

Eye On Campus

Uncle Sam Wants More than a Few Good Men

Military Seeing Severe Shortfall of Enlistees

By **MICHAEL BRUDER**
Lion's Eye Staff Writer
Mab522@psu.edu

Faced with enlistment shortages, military recruiters are turning to college-bound young adults to fill the void.

"We are looking for people who are college bound or have some college," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Bucklin, a local recruiter for the Navy. "There are many great reasons and incentives to serve our country."

Bucklin said Montgomery GI bill as one of the most attractive incentives for enlisting.

"The GI bill offers over \$35,000 to veterans to use toward college after discharge," he said, adding that the military offers many other attractive benefits such as health insurance plans from Veteran's Affairs (VA).

Army Specialist Denaldo Lopez does not agree. Lopez feels that the benefits are not what they were made out to be when he enlisted.

"I waited four months to get an evaluation from the VA when I got back from Iraq," he said, adding it was not until his medical evaluation that his veteran's medical benefits kicked in.

Not only is the Pentagon upping the ante with enlistment bonuses, but it has come under fire for a multi-million dollar ad campaign aimed at those who typically influence young people, including parents, coaches and teachers.

In addition to targeting those who

influence America's youth, the Defense department recently announced the Army's signing of a \$100 million, six-month contract with advertising conglomerate Leo Burnett Worldwide.

While making the official announcement Secretary of the Army, Louis Caldera said "They (Leo Burnett Worldwide) will enable us to reach effectively those young African American and Hispanic American men and women who make up a major part of our marketing effort and our army."

Still recruiters are scrambling to meet their quotas.

According to a Pentagon report released earlier this year, the Army fell short of recruitment goals by nearly 7,000 enlistees. This year marks the Army's largest recruitment short fall since 1979. The Marine Corps also fell short of their recruitment target for the first time in 10 years.

In September, the Army lowered its standard enlistment requirements in an effort to cope with suffering numbers. In addition to lowering standards the Army is now offering large cash signing bonuses of up to \$10,000.

With the enlistment numbers low, some recruiters have been criticized for allegedly putting pressure on young men and women to enlist.

In May, CBS News reported the story of 20-year-old Chris Monarch who was threatened with jail time by Sgt. Thomas Kelt if he failed to appear at a meeting with recruiter at a mall in Houston, Texas. Upon confirmation of the incident the Army was prompted to halt recruiting for one day to review recruiting procedures.

In another reported incident of overly aggressive and abusive recruitment practices, recruiters in Golden, Colorado, were caught advising a 17-year-old to lie about his high school diploma and fake a drug test to enlist.

"Recruiter is like a bad word now, it's like an obscenity," Petty Officer 2nd Class Bucklin said, adding that that he doesn't look for people who don't want to join.

"We don't hunt people down; it's about making yourself attractive to questions."

But the increased pressure by recruiters on young people is only fueling more resistance, anti-war protestors say. And, as the war in Iraq drags on and public support for it withers (63 percent of Americans now disapprove of the situation in Iraq according to the latest CNN/Gallup/USA Today/poll), military recruiters are finding themselves in the crosshairs of a growing -- and vocal -- antiwar movement.

Anti-war protestors have been energetic in their efforts to inform young people how to opt-out of Pentagon's recruitment lists.

A provision listed in President Bush's much criticized "No Child Left Behind act" allows recruiters access to a list of student names and contact information from any school that receives federal funding. The provision includes high schools as well as colleges. Students can however, request to have their names removed from the list.

Groups such as American Friends Service Committee travel the nation speaking to thousands. A pamphlet from AFSC announces the group supports "a national effort to counter growth of military influence in public schools".

The AFSC is not alone. The New York Civil Liberties Union has launched a campaign to let high school students know they do not have to make themselves available to military recruiters, and residents of San Francisco passed a law banning military recruiters from school campuses with the understanding that the schools may lose federal funding, and urging educators at public schools to discourage recruitment and provide students with information on scholarships and alternatives to the military.

Delco To Celebrate Holiday

By **JOHN MILLER**
Lion's Eye Staff Writer
jmm8333@psu.edu

On Dec. 8 during Common Hour, the Student Government Association, in partnership with Student Life will present Winter Holiday Celebration (WHC). This is an end of fall semester festivity focusing on the following major upcoming holidays: Christmas, Hanukah, and Kwanza.

"There will be food, music, some presenters and performers," said Student Government Vice President, Crystal Bowhall (Junior/Business.) She also added that all students and faculty are invited and the festive event will be held in the Lion's Café and Den.

"It is going to be a community building, educational, and social event," ssaid Chris Coia, Associative director of Student Affairs. He also said to expect traditional holiday foods and music appropriate for all holidays.

In addition, display boards detailing relevant information about the various holidays will decorate the café and one will be a special look at Christmas around the world.

Peace Advocate Decries U.S. Involvement in Middle East

By **MICHAEL BRUDER**
Lion's Eye Staff Writer
Mab522@psu.edu

This week the Philosophy Club hosted guest speaker Robert M. Smith who gave a lecture on the U.S. involvement in Iraq.

Smith, a coordinator for the Brandywine Peace Community gave a one-hour lecture on "resisting the empire."

The lecture centered on war resistance, opposing a war-based U.S. economy, and nuclear disarmament through nonviolent civil disobedience.

Much of Smith's lecture centered on the need to cut profits from the largest arms manufacturer in the U.S., Lockheed Martin. Smith also warned of the impending dangers this country faces under the control of the Bush administration.

"I think the most important thing to do right now is to oppose (President) Bush," said Smith.

Smith opened his lecture by saying, "it is nice to finally be here without being arrested."

Robert Smith, Anti-War Protester

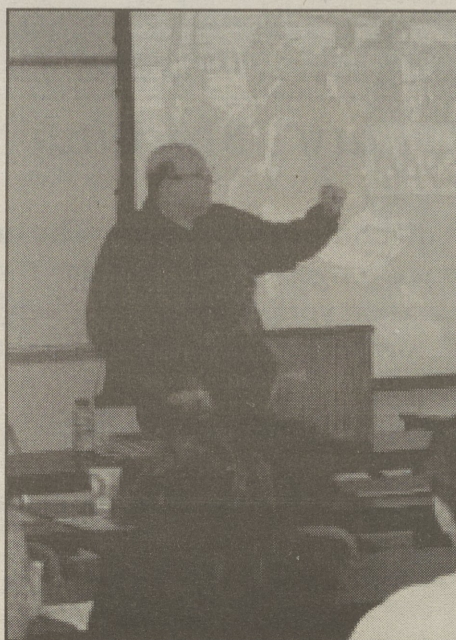


Photo by: Frank Friday

Just two years ago when President Bush visited Penn State Delco, Smith was arrested for failure to observe the "free speech zone" or what he calls the "protest pit" which was set up by the Secret Service across the street from the school.

"It seems the Secret Service's idea of the first amendment is you can say what you want to as long as nobody hears it," Smith said, recalling the incident.

Smith's history of nonviolent civil disobedience dates back to the late 1960's when he was imprisoned for three years for refusal to participate in the draft. Smith found himself behind bars again in April of 2004 for participating in a nonviolent protest of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Smith is organizing many upcoming events including a Dec. 22 candlelight vigil as well as a Martin Luther King Day of Nonviolent Resistance on January 16th.

To learn more contact the Brandywine Peace Community at 610-544-1818 or on the web at www.brandywinepeace.com.