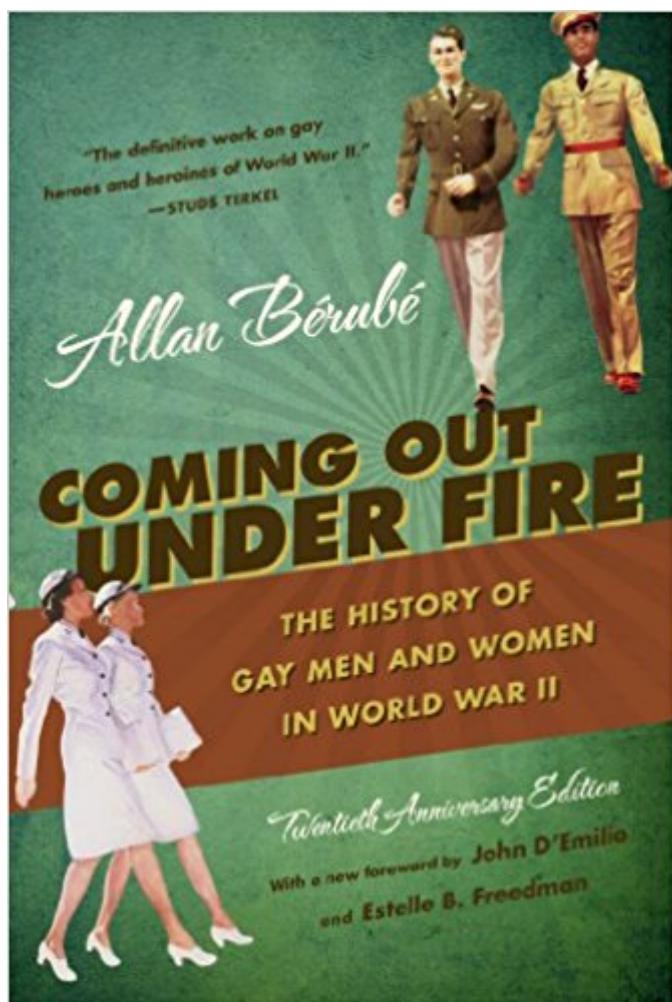


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Coming Out Under Fire: The History Of Gay Men And Women In World War II



Synopsis

During World War II, as the United States called on its citizens to serve in unprecedented numbers, the presence of gay Americans in the armed forces increasingly conflicted with the expanding antihomosexual policies and procedures of the military. In *Coming Out Under Fire*, Allan Berube examines in depth and detail these social and political confrontation--not as a story of how the military victimized homosexuals, but as a story of how a dynamic power relationship developed between gay citizens and their government, transforming them both. Drawing on GIs' wartime letters, extensive interviews with gay veterans, and declassified military documents, Berube thoughtfully constructs a startling history of the two wars gay military men and women fought--one for America and another as homosexuals within the military. Berube's book, the inspiration for the 1995 Peabody Award-winning documentary film of the same name, has become a classic since it was published in 1990, just three years prior to the controversial "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which has continued to serve as an uneasy compromise between gays and the military. With a new foreword by historians John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, this book remains a valuable contribution to the history of World War II, as well as to the ongoing debate regarding the role of gays in the U.S. military.

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; 2 edition (September 7, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 080787177X

ISBN-13: 978-0807871775

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #353,541 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Coming Out #135 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Gay & Lesbian Studies #158 in Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Bisexuality

Customer Reviews

This carefully researched and documented book is must reading for members of Congress, military policy makers, veterans, and every American who is interested in how the events of World War II still affect our lives today.--Representative Patricia Schroeder, former member, House Committee

on Armed Services Extraordinary. . . . What is most fascinating about Berube's book are not the cases of gay oppression but the evidence of official acknowledgment of a gay presence within the military . . . whose numbers were far greater than anyone had imagined at the onset of the war. . . . Coming Out Under Fire succeeds by describing in detail the prejudice and social change of a turbulent era . . . [and adds] important information to the current debate over the military's battle to keep homosexuals out of the armed services." --Randy Shilts, San Francisco Chronicle A fascinating, poignant and infuriating document that affords legions of American veterans their first authentic homecoming. Allan Berube deserves a medal.--Armistead Maupin, author of Tales of the City A pioneering work . . . original and well-documented. . . . Mr. Berube deserves plaudits for making a strong contribution to our knowledge about those who marched to a different drummer.--Herbert Mitgang, New York Times A timely and valuable perspective. . . . Coming Out Under Fire, the product of more than 10 years of research, of digging into archives and interviewing scores of veterans, is the story of how--out of necessity--the military coped with this large influx of homosexuals, and how gay men and women coped with the military. . . . Particularly in the context of [the] debate over who has the right to fight and die for his or her country, Coming Out Under Fire is well worth reading."--Doris Kerns Goodwin, New York Times Book Review

At last, the definitive work on gay heroes and heroines of World War II. Their gallantry was in bold contrast to the cravenness of their detractors. A profoundly moving work.--Studs Terkel, author of The Good War Both a classic in the field and still the definitive work on its subject. Nothing surpasses it.--Regina Kunzel, author of Criminal Intimacy

I'm an author and read this while doing research for a novel. My eyes were opened. While gay, lesbian and bisexual Americans volunteered, and died in the service to our country during WWII, they were, for the most part, systematically discriminated against and treated with dishonesty, humiliation and psychological abuse. Sometimes mere accusations with no proof were enough to drum a member out of our armed forces depriving them of rights and the GI Bill benefits. To make it worse, their draft boards were told and work got around in civilian life that they were unfit. In that era, after the war, the lack of an honorable discharge often cast such a dark shadow that many couldn't find work. For those who believe being gay is a choice and a sin I disagree with you. I ask if you truly believe that or if you are doing a knee-jerk reaction to poison ideas implanted in you. This story is history, and you won't read of it in standard history books. Discrimination is discrimination is wrong. The pledge of allegiance ends: "with liberty and justice for all."

A little academic in spots but a fascinating history of how gay men and women did their part during WWII. The official discrimination they faced was inconsistent certainly, with many officers looking the other way if they were pulling their weight and others going out of their way to "bust the queers". Regardless of your personal attitudes towards the gay community, the part they played in helping to win the war cannot be discounted.

this is an excellent book, revealing a bit of history that I am sure very few are aware. I thought it was well written and factual; the characters in this book are what they are and it was interesting to hear their point of view of a situation they basically had no control over, being drafted into military service. If anything this helps give a perspective as to why the military has acted the way they have when it comes to gay and lesbian service members. These individuals showed great courage and character as their stories unfold. Well worth the read.

I really wanted to love this book, but I just didn't. I was so looking forward to it based on the reviews and the subject matter. I am an avid WWII history buff, and couldn't wait to read about what it was like to be gay not only in the service at that time, but just during that era. The book was very good. Very interesting and enlightening. But I found it extremely repetitive. Each chapter could have been half the length and still effectively told the story. He also repeatedly used the same phrases to describe various situations. I often found myself losing interest as chapters went on, though I enjoyed what I read up to that point. Overall though, well worth the purchase and the read. It could have just been half the length.

I bought this book as part of a college history course and thought it was both well written and informative.

A very unique book; gives a completely new definition to "hardship" during World War two. I loved the dedication at the beginning of the book (Mr. Berube dedicated to his deceased male lover). Gay struggles are part of the human struggle and should not be ignored.

I wish it had more individual stories

This book is something I needed for my final paper for a history class. I actually enjoyed reading this

and ended up getting a B on my paper. Should proofread better I guess.

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