

COLUMBIA CLASS OF 1959 REUNION PANEL ON ROTC
COLUMBIA AND THE ROTC PROSPECTS FOR RECONCILIATION

50th REUNION

June 6, 2009

INTRODUCTION
DR. WILSON

In June 2009, the Columbia College Class of 1959 held its 50th reunion on the Columbia campus in New York City. Almost a third of the graduating class attended and participated in an extremely rich program of lectures, panel discussions and social events.

On Saturday afternoon, June 6th, close to 75 people gathered for a panel discussion convened to consider prospects for bringing NROTC, the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Program, back to Columbia. The four members of the panel, plus a number of those in the audience, had all been NROTC students, midshipmen, during their Columbia years. Graduation brought each of them an Officer's commission in the United States Navy and an active duty assignment.

In 1969, primarily because of widespread anti-war sentiment in this country, the University withdrew its support of ROTC. It was not the only university that did so and since that time, Columbia has declined to bring the program back.

In the discussion you are about to hear, the panelists and members of the audience discuss their own experiences and their assessment of the major disagreements that are presently being addressed in the active and serious debate about bringing NROTC back to Columbia. That debate and those discussions are taking place between and among students, faculty and alumni.

Members of the panel, in the order in which each presented his views, were Norman Bernstein, Ted Graske, Frank Wilson and Ben Huberman.

MR. BERNSTEIN

Thank you for attending this panel that is to discuss the potential return of the NROTC to Columbia. The panel members are our classmates: Ted Grasko, Dr. Frank Wilson, Ben Huberman and myself, Norman Bernstein. Each of the four of us will speak for fifteen minutes and then we will open the discussion to questions from the audience.

I want to start our discussions by first reading a letter that I received yesterday from General David H. Petraeus. Copies of the letter are on the table, and, if you wish, you can take a copy with you at the end of our discussions today. The letter reads as follows:



Headquarters
United States Central Command
7115 South Boundary Boulevard
MacDill AFB, FL 33621

5 June 2009

Norman W. Bernstein
14 Wakefield Road
Scarsdale, NY 10583

Dear Mr. Bernstein,

Congratulations to the Columbia College Class of 1959 on your 50th Réunion!

And congratulations to your panel for drawing interest to the discussion of returning ROTC to the Columbia campus. Our military needs the intellectual depth that students from its finest schools can bring to the force. Students who enroll in ROTC learn leadership and organizational skills that serve them throughout a lifetime of service, whether in or out of uniform. Above all, our country benefits by revitalizing in our brightest young people a sense of national service as an obligation of citizenship.

I am delighted to see that you and your classmates carry alumnus Alexander Hamilton's legacy of military and public service into the twenty-first century. Please accept my warmest wishes and grateful appreciation for your continued service to our nation.

All the best from CENTCOM,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David H. Petraeus', written in a cursive style.

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commanding

For those of you who don't know, Alexander Hamilton didn't start his career writing the Federalist papers or being the first Secretary of the Treasury. Seeing the Revolutionary War coming, he crammed every book he could find about artillery, got himself named as a Captain of Artillery in the Continental Army, and fought his two gun battery at the battle of White Plains covering Washington's retreat. He was in the further retreat across New Jersey into Pennsylvania. Then on Christmas Eve he led his battery across the frozen waters of the Delaware into the thick of the fight at Trenton and a few days later, he was in it again at battle for Princeton. Washington was so impressed he named Hamilton his aide. Towards the end, at Hamilton's insistence, this time as a colonel, he was allowed back into the fight and led an attack on a British redoubt at Yorktown, which was successful.

Hamilton's legacy is deep within the DNA of this school, and many of our faculty (and I suspect many in the administration) do not understand that there was, from the very beginning at this school, a tradition of military service.

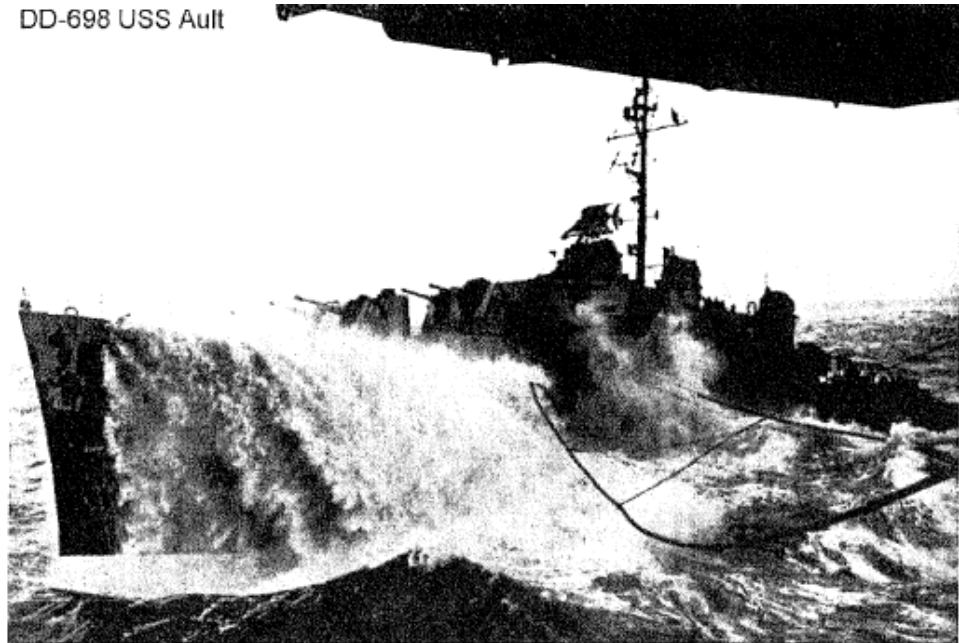
Now, I'd like to talk briefly about my own experience and mindful of my time limits, I want to move quickly. What I would like to talk about is life on a rolling, pitching, small combatant with green water over the deck and one in three bridge watches, coming off watch at mid-night, being woken at 2:00 A.M. to break crypto messages, or having the midnight to 4:00 A.M. watch and being woken at 6:00 A.M. to start the ship's workday; living on coffee, the ship rolling 10 degrees either side of vertical in good weather, 20 degrees either side of vertical in bad weather, that puts you through a 40 degree arc, and all the while the ship is pitching up and down.

So, what you have is a corkscrew motion, and somehow your body and your stomach adjust. The smell of bunker oil permeates everything. The bridge of the ship I was on, the USS Ault, DD698, a Sumner class destroyer built near the end of World War II, was wide open to the weather on either side of the bridge; it was a glory in the Caribbean and a misery in the North Sea.

I found some photographs of the Ault underway in good weather and in heavy weather. Now, you can get a sense of what it was like underway in heavy weather.



DD-698 USS Ault





I first reported on board the Ault, in of all places, Toledo, Ohio. The Ault was in Ohio because the St. Lawrence Seaway had just opened connecting the Atlantic to the Great Lakes and we were there as part of the celebration. This photograph was of the Captain of the Ault, Commander R.E. Williams.



USS Ault in Toledo, Ohio. Left to right: CDR. R. E. Williams, USS Ault Commanding Officer. Capt. Raymond Berthrong, Commodore of Destroyer Division 222.

There are lessons in humility one learns in the Navy from watching very young men from the Ozarks with only high school diplomas operating and maintaining complex radar and sonar equipment. Some were operating

communications and fire control equipment and I, as Electronics Material Officer and then later as Anti-Aircraft Battery Officer, struggled to understand. They were just as smart as I was. The only difference was that I was an Officer with a Columbia education, and they were not.

