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### *Ask & Tell: Gay & Lesbian Veterans Speak Out.* Steve Estes. Reviewed by John F. Longres.

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While I appreciate this volume as groundbreaking in examining the other half of the migration process, I perceived several difficulties with the book. First, the title and cover copy are misleading in that they do not convey that this is almost entirely a book about history. Save for the chapters on India and Israel, countries which both, of course, gained their present national status in the mid-twentieth century, the remaining chapters focus primarily on 18th, 19th, and early 20th century events. As a scholar of immigration but not a historian, I frankly found it a struggle to get through this material. My applied social scientist's understanding of the value of studying history is to avoid repeating its human tragedies and thus to develop implications for improved social policy in the future. Such a perspective is not manifested in this volume.

Second, the editors note that the book specifically focuses on the cases that lie between the extremes of national policies that expelled citizens for political or religious reasons on the one hand, and totalitarian regimes that have prevented their citizens from leaving, on the other. Yet, it is precisely the extremes of any phenomenon that are the most interesting and possibly the most instructive. Finally, although the book purports to focus on citizenship, several of the chapters deal also with internal migration, in which citizenship is, of course, a moot issue. In conclusion, this volume does present a new perspective on migration, one which will primarily be of interest to historians.

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Steve Estes. *Ask & Tell: Gay & Lesbian Veterans Speak Out*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. \$29.95 hardcover.

The bulk of this compelling book consists of edited interviews with lesbian and gay veterans from as far back as World War II right up to the present in Afghanistan and Iraq. The book follows each of our major wars since WWII with chronologically interlaced chapters on graduates of the

military academies, the integration of women during the 1970s, and the open challenge to end "the ban" by brave men and women during the 1980's and beyond. In spite of all efforts to exclude and persecute, young gays and lesbians have gone to great lengths to enter the military and defend America against its perceived enemies. The book focuses on soldiers, sailors and marines that served their country in time of war, many of whom were combat tested. Regardless of how one might feel about our government and its military, the stories clearly demonstrate the patriotism of lesbians and gays. Collectively these are stories of true American heroes, fighting for our nation and now fighting for the freedoms heterosexual Americans take for granted.

My own military story is less heroic. As a young gay man not wanting to be drafted, I joined the U.S. Army Reserves in 1962 and spent six months on active duty in an infantry unit and six years of on and off weekend and summer duty. I never saw combat, but I do know first hand of the combat of hiding in a military closet.

The stories are presented against a backdrop of policies surrounding gays in the military. Psychiatric theories and the notion that gay men are too delicate to engage in warfare, proposed by Harry Stack Sullivan, himself a gay man, led to the first ban on gays in the early days of WWII. In the hysteria of the cold war, unsubstantiated fear of blackmail was used to exclude military and government personnel. Yet military attitudes toward lesbians and gays have varied as a function of need; in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, military officials often looked the other way. With the presidency of Ronald Reagan and the emergence of AIDS, a new wave of persecution came into being. Coupled with the rise of the gay and lesbian movement, this persecution led to direct challenges by exemplary military personnel willing to "come out" to the nation. President Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell," was supposed to bring about greater tolerance, yet failed, largely because of the rise of social conservatism and fundamentalist Christianity. Even with their ranks depleted and over-deployed, military leaders today continue to search out and destroy lesbians and gays trying to fill their patriotic duties.

Estes has collected these oral histories to counteract what

he sees as a general silence about gays in the military. He argues that "the politics of military service are also the politics of memory." If we are not told of the valor of lesbian and gay veterans, he fears Americans will not see us as having been there to defend our nation. Although there are other books on this subject, this one is different in that it covers over 60 years of voices openly talking about their military service.

In October 2000, a bipartisan Congress overwhelmingly approved funds to establish the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress to collect the stories of those who served their country in time of war. Among the questions interviewers ask is one on the discrimination veterans faced in uniform and out. Although Congress did not intend it, it gave lesbian and gay veterans the opportunity to come out. Steve Estes, working for this project, felt an obligation to "Ask and Tell" so that these stories will now be part of recorded history.

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Clayton J. Mosher & Scott M. Akins. *Drugs and Drug Policy: The Control of Consciousness Alteration*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2007. \$54.95 papercover, \$99.95 hardcover.

In the field of alcohol and drug studies, many scholars and policy analysts have effectively utilized a constructionist orientation to help explain and understand substance abuse policy and policymaking. From this perspective, individuals interested in the creation and interpretation of alcohol and drug policy can integrate information from multiple disciplines, including history, sociology, economics, and political science. It also allows individuals to take into account the interaction between dynamics, such as historical and cultural relativity, political and self-interest, language and discourse (including rhetoric, propaganda, and mediated information), and power relationships, in constructing substance abuse policy. In *Drugs and Drug Policy: The Control of Consciousness Alteration*, Mosher