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U.S. ends ban on openly gay soldiers

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

U.S. lawmakers voted on Saturday to end the ban on gay men and women serving openly in the armed forces. It brought an end to a 17-year campaign over a policy that prevented or discouraged thousands of gays and lesbians from joining America's military. There was an overwhelming victory as senators voted 65-31 in favor of repealing the law. It was introduced under Bill Clinton's presidency and was called "don't ask, don't tell". President Obama was very pleased with the Senate's decision, saying it was "time to close this chapter in our history." He added: "As commander in chief, I am also absolutely convinced that making this change will only underscore the professionalism of our troops as the best led and best trained fighting force the world has ever known."

Obama will sign the landmark bill into law this week, although the changes won't take effect for at least several months. Political commentators hailed the decision and likened it to the end of racial segregation in the military. Senator Joe Lieberman, who was at the front of efforts to end the law, said: "We righted a wrong." Another Senator, Ron Wyden, said: "I don't care who you love. If you love this country enough to risk your life for it, you shouldn't have to hide who you are." Opposed to the bill was former presidential candidate John McCain, who said, "we are doing great damage... don't think there won't be a great cost". One gay ex-air man, Michael Almy, is looking forward to rejoining the air force. "I can't wait to be a part of it again," he said.

WARM-UPS

1. GAY SOLDIERS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about gay soldiers. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

lawmakers / armed forces / gays and lesbians / pleased / convinced / professionalism / landmark / take effect / racial segregation / risk your life / damage / looking forward

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. DISCRIMINATION: How to deal with it? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

Discrimination	How much exists in your country?	How can we get rid of it?
Against gays/lesbians		
On religious grounds		
Racially based		
Based on accent		
Based on social status		
Ageism		

4. GAY TROOPS: Students A **strongly** believe gay troops should not be in the army; Students B **strongly** believe that's a totally ridiculous argument. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. FIGHTING FORCE: What's most important in having a top fighting force? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- sexual preference of troops
- quality of training
- physical fitness of soldiers
- military intelligence
- how up-to-date the equipment is
- shooting skills of soldiers
- ability to lead and be led
- mental strength

6. GAY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'gay'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- a. Gays and lesbians can now enlist in the U.S. Army without secrecy. T / F
- b. Twice the number of senators voted for the bill than those against it. T / F
- c. President Obama talked about writing a chapter in a history book. T / F
- d. Obama said the decision would increase military professionalism. T / F
- e. President Obama wants someone to build a landmark for this bill. T / F
- f. Some people said it was a similar decision to ending racial segregation. T / F
- g. A former presidential candidate said the decision would cause no harm. T / F
- h. A former gay airman said he didn't want to work for the military again. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. gay | a. for |
| 2. prevented | b. positive |
| 3. in favor of | c. corrected |
| 4. chapter | d. praised |
| 5. convinced | e. former |
| 6. take effect | f. stopped |
| 7. hailed | g. considerable |
| 8. righted | h. homosexual |
| 9. great | i. episode |
| 10. ex- | j. begin |

3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. end the ban | a. to risk your life for it |
| 2. It brought an end | b. in our history |
| 3. There was an overwhelming | c. to end the law |
| 4. time to close this chapter | d. to a 17-year campaign |
| 5. the best led and best | e. bill into law |
| 6. Obama will sign the landmark | f. at least several months |
| 7. changes won't take effect for | g. on gay men and women |
| 8. at the front of efforts | h. be a great cost |
| 9. love this country enough | i. victory |
| 10. don't think there won't | j. trained fighting force |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

U.S. lawmakers voted on Saturday to _____ the ban on gay men and women serving openly in the armed forces. It brought an end to a 17-year campaign over a _____ that prevented or discouraged thousands of gays and lesbians from joining America's military. There was an overwhelming _____ as senators voted 65-31 in favor of _____ the law. It was introduced under Bill Clinton's presidency and was called "don't ask, don't tell". President Obama was very pleased with the Senate's decision, saying it was "time to close this _____ in our history." He added: "As commander in chief, I am also _____ convinced that making this change will only underscore the professionalism of our troops as the best _____ and best trained fighting force the world has ever _____."

