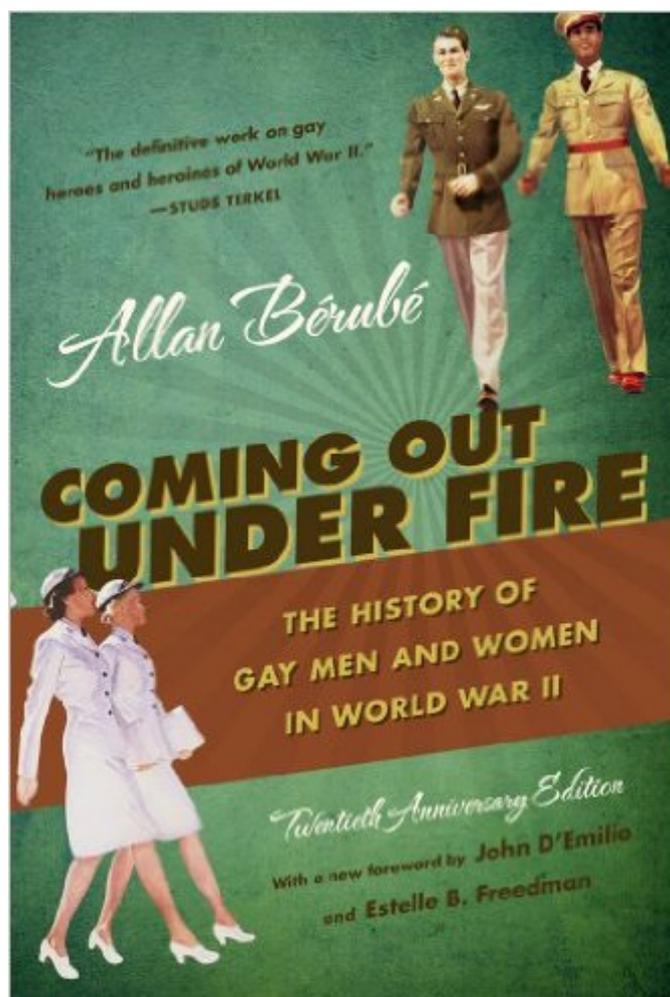


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Coming Out Under Fire: The History Of Gay Men And Women In World War II



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 confrontations--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

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Customer Reviews

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."

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.

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.

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.

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