



## **Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement**

*Stephen Snyder-Hill , George Takei (Contributor)*

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When “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the official U.S. policy on gays serving in the military, was repealed in September 2011, soldier Stephen Snyder-Hill (then Captain Hill) was serving in Iraq. Having endured years of this policy, which passively encouraged a culture of fear and secrecy for gay soldiers, Snyder-Hill submitted a video to a Republican primary debate (held two days after the repeal). In the video he asked for the Republicans’ thoughts regarding the repeal and their plans, if any, to extend spousal benefits to legally married gay and lesbian soldiers. His video was booed by the audience on national television.

Soldier of Change captures not only the media frenzy that followed that moment, placing Snyder-Hill at the forefront of this modern civil rights movement, but also his twenty-year journey as a gay man in the army: from self-loathing to self-acceptance, to the most important battle of his life—protecting the disenfranchised. Since that time, Snyder-Hill has traveled the country with his husband, giving interviews on major news networks and speaking at universities, community centers, and pride parades, a champion of LGBT equality.

## **Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement Details**

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## **From Reader Review Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement for online ebook**

### **Soul Dancer says**

Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement

On page 62 Snyder-Hill writes:

"Then I had an epiphany, and reality set in. The speaker announced that we owed our freedom to the men and women in uniform, all while I was cowering so I wouldn't be seen with my boyfriend. I was this noble, honorable patriot, and I was protecting everyone's freedom—except my own."

From this point forward, we experience an exponentially increasing clarity and direction that inspires Snyder-Hill to press forward in being the change our world needs.

With the 2016 Presidential elections fanning the flames to repeal DADT, read this book to learn from first hand experience, the harmful effects of homophobia on all people.

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### **Maggie Mattmiller says**

Powerful story. I'm not sure how someone could read this, and not feel connected to Stephen. Definitely one that brings a powerful perspective- one that within a week of having read it, I brought up in a conversation in order to bring some perspective. Not sure what all to say about this one, other than you should check it out!

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### **Joshua Snyder-hill says**

I'm at a distinct disadvantage since my husband wrote this so I got to read it before it's release. I held off because of how much emotion I knew the book would bring back to me. Steve is an amazing person and this is a story of how he became what I would consider a hero and leader to the LGBT community and even beyond. The event of being "booed" is merely used as a mark in time to help show the boiling point to where Steve would show his true colors and the world what an amazing person he truly is. I have the benefit of seeing how he changes hearts and minds on a daily basis this book gives you insight to how his story gives him the credit and right to do so. An amazing read and hard to put down, GET YOUR COPY!

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### **Tabitha says**

I don't think I have ever been more touched by a book! I couldn't put this book down. I laughed, cried, and became downright angry at times at the hate and ignorance in this world! This is a great book that will provide insight into the lives of people who fight each day for things most of us take for granted. This is a book of love, hope, courage, struggle, realization, determination, and triumph! The fight for equality is still real and ongoing, but progress is being made! The struggle, courage, and determination of Steve, and his

husband Josh, is amazing! I'm proud, honored, and humbled to be able to say that I have the privilege of knowing them!

Read this book, pass it along to anyone and everyone you know! Let's all continue the progress that has been made through the determination, fight, and struggle of so many!

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### **Tj says**

A spouse or a lover embraces a soldier as he or she prepares to board a plane. The soldier stands straight and tall in uniform bravely holding back the tears. Running through both of their mind is "what if this is the last time we see each other, the last kiss or hug" Death is a real possibility.

This scene is familiar and my local news channels carries such scenes each time a unit is deployed. Those of us who aren't in the military or don't have a loved one in the military may pause for a minute, hope with all our hearts for a safe return, be grateful for volunteers who are willing to protect our country and then get on with our day.

Now image if the deployment took place while Don't Ask Don't Tell was in place. Stephen tells in his book of hiding under an escalator and telling Josh good-bye. They couldn't openly acknowledge each other and that good-bye had to be hidden like it was some dirty secret. That little line the book touched me the most. Something so common as kissing my husband in public is something I don't give a second thought but I should. Stephen Snyder-Hill was willing to die to protect my rights and defend this country but under DADT he didn't share the same small freedom of a kiss.

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### **Laurie says**

Here is an excerpt from my review: "One soldier serving during the long era of DADT was Stephen Hill (now Stephen Snyder-Hill). Stephen was a closeted gay soldier wanting to fight for his country, struggling to understand his identity, and fearful of losing his job simply because of his sexual orientation. Soldier of Change: From the Closet to the Forefront of the Gay Rights Movement tells Stephen's story of confused young adult to public gay right advocate."

You can read the full review here: <http://cookscreapcraft.blogspot.com/20...>

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### **Bree Taylor says**

Off of a review in a local Columbus magazine, I picked this book up at the library. Steve's story is both riveting and inspirational. I remember how hard it was for both me and my mom when she came out. And it never occurred to me how difficult that must have been for her.

I thank Steve for his courage, his service, and his excellent book. I hope I run into him someday!

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### **Saleena Davidson says**

This is a book that was sitting on my TBR (to-be-read) pile for awhile, I got it at Book Expo in May. I am very sad it took me so long to read it, as it was truly a great read. It is a quick biography and an inside view of why Don't Ask Don't Tell was a horrible governmental policy; as well as how the repeal of that policy has affected the military personnel. It is written by Stephen Snyder-Hill, who is best known for asking a question about the policy to the Republican candidates at the Republican convention, and being booed by the entire group of attendees...and since it was a video question, it & the response quickly went viral. Stephen is matter-of-fact in his delivery of events, much as you'd expect a soldier to be; and he details how he and his husband have become gay rights advocates, although they never set out to be. I really enjoyed this book, I think it speaks to teens, adults and anyone who wonders what it's like to live in the closet....and it is also a great tool to show that just being gay doesn't mean you can't be anything you like (and you don't have to fit a Hollywood stereotype).

