...wha-da-ya think?

#### Women in the Military

Women entering male-dominated professions are often subject to sexual harassment. How does the military treat its females?

Seventy-nine percent of military women in a University of Iowa survey reported being sexually harassed - with 30% reporting rape or attempted rape. (*American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 3/03) Women suffer higher rates of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Is sexual assault the reason?

Because of the "tough guy" attitude of the military, most victims never report the abuse. Those who do report have been demoted, transferred to worse jobs or scoffed at for making the report. Very few perpetrators are punished. (*CBS News: Military Issues Cadet Assault Memo*, 12/7/04)

A 2005 report states "harassment [at military service academies]... creates an environment in which sexual assault is more likely to occur." (*Defense Task Force on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies*, June 2005.)

#### Minorities

"It was common for my drill sergeant to ask, "Where are my Chinese at?" when assigning laundry duty." Aimee Allison, a former medic in the Army Reserves says in the book *10 Reasons Not To Join The Military*. She goes on to list instances of racial remarks directed to other minorities at boot camp.... "Give me a pimp walk... You look like a gang member... You just smile [if you get lost] and we'll see you in the dark... Let's go burn some turbans!"

Minorities comprise 30% of the military but only 12% of officers. Minorities are overrepresented in military prisons and 83% of death sentences are given to minorities. They are less likely to receive honorable discharges, with the accompanying right to receive continuing benefits.

Racism in the military? Wha-da-ya think?

#### Gays and lesbians

The military operates under "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," meaning that gays and lesbians can serve in the military as long as no one finds out they're gay. If discovered, they risk discharge, which means losing their accrued benefits.

Considering that the military is an eight year commitment,

that's a long time for anyone to hide his or her true identity and live in fear of being "found out".

So...

What does the military teach about equality??? Aimee Allison concludes: "Military discipline depends on eliminating individuality. Anything that makes you different from the "standard" (read: straight white male) makes you a target for abuse.... Soldiers are taught to follow orders in war without question. When the training taps into a person's own racist views, it's easier to convince them to kill people who are different."

Of those who join, 30% will suffer with PTSD or other permanent disabilities. Those who join earn less money and are less likely to go to college than those who don't.

Find out the facts and educate your students on the realities of fighting in war before you send them off.

### Does a student need help getting out of the Delayed Enlistment Program?

Recruiters may claim its impossible, but **it's not too late!** For information on how to help, go to <[www.objector.org](http://www.objector.org)> or call the GI Rights Hotline (800) 394-9544.

#### Pop Quiz:

- 2% of whites and \_\_\_\_% of blacks report being unfairly punished. 1% or 8% or 16%
- Percent of MALES who report being sexually abused in the military. 2% or 10% or 20%
- Percent of soldiers who have heard anti-gay comments. 20% or 40% or 80%

#### Peace Education

The Peace Education Center believes that every young person facing the decision to enlist should hear from more than their military recruiter. This organization is available to speak to classrooms, and groups. They also have a library that includes books, pamphlets and videos. They can be reached at 517 337-8087 or at [www.peacedcenter.org](http://www.peacedcenter.org)

#### Because:

- Everybody has needs
- Everybody has abilities
- Everybody has stories to share
- Everybody is part of our community... Because:



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Answers: A. 8% B. 10% C. 80%

Pop Quiz Answers