The Navy also had a system of teaching, unlike anything I had ever experienced before. It provided an overview of complex subjects broken down into component parts. Each component was taught and then integrated with the prior component, and soon the whole thing fell into place.

Then there were the live ammunition gunfire exercises. I still remember the rhythmic blast of two twin-mounted 3 inch 50 caliber rapid firing anti-aircraft guns firing at towed targets while I, in the gunfire director less than 20 feet or so away, was controlling the fire.

There is a sense of responsibility that comes to a 22-year-old - issuing orders to the engine order telegraph and helmsman, "all ahead full turns for 20 knots, left standard rudder, new course 260" and feeling the whole ship heel in response to your commands and knowing that you had better be right. There is the discipline that comes of carrying out your duties to your ship and your shipmates, no matter how tired, cold or seasick you might feel.

It was a high point of the Cold War. Our Air Force was running what were called "Elant Missions" - old B-47 bombers filled with electronic gear making runs toward the Soviet Union, taking readings on Soviet search and fire control radar, and getting out before they were shot down.

The USS Ault spent seven months in the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet. The Russians had "fishing trawlers" shadowing the Sixth Fleet. The "trawlers" had no nets, of course, just lots of radio and radar masts. The Russian air defense rockets shot down Gary Powers and his U2 over Soviet soil. Khrushchev, angrily cancelled a summit meeting with Eisenhower.

The USS Ault and another old vintage destroyer (I don't remember its name) were sent as the first American warships since World War II into the Black Sea for a "goodwill mission" to two Turkish seaports on the Black Sea. One was Eregli, a little fishing village, and the other was Samsun, the latter a Philadelphia sized industrial port that I had never heard of and didn't know existed.

Before entering the Black Sea, we were boarded by men in civilian clothes with black boxes. We were not told who they were or why they'd come aboard but between our visits to the Turkish ports, we shook off the Russian fishing trawler that had been shadowing us and did a high speed run north toward Sebastopol, the main Russian naval base. To this day, I do not know exactly what we were doing, but my guess is that we were attempting to get Russians to turn on their surface search or fire control radars so that the men with the black boxes

could take readings on the frequencies that the Russians were using. There is confirmation of that in at least one published source.

I could also talk endlessly about the red tiled roofs, and the pastel building colors of the Mediterranean ports that we visited: Cannes, Niece, Gulf Juan, Patras, Piraeus, the port city for Athens, Athens itself, Rhodes, Rome, Barcelona and on the Atlantic coast, Brest. I could talk about the sights and sounds and smells of the Riviera and the Acropolis; and learning to drink wine from a gourd in Barcelona or watching a bullfight in Palma d'Majorica.

After returning to the States and a refit at the naval base in Norfolk, Virginia, we went to the naval base at Guantanamo, Cuba, for gunfire training. While we were there, the landings at the Bay of Pigs caused most of the Navy's civilian workers to leave the base - they apparently belonged to Castro's militia and were going to join their units. After the collapse of the invasion, (I could talk more about that as well), Castro massed militia outside the base, Cuban radio was blaring martial music. And, we and several other destroyers, stood out into the harbor, to provide gunfire support to the handful of Marines that were going to try to defend the base.

We were told that Castro had put artillery on the hills overlooking the base, and we wagered whether, once shooting started, we'd be blown out of the water in five minutes, ten minutes or fifteen. No one was willing to wager that we would last more than fifteen minutes.

However, President Kennedy, who had refused air support for the Bay of Pigs invasion, landed a regiment of marines in Guantanamo. According to The New York Times, they'd come ashore for rest and recreation. There was no mention in the article that they came ashore with their artillery and full battle gear.

Castro apparently decided that he did not want to take on the Marines, and so instead he cut off the base's water supply. The Navy brought in a desalination plant, and they lived happily ever after.

Following two years on the destroyer, Columbia Law School seemed easy. I used some of the techniques I learned from the Navy to break work down work its component parts. The Navy discipline held, and I was prepared on every case, in every class, everyday.

In 1964, I graduated from law school, cum laude, a Harlan Fisk Stone Scholar and a member of the Board of Editors of the Columbia Law Review. I am quite certain that that would not have happened but for my two years on the Ault. In my view, a reason for having an NROTC at Columbia is that it leads to a student becoming an officer in the fleet and to the adventure of a lifetime.

Thank you. Our next speaker is Ted Graske. Ted:

THEODORE W. GRASKE, JR.



Thank you. As you can see from the opening slide, I'm not here to do a bad university, good military model. What I'm here to do today is to give you an accurate assessment of perhaps both sides of the coin, so I'm going to try to be objective about the ROTC issue. I'm going to try to be provocative and I might even take a poke here or there; but this is going to be a case of leaving the pros and cons and things that you may be surprised at from the situation here at Columbia. It's also based on the work I do with an outside organization of alumni. Many of my thoughts are not out of my head but they are based on talking to many alumni, military people, to administrators here at Columbia, and so forth. To begin I am going to take 30 seconds on my military history.



My service in the Navy was 5 ½ years of active duty and then 24 years in the Reserves. Most of that was in anti-submarine warfare in aircraft depicted on the slide. I'm not going to go through 30 years of military service.

In addition to my civilian career, I spent a lot of weekends playing this game, either flying, planning, training people, working logistics, or taking care of various problems if things break as they frequently do.

I was not a pilot - I was what is called a Flight Officer or Tactical Coordinator. The important thing is that when you fly this type of aircraft, depicted in the slide, you fly either 200 feet over the water or you're up at 30,000 feet. And, everybody who has been in an airplane knows that, at 30,000 feet, you don't see the minute details. So, the next few minutes are going to be a high-altitude view of the issues and then we'll try to pin down some of the details in the question and answer period.

“The Nation that makes a **great** distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by Fools”

Thucydides (460-400BC)

That’s the theme. So, in keeping with Thucydides and the many other Columbia readings we have read or been reminded of at this reunion. I will try and interpret his remarks. The Greek historian is trying to explain how Athens, the world’s first democracy, had lost the war to Sparta, a smaller nation that makes absolutely no distinction between scholars and warriors.

Now, the message here is the theme that the military and academia can coexist peacefully and productively, and that is the theme you are going to hear.

Columbia Early 1950’s



We’re going to flash back to the early ‘50’s. It’s a little difficult to identify the exact year of this ceremony shown on the slide. We obtained this from the New York Public Library. It is most likely from the early 1950s.

In the '50's, there was a tense global environment. A hot war in Asia had just ended. There was a Cold War in Europe. Atomic war was in the American psyche. Remember, people were building bomb shelters in their backyard. It was a tremendously different time, and it was different at Columbia. The ROTC unit was over 250 midshipmen.

Now, there were no women in the school at that time, so the midshipmen were all men. Why were they there? Well, there was something that today we call "conscription", but back then we called it the "draft". So, there was a motivation to become an officer as opposed to dig foxholes in the Army.

Another reason was scholarships and financial support. That generation, our generation, was not out of the Depression, but we were just after that. Most people did not have a lot of money, and the scholarships were very important. There was a sense of service and several other reasons.

On this slide, I call your attention to the Dean leading the group out. That's not a military officer.

That shows you how the relationship between the military in those days and the ROTC existed. It was one act. And, I believe (I cannot prove this), that academia, or as they call it the "Academy", believed that the association with the military would have more benefits than drawbacks.