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### **Nikita Pchelin says**

Gay or straight, if you are interested in social activism and want to understand how seemingly impossible battles are won by those who stand up for themselves - this is the book to read. I loved the story and kudos to the author for doing all the things he's done and telling the world about it.

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### **April Rogers says**

I didn't see the debate and only vaguely recall news that a soldier had been booed for being gay. At the time I remember being mad and disappointed but then the story faded- for me anyway. For the soldier, it was just the beginning of his fight for better understanding/acceptance and for marriage equality. It was a personal, honest, and clear look at how "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was a terrible policy. This book is a great human rights conversation starter. We've come so far but there's still a long way to go.

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### **Mark Hiser says**

I have spent much of the afternoon reading Soldier of Change by Steve Snyder-Hill. For those who may not recognize his name, Mr. Snyder-Hill is the gay soldier who was booed when he asked a question at the Republican primary convention a few years ago.

I am almost half done with his book and cannot recommend it enough to people who are interested in the struggle many, if not most, GLBT persons face as they learn to love themselves in a society that has taught them to hate themselves.

But I also recommend it to people interested in the civil rights cause of our time, and to those interested in the ability one person has to make a positive change in the world. This is a story of love, honor, integrity, fear, and courage.

I must say that I am finding it difficult to stop reading for the evening. I have found myself laughing aloud,

nodding my head, shaking my fist, and wiping my tears while reading this book. I cannot wait to finish reading it.

Later the next day---

Now that I have come to the end of this amazing story, I can only say read this book.

Ultimately, this is the story of someone coming to accept and love himself enough to be able to live with honesty and integrity, and then honoring himself enough to fight for other people to be able to live freely, fully, and openly.

This book will help straight people understand so much about their gay friends, family members, teachers, ministers, and co-workers. It will help them understand how discrimination hurts everyone. It will help them understand the importance of marriage equality.

Though the decades of my life, I have read countless books as I continue to unlearn what society and the church taught me about myself as a gay man. I can say that Soldier of Change is one of the best.

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### **Suzanne says**

I remember watching the news that day... I was living in BC at the time but I kept an eye on all the news in the States as I was engaged to an American at the time I was heart broken to see the response during that Republican debate. I thought to myself what human could be so cold and callous to another human being much less one who is serving his country as they speak. Fighting for what they believed in and for America as a whole. I felt those so called humans should be ashamed with themselves.

Fast forward to this year. I never knew what happened to that soldier till browsing Facebook one day and George Takei had posted about this book he was doing the forward for... I saw the picture and went OMG. I always wondered what had become of him. Our news up in Canada at the time never dug as much as they do in the states. So once I had moved I was able to hear and see a lot more of what was going on. Once I knew a book was coming out I was so intrigued... I grew up being taught that everyone is their own person. They can love or be with whom they ever want to. May not be your cup of tea but its not right to judge someone based on it. They are people just like me, they just feel that connection with the same sex and that's okay. My parents were amazing when it came to things like that, especially since my mother was raised very strict Roman Catholic. She was always a strong supporter of anything we did no matter what it was. I have a handful of friends who are part of the LGBT community and never thought of them as anyone different.. Just cool people to talk to, hang out with and share different opinions with :)

I picked up the book finally this past weekend. I sat down and started to read and never put it down. I think I took 12 hours to read cover to cover and go back on some sections to re-read. The emotions I could feel that you had poured into that book were extreme and I felt them. I wanted to cry, yell, laugh, smile. I couldn't imagine the struggle that you had to endure until that fateful day in September. You brought out the raw and the real in this book and I commend you for it. Its not every day someone has the courage to write what you did. My heart broke when it came to the parts about having to lie... I cried at the amazing love you and Josh share. Not everyone gets to find that love but when you do, you hold on to it and never let go and I am so happy you didn't. Heres to a life time for the two of you.

Thank you for writing such a strong and powerful book that needed to be written so that others can have the courage that you have brought forward. Words cannot express the emotions felt during this read. I fully recommend this book to anyone and everyone.

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### **Meredith Camel says**

As soon as I read the manuscript for this memoir, I knew I wanted to be involved in the process of bringing this incredible story to as many people as possible. When I was a child learning about the Holocaust, I kept hearing the phrase "Never Again." As long as we keep telling the story of this tragedy, we can prevent it from happening ever again. Steve's story is not only an essential text in the human rights canon, it is a critical resource for ensuring that LGBT rights, both within and outside of the military, move forward and not backward. It is an honor and a privilege to be part of this historic book.

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### **VampAmber says**

This was a beautiful book that everybody should read. Not just LGBT and their supporters, but those that are so full of hatred that they deny people basic human rights. There is literally no reason to be homophobic, other than being full of hatred and bigotry. This story shows the humanity behind the statistics. I feel proud, knowing that there are people out there like Stephen Snyder-Hill, fighting for equality and the end of this hatred. This book made me want to help. No one should be denied human rights, exclusively because a few people hate them over something they go out of their way to refuse to understand. End the hate. Embrace equality. Gay, straight, black, white, Christian, atheist, we're all the same thing: human.

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### **Kara says**

I was motivated to read this book after meeting Stephen Snyder-Hill's husband Josh on a recent flight home to Columbus. It was a quick, easy read about a long, hard struggle that I'd be naïve to say I fully understood, having never been told I was "less than" or denied protection under the law because of whom I love. Everyone should read this touching memoir (I teared up almost the entire time I read this book). I especially hope that those who have ever believed or still believe someone should be treated differently at all solely because of whom they love will read this book. It would be hard to claim to have a heart if you read it and still held those beliefs.

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