

PRESS RELEASE



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Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Veterans of America, Inc.

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GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL VETERANS OF AMERICA TO HOLD MEETING WITH TOP PENTAGON OFFICIALS

While many people celebrate Cinco De Mayo as Mexican Independence Day, this year members of the Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Veterans of America will celebrate for a different reason. The first-ever meeting between a gay veterans organization and pentagon officials has been confirmed for 4:00pm on Monday May 5, 1997 and will be held in the Pentagon. Jim Darby, National President of GLBVA, submitted the request to the Pentagon several weeks ago and says, "We were not truly very optimistic, but since no other gay veterans organization had ever done this, we simply thought - why not!"

Representing GLBVA in this history making meeting will be Jim Darby, National President; Edward Clayton, Vice President of Public Affairs; Cliff Arnesen, Vice President of Legislative Affairs; Mel Tips, Treasurer and Terry Tobias of the GLBVA Veterans Advisory Council. Military officials, including Mr. Frederick Pang, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management, are expected to discuss a wide range of issues including:

- 1) the appointment of an independent military review board to investigate and hold responsible those base commanders who violate or condone violations of the pentagon's Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue Policy.
- 2) deletion of the Uniform Code of Military Justice sodomy laws which are most often used to arbitrarily discharge gay, lesbian and bisexual servicemembers.
- 3) the military's and Veteran's Administration mistreatment of veterans with HIV/AIDS.
- 4) the policy of monetary recoupment from discharged members all pay and allowances received while on active duty.

While in Washington, DC. members of GLBVA will also be participating in the Sixteenth Annual William Joiner Conference on the Concerns of Veterans. This conference, which is sponsored by the University of Massachusetts Boston's William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences, attracts thousands of veterans from around the country to the nation's capitol for the four day event.

Additionally, representatives of GLBVA will be meeting with Senator John Kerry on Tuesday afternoon and will participate in conference meetings with Senator Ted Kennedy, Congressman Lane Evans, Senator Barney Frank, Congressman Luis Gutierrez and others.

GLBVA, Inc. is the only national non-profit organization for gay, lesbian and bisexual active duty, reserve and veteran members of the United States Armed Forces, their families, friends and supporters.