We're going to fast forward to today. I put some of your favorite politicians on that slide; and I'll tell you why in just a second.

Today, once again there is a very dangerous global environment: tsunamis - we (the military) have been deeply involved with humanitarian work in tsunamis; the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, terrorists; and believe it or not, in this day and age, pirates. North Korea has just renounced the truce that was put into effect in our college years, 1953. Russian bear bombers (just like in the '50's) have returned to new patrols off our coast, and sub-Saharan Africa is a mess.

Today, the class of 2009 who are leaving Columbia are facing just as many obstacles and as dangerous global environment as we did. In fact it is even more complex, because it was bipolar in our era. It was the Russians and it was us. Now it's Iran; now it's China; now it's the Korean peninsula, and so on. It's multi-polar; it's very different.

So, what is the message? The message at the bottom of the slide is, even though it's two Yalees and one Columbia person, the message is, leadership is required. And, Columbia has always produced effective leaders, whether it be in politics, medicine, economics, or the law. It's just baffling to us why a very significant portion of the United States economy, the military, a major consumer of Resources, a leader in many world affairs, is left out.

ROTC Today



Leadership is important. Let's look at the ROTC today. Each year, there's about 11 students in the ROTC or related Marine Corps program. They get their ROTC training and this is key. If you are going to take Army ROTC, you have to go to Fordham University for the training. If you take Air Force ROTC you have to commute to Manhattan college in the Bronx.

The way ROTC works is especially very different from when we were here. It's emphasis is Regional now. Fordham University is the Army Center for much of New York. They recruit from 100 schools in the New York area. Manhattan College is the central point for the Air Force. Therefore, a Columbia student has to truck up to either Manhattan College or Fordham to get their training, with one minor exception I'll get to in a second.

Nothing happens here on campus, so these 11 students participate in what are called cross-town, units namely Fordham and Manhattan. There is a Navy ROTC unit at SUNY (the State of New York Maritime Academy at Fort Schuyler in the Bronx) but at the present time, that's not accessible.



Now, this year, we only had one commissioned officer. Her name is Elizabeth Feldmeier. She is a graduate this year, Cum Laude, from the College. She is a distinguished military student. She received this award recently. Only a small number of these awards are given by the Army. She is on her way to law school at the University of Pennsylvania. After she finishes law school, she will initiate her military service in the U.S. Army. The picture on the slide is lousy, but I'd like Elizabeth to stand up, and I'd like us to show her our appreciation for her work and service. (Applause)



Now, you may ask, why is there no ROTC on our campus? I can say that it is because Columbia maintains that it cannot have an academic program with a discriminatory aspect. I'll read you a quote by someone called "Presbo" by the students. (President Bollinger)

“The University has an obligation deeply rooted in the core values of an academic institution and in the First Amendment principles to protect its students from improper discrimination and humiliation.”

DADT

- Don't Ask –DON'T Tell
- ***Don't ask, don't tell*** is the common term for the policy about homosexuality in the U.S. military mandated by federal law [Pub.L. 103-160 \(10 U.S.C. § 654\)](#).

The term that's commonly used and I'll use it here today, is “Don't ask, don't tell”. It is a lightning rod issue on campus and it simply means, if you are a gay or lesbian soldier, sailor or whatever, you cannot be open about it. If you are open, you are out.

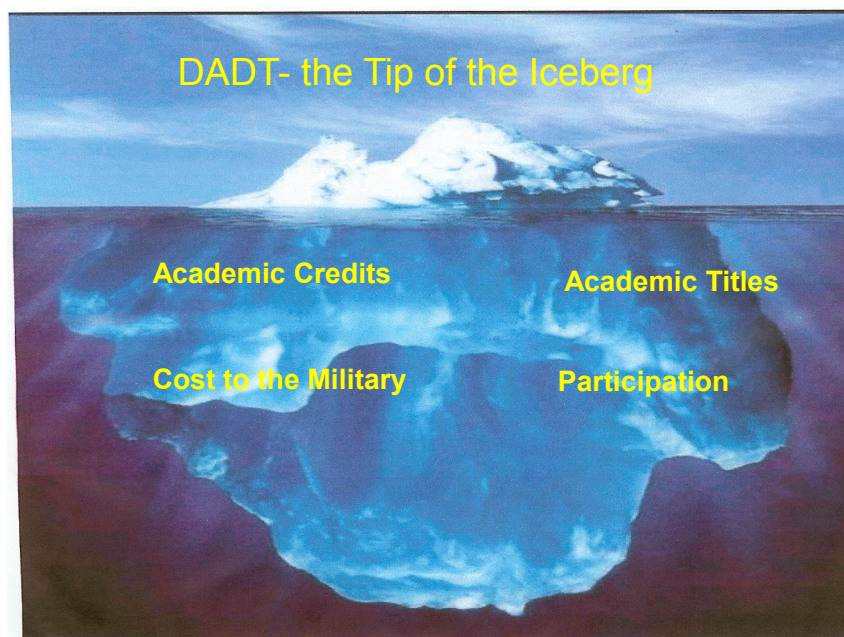
GOOD INTENTION- BAD ANALYSIS



Now, many alumni have this reaction. They think back to their Humanities courses. They remember “Don Quixote” where the intentions to save Princess Esmeralda were good, but his analysis was not.

The ROTC left campus in 1972. DADT became law in 1993. That is 21 years later, 21 years later. So, the skeptic – the skeptic argues, “Well, there’s something else at work here.”

The second point, and this is where I feel the school has let the students down, DADT is a law. It’s not a military policy and it’s not something that the college students participating in ROTC, put into effect; and to penalize them for the acts of Congress, we feel is very unfair.



However, “Don’t ask, don’t tell”, is the tip of the iceberg; and this is what you don’t see in the papers.

President Obama says he will do away with DADT. My question is: What is next? Or, as the skeptic says, “I know they’ll find another excuse.” But, the issue here is that once that (DADT) disappears, there are certain substantive issues to work out – academic credits, department status and the big one, faculty control; and I’ll enumerate on those in a minute.

Also, on the Department of Defense side, and this is very critical, is the cost. Tuition at Columbia is \$39,000 a year roughly. Forget about board. You can get three officers from Alabama for the price of one Columbia student. So, if you hear about a campus that allegedly is anti-military, and you get three people from Alabama without the rancor for the same cost - what do you think the decision will be? So, there’s a two-way street involved here.



Now, what's on the scene that might be a little bit brighter than obstacles? And, the first thing is, President Obama is committed to repeal "Don't ask, don't tell". When is a good question, but on the Columbia campuses there are some climate changing influences.

Number One: There are over a hundred military veterans now at Columbia, and that interaction with students will prompt an understanding and less reluctance to consider the military as a career option. In addition, the School of General Studies recently announced that if you were a military veteran and you qualified for what they call "the Yellow Ribbon VA Program", which pays roughly half of the Columbia tuition for General Studies, Columbia will foot the rest of the bill. So, if you're a veteran, Columbia will provide some funding for your education. Now, what's the message there? Columbia is putting money and resources into something. It is not just talk.

Second, recently the Columbia War Memorial was established, and that took quite a while to get up; but again, the University paid for it. And before you leave today, I invite you to go into Butler Library, go behind the Security desk and up on the wall, there's a very nice Honor Roll. And, the Honor Roll goes back to the Revolutionary War it's about Columbians who have given their lives to the nation's service.

