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### MILITARY

The relationship between homosexuality and the military profession is a complex and paradoxical one. The modern stereotype of the homosexual male as lacking in manliness is utterly belied by the masculine character of the traditional warrior who is also passionately attracted to his own sex. Instead of diminishing the warlike nature of the tribe, this tendency immensely strengthened its valor and endurance. The homoerotic bond fostered ideals of heroism, courage, resourcefulness, and tenacity among the warrior caste, and exalted these virtues to the apogee of public honor. Such was the case among the Dorians of ancient Greece in the seventh century B.C. and among the Samurai of feudal Japan.

*Ancient Greece.* The virile and warlike Hellenic tribes, migrating southward into the Peloponnesus and to the island of Crete, institutionalized the custom of *paidēasteia* (literally "boy-love"). This custom meant the love of an older warrior for a younger one, who corresponded to the squire or page attending the medieval knight. The attachment was always conceived as having an element of physical passion, sometimes slight, sometimes dominant and all-engrossing. If it originally designated the heroic devotion of comrades to each other, it was later extended to the more spiritual relationship that prepared a boy for intellectual life and for public service to the *polis* (city-state), and also to the unabashed sensuality recorded in the twelfth book of the *Greek Anthology*.

In Sparta and in Crete it was customary for every youth of good character to have his lover, and every educated and honorable adult was bound to be the lover and protector of a youth. The connection was intimate and faithful, and recognized by the state. The citizen of Sparta was a professional soldier throughout life; his landholding, cultivated by helots, assured him a sufficient income to devote himself to his obligations to the state. The Spartan form of pederasty was imprinted with virility, with male comradeship, and with fidelity; the physical aspect was secondary, though rarely absent. At home the youth was constantly under the gaze of his lover, who was to him a role model and mentor; on the battlefield they fought side by side, if need be to the death, as in the inscription commemorating the battle of Thermopylae: "O stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians that we fell here in obedience to our country's sacred laws." The pederastic spirit guarded the cradle of Western civilization against the Oriental despotism that a Persian victory would have imposed on the Hellenes.

Whether or not a formal abduction of the youth by his lover took place, the institution of military comradeship spread far and wide among the Greeks, and immense importance accrued to what was regarded as a cornerstone of public life, a recognized source of political and social initiative, an incentive to valor, an inspiration to art and literature, and a custom consecrated by religion and divine sanction. The ethos of the ruling caste was inculcated by pederasty, so that Pausanias of Athens could solemnly declare that the strongest army would be one composed entirely of pairs of male lovers. Stories of the heroic feats of such couples testify to the profound concern which the Greeks felt for the subject. The heroism of the Sacred Band of Thebes, organized on Pausanias' model, who perished to the last man in the battle of Chaeronea (338 B.C.) while fighting against the huge army of

Philip of Macedon, sealed the glorious tradition of comradeship-in-arms, and engraved upon it for all time an ineffaceable symbol of valor.

*Japan.* The Samurai of feudal Japan afford another example of the part played by homoerotic attachments in the military life of a nation; the Japanese knighthood dominated its country until the end of the Tokugawa era (1867). The Samurai had their own tradition of chivalry, simplicity of living, bravery, and loyalty and dedication to the service of nation and Emperor. Numbering some two million in all, the Samurai were exempted from taxation and privileged to wear two swords. The ideals of Bushido, as the Japanese code of knighthood was called, were those of a nobleman and warrior: heroism, courage, endurance, justice in dealing with others, and unflinching readiness to die in the call of duty. "To live when it is right to live, and to die only when it is right to die—that is true courage," said a Japanese author. All commercial pursuits and gainful activity were forbidden the warrior caste, but the finer arts were not neglected. The blend of the masculine and feminine that marks the homosexual personality was inherent in the Japanese character—the virile strongly pronounced but alloyed with a feminine tenderness and delicacy. The study of letters, of poetry, and of music was widespread. The intellectual and moral heritage of feudal Japan stemmed from the Samurai ethos, which like *paiderasteia* in ancient Greece, gave an impetus to every facet of national life.