absolutely
repealing
policy
led
end
known
chapter
victory

Obama will sign the _____ bill into law this week, although the changes won't take effect for at least several months. Political commentators _____ the decision and likened it to the end of racial segregation in the military. Senator Joe Lieberman, who was at the front of _____ to end the law, said: "We _____ a wrong." Another Senator, Ron Wyden, said: "I don't care who you love. If you love this country enough to _____ your life for it, you shouldn't have to hide who you are." Opposed to the bill was _____ presidential candidate John McCain, who said, "we are doing great damage... don't think there won't be a great _____". One gay ex-air man, Michael Almy, is looking _____ to rejoining the air force. "I can't wait to be a part of it again," he said.

cost
righted
hailed
former
landmark
forward
risk
efforts

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

U.S. lawmakers voted on Saturday _____ gay men and women serving openly in the armed forces. It _____ a 17-year campaign over a policy that prevented or discouraged thousands of gays and lesbians from joining America's military. There was an overwhelming _____ 65-31 in favor of repealing the law. It was introduced under Bill Clinton's presidency and was called "don't ask, don't tell". President Obama _____ the Senate's decision, saying it was "time to close this chapter in our history." He added: "As commander in chief, I am _____ that making this change will only underscore the professionalism of _____ and best trained fighting force the world has ever known."

Obama will sign the landmark _____ week, although the changes won't _____ several months. Political commentators hailed the decision and likened it to the end of racial segregation in the military. Senator Joe Lieberman, _____ efforts to end the law, said: "We righted a wrong." Another Senator, Ron Wyden, said: "I don't care who you love. If you love this country _____ for it, you shouldn't have to hide who you are." Opposed to the bill was former presidential candidate John McCain, who said, "we are doing great damage... don't think there _____". One gay ex-air man, Michael Almy, is looking forward to rejoining the air force. "I can't _____ it again," he said.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'gay' and 'soldier'.

gay	soldier
------------	----------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ban• policy• joining• pleased• close• led	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• landmark• least• front• love• former• part
--	---

STUDENT GAY SOLDIERS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

Write five GOOD questions about gay soldiers in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

GAY SOLDIERS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'gay'?
- c) What do you think of the lawmakers' decision in the U.S.?
- d) Are you surprised the U.S. banned openly gay men and women from joining the Army?
- e) What do you think of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy?
- f) What effect will this decision have on the professionalism of troops?
- g) Do you think gays and lesbians could have sued the U.S. military for discrimination?
- h) Why would it matter if a soldier was gay or not?
- i) Why do you think it has taken so long to pass this bill?
- j) Is the U.S. military the "best led and best trained fighting force the world has ever known"?

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GAY SOLDIERS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Is this bill like the end of racial segregation?
- c) Do you think there'll be a lot more people wanting to join the Army?
- d) What do you think of Ron Wyden's words?
- e) What damage do you think John McCain is talking about?
- f) Will there ever be no discrimination in the world?
- g) What do you think of being a soldier as a career?
- h) Do you think there'll ever be a gay leader of America's military?
- i) What's the next barrier that needs to come down to end prejudice?
- j) What questions would you like to ask President Obama?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1012/101219-gay_soldiers.html

U.S. lawmakers voted on Saturday to end the ban on gay men and women serving (1) _____ in the armed forces. It brought an end to a 17-year campaign (2) _____ a policy that prevented or discouraged thousands of gays and lesbians from joining America's military. There was an overwhelming victory (3) _____ senators voted 65-31 in favor of repealing the law. It was introduced under Bill Clinton's presidency and was called "don't ask, don't tell". President Obama was very pleased with the Senate's decision, saying it was "time to close this (4) _____ in our history." He added: "As commander in chief, I am also (5) _____ convinced that making this change will only (6) _____ the professionalism of our troops as the best led and best trained fighting force the world has ever known."