There are several other activities that suggest some positive change, but two things I would mention. If you think that, the administration of Columbia likes an anti-military image, that's not true. I can tell you; I could give you quotes and chapters in verse. They do not feel that it is in the interest of the alumni; they do not feel that it is in the interest of the students, the administration or anyone that Columbia have that image. They want to have a pro-active citizen image.

The administration has a long way to go because of the history with the ROTC issue, but a very big thing is that Columbia feels that it needs to have the more positive image. (Whether or not they deserve it is another story). They don't want Bill O'Reilly type comments at the moment.

In addition to that, we have a fair amount of cooperation from Columbia faculty, up to and including not only running seminars, inviting people like Thomas Ricks and others, but to the extent of one or two people making contacts in Washington for us. So, there is some supportive faculty. There are some that are still, say, on the other side mired in the 60's.



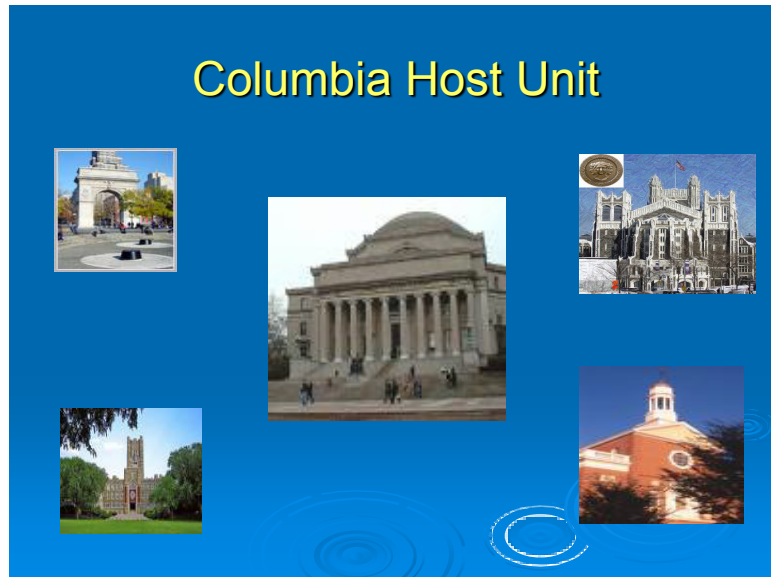
You have to ask yourself a question. What is in it for whom? What is in it for the University? What is in it for the nation?

The stakeholders in this are the Columbia community, that's students, faculty, alumni. The second stakeholder is the military. The third stakeholder is the nation, beyond Columbia.

What is the benefit for a faculty member? The benefit for a faculty member is they can influence a key segment of American society. Now, not every Columbia graduate is going to be a general or a President Obama. We know that, but they have a chance to influence actively and not just say nasty things or whatever.

For the student, everybody knows about scholarships. But do you know full scholarships now are worth \$40,000 a year. Because of the expensive Columbia tuition, a full scholarship is worthwhile. I would say this. Unlike our years, scholarships are very differentiated and varied by service, type of participation, as well as other variables. A scholarship matrix, as you would. You

may remember that as midshipmen, we got stipend of \$27 a month. Now, when you are a senior, it is roughly \$400 a month, or I think the Army might be a little more. So, the last point..., the military gets some well educated officers for a period of time who have had contact here at Columbia with other future society leaders.



And, last but not least, and I can address this in the question and answer session, is four schools - Harvard, Yale, Brown and Columbia - are not participating in ROTC. Therefore, what is happening is that a key segment of people who are going to be future leaders, who will be economically well off, are going to be represented by other people, in doing the nation's heavy lifting, when it comes to military affairs. In addition, many alumni do not think this is socially healthy. So we'll talk about that in the questions and answers.

DR. FRANK WILSON

Thanks so much, Ted.

At first glance, the proposition that a liberal arts college in this country should help to prepare young men and women for service, or even a career in the military, seems profoundly wrong-headed. Universities, after all, are traditionally in the business of fostering habits of mind that we associate with peace, contemplation, and creativity. Whereas the job of military, as I have been told by a friend who advises the Secretary of the Air Force, is "to kill people and smash things."

To its credit, Columbia makes no attempt to shield its students from the realities of military conflict, since it permits its students to read Homer. Thus, in Book Four of "The Iliad", one finds this passage:

Antilochus was the first to kill a Trojan captain, Thalyssias' son Echeolus. Antilochus thrust first, speared the horsehair helmet right at the ridge, and the bronze spearpoint lodged in the man's forehead, smashing through his skull and the dark came whirling down across his eyes – he toppled down like a tower in the rough assault.

Having been both an emergency room doctor and a neurologist, I can assure you that Homer was not indulging in poetic fancy or in fancy or inflammatory rhetoric here. It is grievously unpleasant to have a spear driven into your head.

So, why are we harmless-looking elders in the Class of 1959 advocating that the University welcome ROTC back into the academic life of this Institution?

You have already heard from Norman and Ted about some of the case we are trying to make. Based on many discussions that we've had in recent months, we are now of one mind even though we each have our own reasons for the agreement that we feel.

Without getting into any seemingly substantive differences about technicalities, I want to say that I personally strongly agree that “Don't ask, don't tell” is a hypocritical policy and worse; it benefits no one and it compromises both national security interests and the fundamental rights of American citizens. And I believe that Columbia's students, faculty and administration are right to oppose it.

On the other sticking point that Ted has mentioned about the faculty issue, I agree that the University faculty bears a serious institutional responsibility to maintain Columbia's academic standards. However, I am inclined to imagine that respectful dialogue and negotiation will eventually resolve present differences about the status of ROTC faculty and the courses required of students and credits for those courses in the ROTC programs.

There are two specific issues that I would like to bring to this discussion which I hope will be taken into account as the resident and extended Columbia faculty consider ROTC and the evolving context in which the possible reopening of that program arises. As it happens, those issues that interest me turn out to have been very much in the air in discussions that have taken place in meetings and privately during our reunion. Those issues are, first, the philosophy of education and, second, the influence of technology on modern life.

The point I would like to make about the educational philosophy issue is this: The metaphysics that apply do not automatically place the University and the military on opposite sides of an ideological divide in education. To the contrary, at the most basic level both the military and the University are in the business of assisting young people to discover what it means to become an adult.

I would argue, in fact, that the military probably does a better job than the University at getting young people to grasp what it means to earn the trust of others whose welfare – indeed, whose very lives – depend on your ability and your willingness to do the job that you have agreed to do.

New Yorkers, perhaps more than almost any other people in the world, understand the moral axis along which this principle operates because of the physical and historical proximity of instructive examples. The most shining of these, of course, is the sacrificial behavior of public safety employees on 9/11. The *horrible* example, of course, is the predatory behavior of highly paid professionals in banking and finance, at the base of which one finds nothing more striking than a culture of undisguised contempt for intellectual honesty and personal integrity.

We don't have to look far beyond the borders of this city for an equally instructive example that directly involves the United States Military. Those of you who have followed the published accounts of the American anti-terrorism policy under the second Bush Administration know that it was *military* lawyers who fought a torture policy advocated by civilian lawyers in the Justice Department, and not the other way around.

Hence, I would suggest that anyone who takes it as axiomatic that a civilian university will naturally foster a moral sense and cultivate ethical behavior in its sons and daughters, whereas the military will not, should take a fresh look at the facts.

