Gay Vet Publishes First African-American Iraq War Memoir

“Closets, Combat and Coming Out
Coming of Age as a Gay Man in the ‘Don't Ask, Don’t Tell’ Army”

Author one of 12 Arrested at White House DADT Protests (November 2010)

“…a riveting first-hand account of a shameful time in our recent history when courageous men like Smith were forced to serve their country in silence.”
– Keith Boykin, New York Times bestselling author


After surviving the notoriously brutal Infantry Basic Training as a chubby, fresh-off-the bus, 17-year-old, Smith is equally tortured by his homosexuality, privately battling isolation, paranoia and suicide, while remaining closeted to all but a few of his colleagues. At his first duty station, he finds himself in dangerous territory – on both military and personal fronts – after the United States declares war on Iraq and his unit is one of the first called in, after the initial invasion.

Honest, frank and eloquent, Smith “reveals not only his personal experiences as a gay military man serving under DADT, but reminds us that for many LGBT men and women, the battle for equality in the eyes of the military is not over – regardless of the repeal of DADT: Transgender soldiers are still barred from serving openly, the U.S. Military still does not have a nondiscrimination policy in regards to sexual orientation, and thousands who were dishonorably discharged under DADT remain stripped of the hard-earned benefits to which they were rightfully entitled.

At turns funny, sad, sexy, and harrowing, “Closets, Combat and Coming Out” is a unique, revealing and deeply personal ground-level view of life on the front lines of race and sexuality in the United States military.

Rob Smith is an openly gay 5-year Iraq war veteran, writer, lecturer, and LGBT activist. His work has been published by USA Today, CNN.com, Salon.com, The Advocate and The Huffington Post.

*In November 2010, he was arrested with 12 other LGBT military veterans and civilian activists at the front gates of the White House while protesting the U.S. Military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (DADT) law, which barred open military service by gays and lesbians. In December of that same year, he was an invited guest of President Barack Obama at the ceremony which saw the repeal of the discriminatory law be signed and put into effect.

To request a review copy, or speak to the author please contact:
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