To the Samurai it seemed more manly and heroic that men should love other males and consort sexually with them than with women. Almost every knight sought out a youth who could be worthy of him, and formed a close blood brotherhood. The attachment could provoke jealousy or even lead to a duel, as the stories told by Saikaku Ihara in *Nanshoku Okagami* (Tales of Manly Love; 1687) attest. The passionate love of a knight for his page—*kosho* in Japanese—could at

times end in the heroic death of both partners on the battlefield. Such relationships were characteristic of the southern rather than the northern provinces. The region of Satsuma is particularly mentioned as the center of Japanese military pederasty, and public opinion in Japan held the affection to reinforce the manliness and fighting spirit of its natives. The Tokugawa era has also left to posterity other literary works that describe the adventures of pairs of lovers, their heroism, and self-sacrifice. As late as the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05) such homoerotic relationships persisted in the army, between officers and soldiers, and underlay the defiance of death and sacrifice of life on the battlefields of Manchuria.

*Europe.* If in the Christian Middle Ages in Europe the clergy imposed a formal ban on homosexual activity, it did not diminish the psychological reality of the warrior's need for male comradeship or the social isolation of the soldier from conventional married life. So renowned commanders with homosexual natures continued to write chapters in the history of warfare: Eugene of Savoy and Frederick the Great of Prussia are only the most brilliant. The male who identifies solely with other men, who disdains and rejects the company of women, and prefers the all-male setting of the camp and the bivouac to the drawing room and the marriage chamber—such a man is a born soldier. That other homosexual types depart extensively if not completely from this ideal does not negate its existence; the contrast proves only how protean in reality are the phenomena grouped under the rubric of homosexuality. It is also relevant in this connection that in some European countries homosexual gratification is regarded by the common people as a pleasure or prerogative of the upper classes, including the warrior nobility with its leisure-class ethos and its sporadic bouts of orgiastic release from the tensions of battle.

The German theoretician Hans Blüher (1888–1955) went so far as to for-

mulate the principle that "When a number of persons of the male sex must live together under compulsion, then the social strivings that exceed the mere organizational purpose develop according to the pattern of the male society," which is to say that male bonding with an unconscious homoerotic content is the psychological cement of the association. Blüher counterposed the "male society" with its primary homoeroticism, which he deemed the basis of the state and the military formations that protect its security, to the family as a social unit grounded in heterosexual attraction and the ensuing reproductive activity. The first assures the political and cultural continuity of the state, the second the biological survival of the nation. He maintained that Judaism had suppressed the homosexual aspect of its culture, with concomitant hypertrophy of the family, so that ultimately the Jewish state lost its independence, and the Jews were doomed to centuries of wandering in exile as a people of merchants and traders without a military caste. The success of the Zionist movement he foresaw, as early as 1919, as dependent upon the ability of diaspora Jewry to generate a true leadership initiated in the mysteries of male bonding and therefore achieve a national identity with a military ethos. And in point of fact the army has grown ever more influential in the politics and national life of Israel since 1948—making a comparatively small country the only first-class military power in the region, even if the Orthodox parties in the Knesset clung to the Pentateuch's prohibition of male homosexuality. Blüher further saw male bonding as crucial to the formation of male elites with a firm sense of group solidarity and loyalty that enables them to play a leading role in the state, of whose strength war is the severest test. The discipline, the comradeship, the willingness of the individual to sacrifice himself for the victory of the nation—all these are determined by the homoerotic infrastructure of the male society.

*Prejudices and Stereotypes.* In total contrast to this analysis is the attitude of the military establishment toward homosexuality in recent times, since the emergence of mass citizen armies—"the nation in arms"—and the psychiatric concept of sexual inversion. Once vast numbers of draftees had to be classified and trained, and the notion of homosexuality as "degeneracy" or "disease" had reached the half-educated public, it was certain to be abused by authoritarian regimes such as the military; and in fact was.