Preparing to participate in this panel has caused me to think about my own personal awakening to the meaning of responsibility during my years in the Navy. And listening to others over the past few days has reminded me that I am the sort of person who is strongly influenced by personal example in those from whom I seek to learn. I was moved by the association with and the example of great teachers when I was a student at Columbia College, and in the Navy I was equally moved by the example of the shipmates and leaders who had become my colleagues.

I recently tried to find out more about the career of James H. Mini, the Commanding Officer of the USS Midway, the ship on which I served for three years after graduating from Columbia College. Born in the Philippines, his father was a military officer; then Lt (jg) Mini was aboard the Arizona on the 7th of December, 1941, serving as an Aviation Officer. He survived the Pearl Harbor attack and for the rest of the war flew attack aircraft in the Pacific. In December of 1944 he was awarded the Navy Cross, the second highest military award, next to the Congressional Medal of Honor. I was able to obtain a copy of his Citation and would like to read to you; it is brief:

“To James H. Mini, for distinguishing himself by extraordinary heroism in operations against the enemy fleet in the vicinity of the Philippine Islands as pilot of a carrier-based dive bomber and the leader of a flight of carrier planes on 24 October 1944, when he so skillfully deployed his forces in a coordinated attack as to inflict the maximum damage to six major combatant ships. For his own attack, he selected the largest battleship in the enemy fleet and in the face of intense anti-aircraft fire, he scored a direct hit with one 1,000-pound bomb. [This, incidentally, was the Japanese super-battleship Musashi, which did not finally sink until it had been hit by a total of 17 torpedoes and 19 bombs]. His leadership, courage and ability were at all times in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval service.”

To my shame, I did not know about this award until this year.

I first met Capt. Mini on a dark and stormy night shortly after I had reported aboard, and was working in the Operations Department. I had been given a memorandum to take to the Captain for his signature during night flight operations. I got myself to the bridge, presented myself to the Captain, who looked at me and said, “Who are you?” “I’m Ensign Wilson, sir, and I have a form for you to sign.” He looked at it and he said, “What’s in it?” “I don’t know, Sir.” He looked at me over his half-mast glasses in disbelief. There is absolutely no way to describe the feeling that I had at that moment. Before or since, I’ve never had such a feeling.

“Mr. Wilson, never bring me anything to sign that you are not prepared to sign yourself because you are entirely aware of its complete contents.” He handed the paper back to me, I scraped out what had accumulated in my shoes, and left the bridge.

Despite the bad start, I got to know Captain Mini and came to appreciate why he took his job so seriously. When he had completed his tour as CO of the Midway he was appointed Commandant of the United States Naval Academy. Tragically, but perhaps not so surprisingly, he died of a heart attack at the age of 50. The date, oddly enough, was December 7, 1963, 22 years to the day after the Japanese had failed to get him at Pearl Harbor.

The connection between my years in the Navy and what happened to me later in life is very much, I think, as strong as Norman’s was. As an emergency room doctor and subsequently a neurologist, I have frequently thought about the meaning of personal responsibility, and how simply but forcefully Capt. Mini impressed on me the importance of knowing not only what I know but what I do *not* know. That is a principle that stood me in very good stead through over 40 years of medical practice, and it’s something that I still think about a great deal.

I am almost out of time, but I do want at least to allude to the technology issue as it relates to ROTC and its place in a civilian undergraduate program. I would like to refer you to *Wired for War*, a book written by P. W. Singer and an extremely important reference on the influence of technology on the conduct of war.

Reduced to simple imagery, consider that there are guys sitting in a trailer in Nevada receiving flight pay to operate Predator drones over Pakistan and Afghanistan. It's the ultimate video game. The whole tendency of technology in the military is to insulate the person who is doing the shooting from the person who is the target. While this is a very good idea in many ways, it does suggest to me that there needs to be some sort of antidote to the dangers of complete dissociation which our technology affords the American serviceman fighting a war thousands of miles away. One such antidote might come in the form of people who are sophisticated not simply in matters of military technology, but about the broader implications of warfare.

For that reason I strongly endorse the idea that the military of the United States should be made up of officers who are broadly educated, who will continue to think broadly about national security, and who are qualified to contribute to the development of foreign and military policies of this country.

Thank you.

BENJAMIN HUBERMAN

It's ironic that Columbia and the Navy are amazingly intertwined throughout history, even before the "Caine Mutiny." By the way, the opening scene in the novel takes place on the lawn immediately behind where we're sitting. In the movie, however, the scene was shifted to a more glamorous campus in New Jersey.

Long before that, part of the shared history includes Federalist Paper 24, wherein Alexander Hamilton argues that commerce and security mandate having a Navy as soon as possible. "As soon as possible" are his words.

The major strategic thinker of the US Navy, Alfred Thayer Mahan, was a freshman at Columbia when he decided to transfer to the Naval Academy. He had a profound effect on the Navy in general and on Theodore Roosevelt in particular. Roosevelt had first met Mahan while he was attending Columbia Law School.

Like most of my classmates, I had various motivations for joining the NROTC and Ted has referred to some of these. For me, the main motivation was to unload a financial burden on my parents through a scholarship at a prestigious college. I had a special motivation in that I felt that as part of the Navy and as an officer at that, that I would finally be accepted as an American. I had been born in

Cuba and did not speak English until I was nine. This had become a real mental burden for me.

I graduated and was commissioned in 1960, one year behind my classmates here today because I was in the five-year engineering program. I then went to the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London on a Fulbright Scholarship. This immediately gave me my first benefit of having gone to Columbia. I wore my class ring with the crown of King George on it. (Laughter). Sam Tindall is here wearing his and you might want to take a look at it. On a number of occasions I was asked if I was a member of the Royal Family. (Laughter). True story. I don't think that I ever said yes.

Because of the time that I spent on the Fulbright Scholarship while on active duty and other subsidized education, I spent a total of six years in the Navy, four and a half of these on Admiral Rickover's staff. On that staff I worked on the design and construction of nuclear submarines.

The spirit of activism at Columbia carried over into my time in the Navy. During my first years in the Navy I was able to get two Navy-wide policies changed. One had to do with allowing newly commissioned officers to accept graduate fellowships beyond the Rhodes and Fulbrights. Those were the only two previously allowed under Navy regulations. After I made my proposal and it was accepted all kinds of fellowships were allowed under the revised regulations.

The other involved a recruiting film which portrayed only white faces in illustrating the daily life of Navy personnel. This was a recruiting film, intended to be shown on television in the Washington, DC, area, among other places. After I discussed this brilliant approach to recruiting with the Chief of Information [John S. McCain, father] that film was withdrawn.

As my obligated service in the Navy was coming to an end, a Columbia Engineering School classmate of mine --Jerry Kahan -- called me. He was aware that I was very interested in foreign policy issues and that I was working in the nuclear field. Jerry told me that the agency where he was working -- the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the State Department -- was in the process of negotiating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in Geneva. He said that they needed somebody like me to be on the delegation. I ended up spending two years working on these negotiations, focusing on the safeguards arrangements which are so much in the news these days with regard to Iran and North Korea.

From there I returned to Washington to work on the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and, finally, I became a member of the US Delegation for the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks with the Soviet Union. These resulted in the ABM Treaty and in various strategic offensive arms limitations.

After these arms control assignments, I went to the National Security Council under Kissinger and worked on various energy and defense issues. When the Atomic Energy Commission was split in two in 1975, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and what eventually became the Department of Energy, I was appointed the first director of the policy office of the NRC.

