

Homosexual groups target ROTC policy

10-3-91 ISD

by **COLLEEN BRADFORD**

Daily Staff Writer

22/4/01

As homosexual groups at college campuses across the nation continue their attack on the entrance policies of the U.S. Department of Defense, Iowa State military officials say the issue at ISU has taken a backseat to other issues.

Reserved Officers Training Corp programs at colleges and universities around the country have been criticized for the Department of Defense's refusal to accept homosexuals.

Lt. Cmdr. Kermit VanBrocklin, an official with public affairs for ISU Naval ROTC, said the controversy surrounding the armed forces' policy forbidding homosexuals to the military seems to have taken a backseat to the Persian Gulf War.

"Recently, not many people have brought it up, not through direct

confrontation anyway," said VanBrocklin. "There have been many open forums and debates on the issue in the last few years, though."

VanBrocklin also said the policy is justified.

"Numerous studies have been done which show that homosexuality isn't compatible with the military. They set the policy and we have to adhere to it," he said.

But Matthew Gibbs, president of Phi Alpha Gamma, a homosexual group on campus, disagreed and called the policy "absolutely crazy."

"During World War II, Vietnam and even the Gulf War, the military didn't worry about the homosexuals simply because they needed people. They let them stay until times of peace," he said.

And Gibbs, who is also the social director for Gay/Lesbian Campus Outreach, said the debate is far from over.

ROTC homosexual debate not over

22/4/01

• from page 1 / **ROTC**

10/3/91 ISB

"There are many people now who think the policy is crazy, but the congressmen aren't willing to make the change right now," he said.

Gibbs said he expects the military to change its policy within the next four to six years.

VanBrocklin said ROTC at ISU has open course offerings where "there is no discrimination based on anything at all.

"But when it comes to competing for federal programs and funds, homosexuals will fall under others (heterosexuals)," he said.

VanBrocklin said that so far, no one in the ISU ROTC has been discharged because of homosexuality.

Nationally, last year six ROTC scholarship students were discharged for being homosexual, according to a *National Collegiate Newspaper* reports. In all, the military discharges about 1,000 people each year for homosexuality, according to *NCN*.

According to Associated Press reports, the state University of New York at Buffalo responded to a student's complaint about the policy by issuing an order stating that military recruiters would not be allowed on campus because of the armed forces policy concerning homosexuality.

But the next day, university officials could not enforce the order because of a New York law allowing military recruiters on campuses.

Similar state laws have been issued in Ohio and Illinois.

Gibbs said ISU's ROTC program also has a policy stating that a person cannot be discriminated against for sexual preferences.

"Basically they (the Department of Defense) are covering the ROTC's butt," he said.

The defense department's policy has been criticized further because it goes against some colleges' non-discrimination policies, according to the *NCN*.

ISU Air Force ROTC officials would not comment on the policy.

Captain Virginia Sullivan, from

the Air Force ROTC headquarters in Alabama, said ROTC does not have a choice in the matter because the policy has been set by the Department of Defense.

"The ROTC doesn't make the choice. The ROTC is a program of the defense department and we can't set our own laws," she said.

As a way to keep the military on campus, a bill has been introduced in Congress which, if passed, would deny funds to schools which didn't allow members of the defense department on campus.

Activist groups, including the ISU Gay/Lesbian Campus Outreach, see the measure as a reinforcement of discriminatory hiring policies carried out within Army reserve units.

VanBrocklin said last year there were a lot of morale votes for gays, "but the reality is when you look at the problem in relation to the United States, other factors come into play."

VanBrocklin said he recognized homosexuality as an issue and he feels "it should be an issue which is discussed at the state level."