For the American armed forces during World War II, the homosexual posed a particular dilemma: the services badly needed fighting men at the outset of the war for which America was sadly unprepared, and the psychiatric examination given to draftees was perfunctory in the extreme. So, many homosexual men were inducted, served in the fighting lines—and then, when the pressure to draft more recruits waned, were ignominiously released from the armed forces with undesirable or dishonorable discharges. A study of the unfit soldier even classified homosexuals with enuretics, as presumably both were guilty of incontinence. During the latter part of World War II a systematic effort was made to detect and exclude homosexual men and lesbians from the American armed forces. As a result many lives were blighted and even ruined.

The intolerance of the American military mounted in the wake of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy's charges that the Truman Administration was "harboring sex perverts in government," followed by the report of a seven-member subcommittee that found homosexuals to be security risks at a time when the media were actively propagating fears of Soviet espionage, and even commended the army for "ferreting out sex perverts." Even the armed forces of America's allies in NATO, many of which had no penal laws against homosexual behavior, were pressured to do likewise. The procedures used to obtain confessions from suspected homosexuals of-

ten violated the rights guaranteed a defendant in a criminal case in civilian life, but the courts have been loath to deny the armed services the option of discharging individuals whose homosexuality has come to light, even if no criminal behavior while on duty could be imputed to them. A series of cases have been appealed and lost on the ground that the concept of privacy has no application in military life, while close observers of the upper echelons of the officer corps have noted an official reaction to homosexuality that borders on the paranoid. It is significant that a postwar study of German military justice in the 1939–45 period concluded that despite the official attitude of the Nazi regime, the German tribunals dealt less harshly with homosexual offenders than did the American—in part because the emphasis that Magnus Hirschfeld had placed on the constitutional etiology of sexual inversion had convinced the German physicians and biologists that criminal proceedings against such individuals were largely useless, while their American counterparts were for the most part naive and uninformed, or had been persuaded that the homosexual needed only psychotherapy to be converted to a normal mode of life. So the medieval attitudes toward homosexual behavior are perpetuated by the American military (*see Law, United States*) with a host of rationalizations such as the authoritarian-bureaucratic mind loves to devise.

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## MILK, HARVEY (1930–1978)

American gay political leader.

Born into a Jewish family on Long Island, NY, at the beginning of the Depression, Milk enjoyed the family's greater prosperity in the 1940s, when he began to journey to Manhattan to attend opera and theatre performances. Yet the adolescent Harvey, becoming aware of his homosexuality, nonetheless absorbed the dominant idea of the period, that conformity was the sine qua non of success. He attended a college in upstate New York, served a hitch in the Navy, and then settled down to an inconspicuous life in a New York apartment with a male spouse. He joined a Wall Street firm and campaigned for Barry Goldwater in 1964. It was the theatre—the musical *Hair* in which he had invested—that began to erode Milk's social and political conservatism.

Moving to San Francisco also helped to shift his perspectives. He had the good fortune to open his camera shop on Castro Street when the neighborhood had not yet achieved its renown. His notoriety grew with that of the street itself, for Milk not only absorbed the *genius loci* but was largely instrumental in creating it. With a kind of outsider's holy simplicity, Milk blithely proceeded to upset the appellation of San Francisco's carefully nurtured gay establishment. Behind the flamboyant façade he proved a shrewd wheeler-dealer, cultivating an improbable but effective alliance with the city's blue-collar unions. He would hire people off the street for his political campaigns, sometimes because of physical attraction, sometimes on a hunch. The hunches often paid off, and a number of members of San Francisco's 1980s gay establishment owed their start to Milk's intuitions. But his last lover, Jack Lira (who committed suicide in their apartment), was a disaster. Milk neglected and mismanaged his camera business so that at times he scarcely had money for food. Yet somehow he pulled the whole thing off. On his third try, in 1977, he was