Among other things, I continued negotiating with the Soviets. The lowlight -- not highlight -- of this was my inability to convince the head of the Soviet nuclear program that the two countries should agree to share nuclear reactor safety information. Years later, after the disaster at Chernobyl, the US and USSR finally did reach such an agreement.

In 1977, I returned to the White House in a joint appointment as an assistant director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and as the senior technology officer on the NSC staff. My two bosses were Frank Press, a PhD geophysicist from Columbia, and Zbigniew Brzezinski, who had just left his teaching post at Columbia.

An extra added attraction for returning to the White House was that President Carter and I shared a background in both having worked for Admiral Rickover, something that the President and I discussed on several occasions. I continued in the White House through the first year of the Reagan Administration, both on the NSC staff and now as Deputy Science Advisor to the President.

Eventually I left because I needed to make some money to send my two boys to college, including one to Columbia. At that point I joined a consulting firm headed by my boss on the SALT Delegation, Gerard C. Smith, and became a full-time consultant in the energy and defense areas.

I still have consulting clients but my major activity these days is chairing the Chief of Naval Operations' Executive Panel. This group of civilian volunteers reports directly to the Chief of Naval Operations, the CNO, who is the four-star military head of the Navy.

It has some 30 members on it from diverse disciplines, with Columbia graduates prominent among them. For example, in recent years alumni have included Josh Lederberg, Albert Wohlstteter, Steve Trachtenberg, Dov Zakheim and Engineering School alumnus Paul Bracken. Chairing this panel for the past eight years is undoubtedly the most important work I have done during this time.

Occasionally, all aspects of my background got utilized at the same time. In 1989, for example, I received a call from the fellow I had replaced on the NSC Staff in 1973. He was now deputy chief of mission at our embassy in Buenos Aires. The civilians had returned to power in Argentina and the Minister of Defense had asked for someone who knew how the NSC worked to come to Argentina and give lectures on civilian control to the Joint Chiefs and to the

Argentine Congress. And, it had to be done in Spanish because supposedly they weren't used to speaking English anymore.

Finally, a few more points: I would say that my biggest regret looking back is that since the late '60's the people who came after us haven't had a full opportunity to serve the country and to receive the financial and other rewards concerning the Navy through the NROTC or otherwise. Indeed, they have been taught by inference that defense of country is somewhat less than honorable, probably not really worthy of intellectual pursuit or even course credit and should be left to lesser beings.

When they were up here some six months ago, talking about national service, both Obama and McCain commented about the desirability of ROTC coming back to Columbia. Obama spoke as an alumnus, McCain as someone whose daughter had recently graduated from Columbia. I think that we should do what we can to press them to do their part, through whatever avenues are available to us. We should also be prepared to pressure the Columbia Administration to reach compromises and solve this problem so that students such as the young woman we heard from here won't have to go through contortions to achieve their ambition to join the military and serve their country. Thank you.

MR. BERNSTEIN: So, now, we'll open this to discussion for those of you who came late. Try to reserve time for others and please refrain from any harangues. We want to have questions and we'll try to give straight answers. I see a hand in back.

Q: Just a simple question. What is the objective that has been alluded to here at Columbia, or just have better participation in a unit somewhere else?

MR. BERNSTEIN: Ted:

MR. GRASKE: Thank you. There's a short-term and a long-term objective. The short-term objective is to increase participation. To do that requires a more receptive climate, less of a chilling effect created by some of the policies, official statements, and many other things. So, the short-term goal is to get enough people to be interesting to the Department of Defense. They must see it to be financially worthwhile

The long-range objective: There are many scenarios, but the most logical one, given the plans of the Department of Defense to manage these Regional Centers, would be to establish Columbia as a regional host activity. First choice is Navy.

Here's why. You may not know this, but there are over 594,000 students in universities in the Metropolitan area. There are over 100 schools, schools like Fordham, CCNY especially, Pace, and many other schools, could be a recruiting

pool for, Naval officers. But it could be Air Force or Army. Columbia is ideally located geographically to service this. The SUNY Naval Unit is very hard to get to and is predominantly midshipmen from the Merchant Marine Academy.

So, the most logical, (and there are several scenarios), is in several years, convince the Department of Defense that there's enough participation and to establish a regional unit with Columbia as the host, just like it is at Penn.

Now, I'll take one more second on that. At Penn, there is a Naval Reserve, excuse me, a Naval ROTC unit, but also it has students from Temple and Drexel. So, the Naval unit there operates as we see the future at Columbia. Nearby Villanova also has a NROTC unit, and they have students from other schools.

So, the concept, most logical, would be to draw from areas like CCNY, like Fordham, like Manhattan, put a Naval unit in here. In particular, because these schools have good minority populations and foreign language speakers, it would be very attractive to the service.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Thank you, Ted. Next question:

Q: "Don't ask, don't tell" seems to be the big stumbling block for Columbia. Is there any chance that that can be reversed, changed, or eliminated? Is anybody working on it?

MR. BERNSTEIN: We talked about that a little earlier. You may have been a little late. But, first of all, that's not a military policy. It's Congressional law. So, to have a significant change, you have to change the law; and President Obama has indicated that he is in favor of such a change. And, I think, given the way in which the feelings of young people, particularly, have evolved over the last ten years, it's almost inevitable that that will change. I can't tell you when, but I think its coming. Next:

Q: First, I'd like to thank Ted for carrying this fight along. I think we, most of us here, I think it is important. But, I'd just like to know, where does the Administration stand as far as these goals that you've outlined that you'd like to enact.

MR. GRASKE: Well, I can tell you that the Administration has the following interest, and this is recent. I've got recent news here. They believe in the ability of the ROTC to offer another career opportunity to their students. They'd like to give them another choice. Having said that, I will tell you there is no way in hell that's going to happen as long as DADT is in existence. So, once that goes away, there are other issues, as I've said, but they are particularly interested, more so than in scholarships, in having a career opportunity. I also communicate with the Trustees. Many of them, not all, feel the same way.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Let me suggest also though that it's obvious that you have some members of the faculty who are simply using "Don't ask, don't tell" as a cover for what really amounts to a continuation of the Vietnam War era mentality, because that's underlying a lot of this. Back there.

Q: Just as a kind of statistical fact, how many of the officers who are prepared through ROTC stay at their careers in the Navy?

MR. GRASKE: I don't have the statistics on the tip of my tongue. However, one of the interesting facets is the Army, Air Force and Navy are losing officers regardless of where they receive their commission at about the same rate

I may be a little off here, but I believe, there is an attrition of say with the Navy, Naval officers now at about eight years, eight/seven, I believe is the detail. However, the Naval Academy is losing people about the same rate, so whether it's seven or eight, I don't actually recall.

But, the attraction of the outside economy, companies want bright people from the get go, so Naval officers, Army officers, whatever it is, are very attractive to the outside world.

MR. BERNSTEIN: To give you a flavor of how things work, at least when I was in, we had 12 officers on our destroyer. Only two were Annapolis graduates. All the others had come into the Navy and became officers through other routes, primarily in ROTC.

MR. GRASKE: I'd just add one thing to that to U.S. taxpayers on this ROTC issue, and this is beyond Columbia. Depending on which study you read, the cost of training an officer at West Point or Annapolis to the Government for you as a taxpayer is anywhere from five to eight times what it costs to train an ROTC person. So, those who say, "Do away with the ROTC", you're going to spend a lot of money.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Yes:

Q: What do you recommend we can do to help?

