

Gay West Point graduate sues military for tuition

DALLAS (AP) — A West Point graduate who was forced out of the military for saying he is gay may have finally won a 6 1/2-year fight with the Army, which has been trying to collect \$76,000 in tuition.

A spokesman confirmed Wednesday that the Army has recommended that the Defense Department stop collection efforts against Clayce Rodamer. Lt. Col. William Harkey said he expects a decision "fairly soon." Rodamer, 32, said he learned of the recommendation shortly before he was about to tell his story on ABC's *Nightline* Tuesday night.

Harkey said the timing was coincidental. "I know it doesn't look that way, but it has nothing to do with publicity," he said.

Rodamer said he was stationed at Fort Bliss, near El Paso, when he acknowledged his homosexuality in 1988. Superiors told him he could either resign or face a court-martial and possible dishonorable discharge, Rodamer said.

Two years after he resigned, Rodamer said he got a form letter asking him to repay the government \$76,000 for the cost of his West Point education because he had not completed the requisite five years of military service.

With penalties and interest, that bill now is nearly \$175,000, he said.

Rodamer said he has "guarded optimism" about a

potential resolution in his case but realizes that others in the military might face the same problem.

"I don't want to let the military off the hook that easy," he told *The Associated Press*.

The Department of Defense has a policy on recovering money from soldiers who receive benefits and leave before fulfilling their military obligations, either voluntarily or because of misconduct.

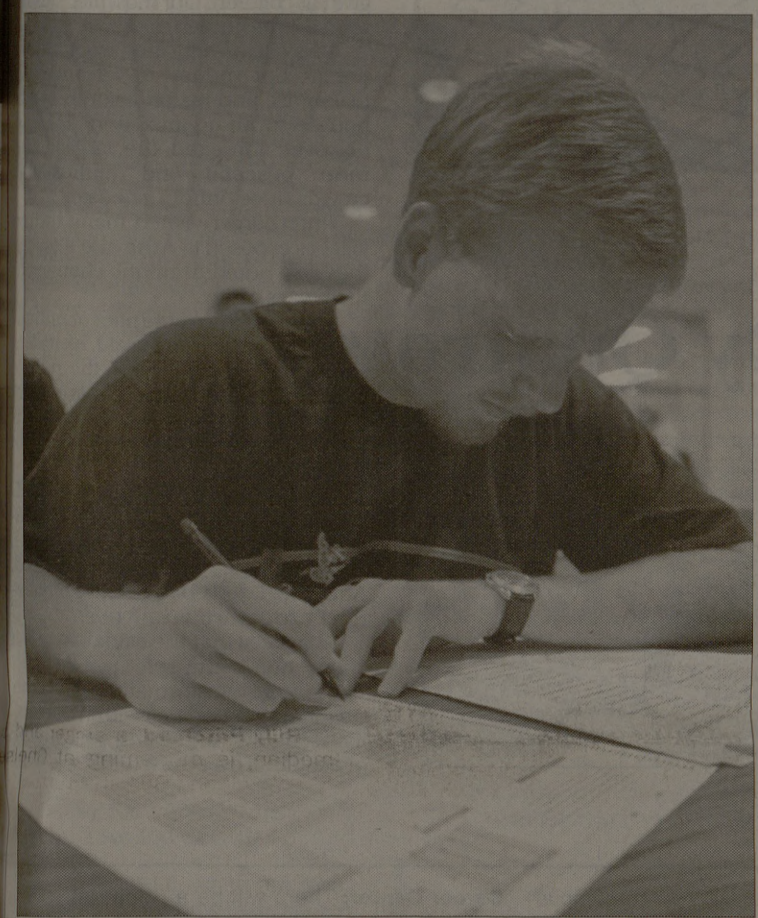
"I never broke a contract with the military," Rodamer said. "They broke it with me."

Lawrence Korb, who served as assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan Administration, said the collections policy was not directed toward gays and lesbians forced out of the military, "but at people who try to take advantage of the system to get a free education."

"Of course, some people hit on the idea, 'Well if I say that I'm gay then they'll have to let me out,'" Korb told *Nightline*.

Rodamer, who now works for a Plano wholesale computer supply company, said he admitted he was gay as soon as he realized his sexual orientation. The admission came before the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy was adopted in 1993.

Before the disclosure, Rodamer said he had gotten "great reviews, top of my class, promoted ahead of his peers, all of that."



Ryan Rogers, THE BATTALION

Ogden seeks athletic fee disclosure

AUSTIN (AP) — A state lawmaker wants to limit the use of college fees for athletics and would require students to be told how much of their fees support school sports.

Sen. Steve Ogden, R-Bryan, said the limit and disclosure would foster accountability in college athletics.

"We're not trying to kill inter-collegiate athletics in Texas," Ogden told the Senate Education Committee Wednesday. "Our intent is not to prohibit charging a fee to run athletic programs, but to disclose the amount."

The committee did not take a vote on the bill.

Ogden said his proposal is aimed at colleges that make up athletic budget deficits with student and general fees.

According to Ogden, the University of Houston athletic program runs the largest deficit of state-funded schools. The university's approximately \$6 million deficit in 1996 was supplemented by approximately \$2 million in student fees, he said.

University of Houston athletic officials couldn't be reached for comment.

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2:00 4:30 7:30 10:00

THE ENGLISH PATIENT (R)
12:45 4:30 8:15

*SELENA (PG)
1:00 4:00 7:00 10:00
12:30 3:30 6:30 9:30

*RETURN OF THE JEDI (PG)
12:45 3:45 6:45 9:45
3:15 6:15 9:15

LIAR LIAR (PG-13)
1:15 3:30 6:10 8:20 10:30
1:45 4:00 7:50 10:00

DONNIE BRASCO (R)
1:40 4:20 7:15 10:00

JUNGLE 2 JUNGLE (PG)
1:40 4:20 6:45 9:20

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