Obama will sign the (7) _____ bill into law this week, although the changes won't take effect for at least several months. Political commentators (8) _____ the decision and likened it to the end of racial segregation in the military. Senator Joe Lieberman, who was at the front (9) _____ efforts to end the law, said: "We righted a wrong." Another Senator, Ron Wyden, said: "I don't care who you love. If you love this country enough to (10) _____ your life for it, you shouldn't have to hide who you are." Opposed to the bill was former presidential candidate John McCain, who said, "we are doing great damage... (11) _____ think there won't be a great (12) _____". One gay ex-air man, Michael Almy, is looking forward to rejoining the air force. "I can't wait to be a part of it again," he said.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) open | (b) opened | (c) opens | (d) openly |
| 2. | (a) over | (b) under | (c) along | (d) through |
| 3. | (a) was | (b) as | (c) ease | (d) has |
| 4. | (a) sentence | (b) book | (c) chapter | (d) novel |
| 5. | (a) absolved | (b) absolute | (c) absolutely | (d) absolutes |
| 6. | (a) score | (b) underscore | (c) rescore | (d) scoring |
| 7. | (a) statue | (b) monument | (c) sight | (d) landmark |
| 8. | (a) hailed | (b) failed | (c) bailed | (d) wailed |
| 9. | (a) for | (b) of | (c) from | (d) if |
| 10. | (a) brisk | (b) frisk | (c) whisk | (d) risk |
| 11. | (a) no | (b) not | (c) don't | (d) non |
| 12. | (a) cost | (b) lost | (c) post | (d) host |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about your country's military. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. SOLDIERS: Make a poster about soldiers and what they do every day. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. DON'T ASK: Write a magazine article about the recent U.S. Senate decision to end the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to President Obama. Ask him three questions about gay soldiers in the U.S. military. Give him three of your views on the new bill. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. T e. F f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| 1. gay | a. homosexual |
| 2. prevented | b. stopped |
| 3. in favor of | c. for |
| 4. chapter | d. episode |
| 5. convinced | e. positive |
| 6. take effect | f. begin |
| 7. hailed | g. praised |
| 8. righted | h. corrected |
| 9. great | i. considerable |
| 10. ex- | j. former |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. end the ban | a. on gay men and women |
| 2. It brought an end | b. to a 17-year campaign |
| 3. There was an overwhelming | c. victory |
| 4. time to close this chapter | d. in our history |
| 5. the best led and best | e. trained fighting force |
| 6. Obama will sign the landmark | f. bill into law |
| 7. changes won't take effect for | g. at least several months |
| 8. at the front of efforts | h. to end the law |
| 9. love this country enough | i. to risk your life for it |
| 10. don't think there won't | j. be a great cost |

GAP FILL:

U.S. ends ban on openly gay soldiers

U.S. lawmakers voted on Saturday to **end** the ban on gay men and women serving openly in the armed forces. It brought an end to a 17-year campaign over a **policy** that prevented or discouraged thousands of gays and lesbians from joining America's military. There was an overwhelming **victory** as senators voted 65-31 in favor of **repealing** the law. It was introduced under Bill Clinton's presidency and was called "don't ask, don't tell". President Obama was very pleased with the Senate's decision, saying it was "time to close this **chapter** in our history." He added: "As commander in chief, I am also **absolutely** convinced that making this change will only underscore the professionalism of our troops as the best **led** and best trained fighting force the world has ever **known**."

Obama will sign the **landmark** bill into law this week, although the changes won't take effect for at least several months. Political commentators **hailed** the decision and likened it to the end of racial segregation in the military. Senator Joe Lieberman, who was at the front of **efforts** to end the law, said: "We **righted** a wrong." Another Senator, Ron Wyden, said: "I don't care who you love. If you love this country enough to **risk** your life for it, you shouldn't have to hide who you are." Opposed to the bill was **former** presidential candidate John McCain, who said, "we are doing great damage... don't think there won't be a great **cost**". One gay ex-air man, Michael Almy, is looking **forward** to rejoining the air force. "I can't wait to be a part of it again," he said.

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - a 3 - b 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - d 8 - a 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a

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