MR. BERNSTEIN: I think you can start by writing a letter to the President of the Alumni Association. I think we need to get the Alumni Association behind us in a strong way and that that will have an effect, to some extent indirectly, a real effect, on the Administration. I think right now, President Bollinger is of the view that if he said or did anything about the ROTC, the left of center faculty will revolt. I think that's an oversimplification, but there's no question that we need the assistance on the most senior level of the Alumni Association.

Q: Can I address that also?

MR. BERNSTEIN: Yes.

MR. GRASKE: On the lighter side, I was hoping some of you physicians and writers who are in the audience might have a spare Mercedes in your garage if you could donate to the students so they could more easily commute to Fordham in Manhattan. Or maybe even SUNY in the future. Wait. I'm only kidding.

On the solid side, on the other side, transportation is an issue and if we never had an opportunity to help the student out, there's two ways. And, that is first, the scholarships don't pay for room and board. The second thing is the transportation issue. I'm pretty sure Columbia would be willing to help us with the parking space or something. Be nice if they could provide some transportation support.

The last comment I will make is that we are trying as a group to establish an award, \$1,000, \$2,000, to the outstanding ROTC student at Columbia based on merit, motivation and contributions. I'll end it with this. We'd like to get some help from you guys in establishing that type of award.

MR. BERNSTEIN: I would add also that if you guys want to pick up a copy of General Petraeus' letter and send it to anyone that you know personally or have anything to do within the faculty or in the Administration, I think hearing the same message from multiple sources would be a very, very good thing to do.

DR. WILSON: I view having captured General Petraeus' ear about the problem we have here as a good thing.

MR. BERNSTEIN: I was at a black-tie reception for the General about ten days ago. I belong to an organization called "The National Committee on American Foreign Policy", and he was the Honoree. I got to chat with him for a few minutes. I told him about our panel and actually asked him if he could come. It turns out his son is graduating today from MIT, so he couldn't come. I fell back and said, "Well, could we have a letter from you, do you think this would be a good idea?"

He said, "Absolutely". And so, he gave me his e-mail address. I sent him a first draft, and he changed my draft considerably, but I received the letter you see. He is a very bright, very articulate and frankly, I never expected his responses, given all the other responsibilities he has. He is most receptive, we exchanged at least three or four e-mails on the subject. Yes:

Q: Ted, don't you agree that the center of opposition to having ROTC come back on campus is the students?

MR. GRASKE: No, I don't, no. I'll tell you why. There have been since 2003 two...let me call them "polls" for lack of a better, better term, because the last one which was recent was hard to define as to whether it was a poll or a referendum.

In 2001 actually, the results of the poll taken of the 1,570 students was 65% favorable of return of ROTC. The last poll which surveyed 7,000 undergraduates was just last December, and Barnard College, General Studies, and the Engineering School, the break, yes, the question was asked, "Should the Navy ROTC return? And, the "yes" was 49.6% and the "no" was 50.4%, something like that. Now, if you ask me about Barnard, I'll tell you it's a different story, because Barnard was in a separate poll. What's striking is almost 5,000 people didn't vote. They are more concerned with getting their grades.

The only groups...maybe, Elizabeth can comment on this as well...There was a very strong gay lobby here, very strong. There are also some groups, actually at the graduate level, socialist group, for one. They are the only ones who make a lot of noise.

MS. FELDMEIER: I guess my comment would be that there are probably two groups on either side, students that are very strong in favor of ROTC and students who are against, and these are probably equal numbers but amount to around 10% of the population. The vast majority, 90%, couldn't probably care less if there was one more club on campus.

Q. But then, where is the center, because you haven't spoken to that? Where is the center of opposition within the school to the return of Naval ROTC? And, what is the issue? If "Don't ask, don't tell" is really a masquerade, what is the issue?

MR. GRASKE: Okay, first of all, let me say, any ROTC, it is okay. The center of gravity on the issue is the upper Administration on the current issue of "Don't ask, don't tell" because of what I outlined on their feelings about discrimination, and so forth. But, really, but underlying that, and this is in '69, it wasn't the Vietnam War, per se. It was the academic issue. In other words, there were feelings by the faculty that: a) the courses were not up to speed; and b) the fact was that they didn't have any control.

Now, fast forward. The issue today is grades. If ROTC and the Navy, and the Navy insist on people getting grades, course credit, the College has absolute, unmovable policy, at least until now, of no course credit. Now, the Engineering School, other places, are different. So, there would have to be some negotiation on the grades, but the tough issue right now is academic credit.

MR. BERNSTEIN: With graduates of colleges and universities in the United States which have an ROTC, having ROTC credits towards the degree, are

admitted to the medical school, law school, PH.D. programs at Columbia and so clearly, the University acknowledges those degrees which include as a portion of the degree of the educations, ROTC credits, are acceptable for academic purposes.

MR. GRASKE: Let me add something to that. We feel that way. But, the students, when you talk to the students, they will say things to us like, "Well, take the physical training courses required by the Army. It's a lot tougher than the physical education requirement here at Columbia. Here, we couldn't get one point."

And, we as alumni, the ones I talk to say, "Well, wait a minute. We understand, you know, the faculty wanting to do that, but why do they give three credits for a dance course at Barnard?"

DR. WILSON: We've had a number of conversations over the recent months, and you didn't bring up one point, Ted, that you emphasized in one of the earlier discussions which was that it was also the issue of the status of the Professor of Naval Science that he did not have to qualify academically as other members of the faculty did and that the faculty didn't like that.

Would you, would you...

MR. GRASKE: I will amplify. The Federal Law...It's called the ROTC Revitalization Act of 1964 says, "You must give the title of Professor of Military Science to the Senior ROTC Military Officer, and make him a Department Head. Now, in fact, that is the law. In practice, there are all kinds of negotiation that goes on, and I won't go into the detail there; but that is also a burning issue. They (military officers) often are not Ph.D. Well, many are, but the issue for the academics is: How can they be titled professors?"

MR. BERNSTEIN: Let me answer that, that this is not an issue that is unique here. For example, I taught First Year Torts at Wayne State Law School while I was at Ford Motor Company, and I was considered an Adjunct Professor; and I was welcomed to the Faculty Lounge. I was allowed an office so I had a place to meet with students but at the same time, I was not a full professor and only very slightly compensated. So, in law school, we do that all the time. And so, the notion that there is something in-between a full professor and say, a graduate student, is well established in the wide range of academic professions, and this is something that they should be able to work out if there was a will to do so.

Hand in the back:

Q: Yes, Phil Burberek.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Hi, Phil.

Q: Hi, how are you? Is there a similar initiative that's at the other three Ivy League schools that are...Check that two-part question...that have rejected the Naval ROTC? The second part following up on Bob Hedes' question: If we gave you our e-mail addresses, could we maybe get an e-mail which would have sort of a letter, not that we would copy it, because we want to have different letters, but a letter which would be a good representation of what we could write to the...What do you suggest we do?

A: (Inaudible) no letters in the future.

Q: And, maybe bullets, some bullet points that we could select from would include, could make our letters more...

A: The answer to your second question is "Yes". The answer to the first question is: There are other organizations, not only in the Ivy League, but also at schools like Stanford and places like that. The Harvard and the Columbia groups are the most active. Yale is a little bit (How do I say this?) flakey at times, and there's not much going on at Brown. Brown is strange, but Harvard and Columbia are very aggressive. We communicate constantly.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Also note that Cornell has always maintained its ROTC. It's a state school, and it has continued to maintain its Army ROTC.

