US Military Could Use a Few Good Homosexuals

Column by Matthew H. Hersch

This recent opposition to permitting gays in the United States military really has me baffled. While regressive types cite un founded suspicions to bolster their shaky claims about morale and discipline, the media reveals more and more cases in which openly homosexual Americans soldiers fought side-by-side with their straight countrymen, without problems. As for me, a straight male civilian voting taxpayer, I wouldn’t mind being defended by either gays or women (especially since I already am). Anyone who wants to risk his or her life defending me is, in fact, welcome to — no questions asked. And given the lopsided nature of the debate on the subject, I have a hard time realising this truth, phasing out some of the possibly to self-doubt and confusion about their political duties. Ask any American war hero why he acted the way he did and he won’t even use a few more homosexuals.

Discipline is the first thing that goes in wartime, followed closely by patriotism (anyone who has read any book on Vietnam will tell you this). American soldiers in particular not only enjoy killing their officers, but are prone to self-doubt and confusion about their political duties. Ask any American war hero why he acted the way he did and he won’t start quoting from the Declaration of Independence — rather, he’ll claim that he did it out of suicidal nihilism or love for his fellow soldier. Slowly, the American military has begun to realize this truth, phasing out some of the harsher, damper disciplinary practices and encouraging, starting with the Persian Gulf war, “loveins” in which platoons gathered in the desert, sat in a circle on the desert floor, and then expressed their feelings to each other. I have no problem with this sort of behavior, and considering the fact that we won the war (sort of), I don’t think it hurt much, either.

And so I ask, what’s the problem with having gays in the military? Americans, by and large, seem far too hung up on the whole problem — not only with the accepting gays into the service, but women as well. As long as social conduct among soldiers remains as closely regulated as it is now, there shouldn’t be any problems. Who knows, perhaps the Spartans were right — if love and war truly go hand in hand, maybe the military could even use a few more homosexuals.

Matthew H. Hersch, a junior in the Department of Political Science, suggests that anyone interested in bizarre Greek sexual practices or past history in general, check out Larry Gonick’s Cartoon History of the Universe, a fine book which uses lots of small words and has many funny pictures.