Q: First of all, I want to thank you for your service as well as for everyone out in the audience. Also, let me (inaudible) praise his comments to report to ROTC, which I do at Columbia College. That's not all I can say, as a Lieutenant Colonel of the United States Army. However, as a member of the Class of '79, going on active duty for about 2 ½ weeks and having daughters in his pocket, let me offer some suggestions and, Norm, if I stray a path from your rules, forgive me. But, I think the equivalent would be a Naval Commander...(Laughter)

And, Frank, you remember Captain Mini. Most of us probably don't remember all of our professors. What you learned is phenomenal. I wonder if, and I hope you'll use this for facts for your letter, Bill, and others.

I wonder if any of you know Herbert C. Jones. I did not until I started doing a research on the War Memorial and the Dedication. Herbert C. Jones is a Columbia College graduate. I don't think he's on the Memorial yet. At least, he wasn't a couple of months ago when I last looked. I don't know, '38 or '39. Herbert C. Jones was one of 15 Americans who earned the Medal of Honor for their actions on December 7, 1941. Herbert C. Jones was one of the ten who were killed that day. He's a Columbia College graduate. He got two Medals of Honor, and you all probably know, Wild Bill Donovan.

What you might not know is that there were 44 alumni of...It's on Ted's website, and Ted is most gracious. He does have a site. I'm sure he'll give it to

you. If I ask him for it, maybe he'll have to give it to us. He didn't post his organization. "The Wounded Lion" is his newsletter. I, in fact, gave my alumni contribution for my reunion to his organization, because I do not want it to go to the University that opposes military service.

We had 44 people killed on September 11th from Columbia. I think it was nine or eleven different schools. That's not just from the College obviously. It's from the entire University. Forty-four KIA's have a right to have someone protecting them.

We also have a tendency to be very diplomatic. I'm not. At the War Memorial Dedication, which you guys did a great job on, I was surprised to see a First Amendment Attorney so inarticulate that it looked like President Bollinger didn't want to be there. I was also very surprised and honored to hear...I wasn't surprised he didn't want to be there, but I was surprised that he couldn't retain a poker face. He just didn't want to be there. But, I was surprised to see Mikey. I was surprised to see and honor Bill Campbell who said, "Corporal or Private William Campbell reporting for duty." And, Holder got a lot of applause when he announced that Bill was staying on. You all know him or obviously, if you don't, my people knew his wife, Roberta.

There are other points of influence perhaps that, Norman, that the Head of the Alumni Association...

MR. BERNSTEIN: I welcome any suggestions that you can send on to.

Q: I might send it directly to President Bollinger with cc's to the Alumni Directors and perhaps to professors that you might remember or you might meet at various cocktail parties and you might meet downtown. Now, you guys probably donate more, so I'm not saying you should cut off your relations. But, maybe you'll say, "You know, I was going to double this. You get the other half when you put back ROTC." (Laughter)

You could also raise out the fact that as an attorney, he should respect precedence. We just opened up a grant, or we're going to be opening up a grant. I think it's the Architecture School, but I'm not sure which school, in Dubai; I think it's Jordan, one of the two, because my brother had this meeting, and maybe, Singapore, and some other countries. I haven't been to those countries, but I'm pretty sure that their policy on homosexuality is a lot more intolerant than the policies of the United States Military. (Applause)

You can point that out in your letter that if you're willing to open up schools where the world is not perfect, then why not have ROTC or NROTC, especially in a school that graduated more midshipmen in World War II than Annapolis did.

The Columbia historian, Mike Vaitel...At least, he used to be the historian for the Pace Law Library, if you want facts and figures. In addition, the faculty is not necessarily all opposed if they can be converted slowly. I could have sworn that the focal point of the issue was at the top of the Administration. If you meet people as well, finally, you can point out that it is a tolerance more like Columbia that produces great leaders, not just like (inaudible) quoted. But, how many Herbert C. Jones are there that we don't even know yet? How many colleges, and there are two on the Memorial, have KIA's on it from the Revolutionary War? We're probably one of the only ones.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Some other people might also have some additional questions. Can you give them an opportunity.

Q: Sure, it's your panel.

MR. BERNSTEIN: And, I think the underlying problem is that of those opposed and those in favor of the ROTC simply don't understand that there are benefits for the students becoming Naval Officers that will affect them for the rest of their lives. They're being told that they're doing this to serve their country. What they're not being told is that this is a real benefit to the student.

Hand in the back, please:

Q: Do you have any figures or idea about what these feelings about "Don't ask, don't tell" are by the troops in the military?

MR. GRASKE: There are various studies on that, and I think...Let me take you out of the study world to the military commanders of the ROTC units in the local areas. Their answer to me when I asked that question for the students is, "The students don't care." Okay, those are three military officers commanding ROTC training units.

The studies that appear in the paper...you know, it is like when you were here and I gave you a course and you had to critique. So, the left critiques the pro-gay group, critiques it one way, 1,000 generals on the pro-right posit another position. Frankly, I came to discard the generals because they're not close to the troops. The people who were close to the troops can know what their thinking is. Those are the ones who we should be listening to.

MR. BERNSTEIN: The letter Shelby wanted read?

A: Yes, Shelby is not here, is he, Shelby? Okay.

A: Shelby Brewer, classmate and NROTC, he asked me to read his letter:

“I had planned to attend the CC '59 Reunion and to attend the Saturday panel discussion on NROTC, a subject I feel strongly about. I cannot attend but I have jotted down some thoughts below and hope my rhetoric is not too harsh.

Columbia should readmit NROTC to the campus and curriculum.

1. Columbia has a rich history of participating in national security. The B-2 program for training cadets during World War II and Columbia's participation in the Manhattan Project are examples. Terminating NROTC at Columbia had no logical basis. Rather, it was an act of pandering to a pampered Fascist left. (Remember, this is Gruber's).
2. Columbia should not be responsible for providing a pristine environment for casual students to contemplate their navels, no pun intended. If the presence of cadets in uniform on campus is offensive to their whims and fancies, then they should attend a lesser institution. In our day CC '59, Columbia was a serious learning and teaching institution, where the majority of students pursued serious subjects and prepared for serious careers in medicine, law, engineering, the letters, science, business and the academics. The College could not be a playpen for English students seeking causes to render their pathetic, dysfunctional lives relevant.

Just two more points: If NROTC has continued to be banned at Columbia and so too should political violence. Columbia NROTC '55 - '59 made a first class education affordable for me. It also brought me into contact with Admiral Rickover and an opportunity to pursue a career in Nuclear Engineering.”

End of letter. (Applause)

MR. BERNSTEIN: This is in response to the question about how military folks feel about the issue of “Don't ask, don't tell”. There was an Op Ed piece in The New York Times, maybe six months ago, asking veterans in Iraq how they felt about the issue, and something in the neighborhood of 70% said it no longer mattered to them. It was a significant increase in just five years.

A: Let me add a lighter side to that. There's a submarine officer attending medical school here at Columbia. He was asked because he's a young lieutenant with recent fleet experience, he, was asked “on a submarine, What about having gay people?”

He says, “The only thing that counts on a submarine is body odor and not your sexual orientation.” (Laughter)

MR. BERNSTEIN: I think we're running out of time, and...

Q: These are all extremely scholarly approaches. Have you been in touch with the University's Office of Communication to ask them to distribute your papers for the faculty?

MR. BERNSTEIN: No, I have not been, but that is a good suggestion.

MR. BERNSTEIN: Alright, well, I think our time is up. We very much enjoyed this. (Applause)