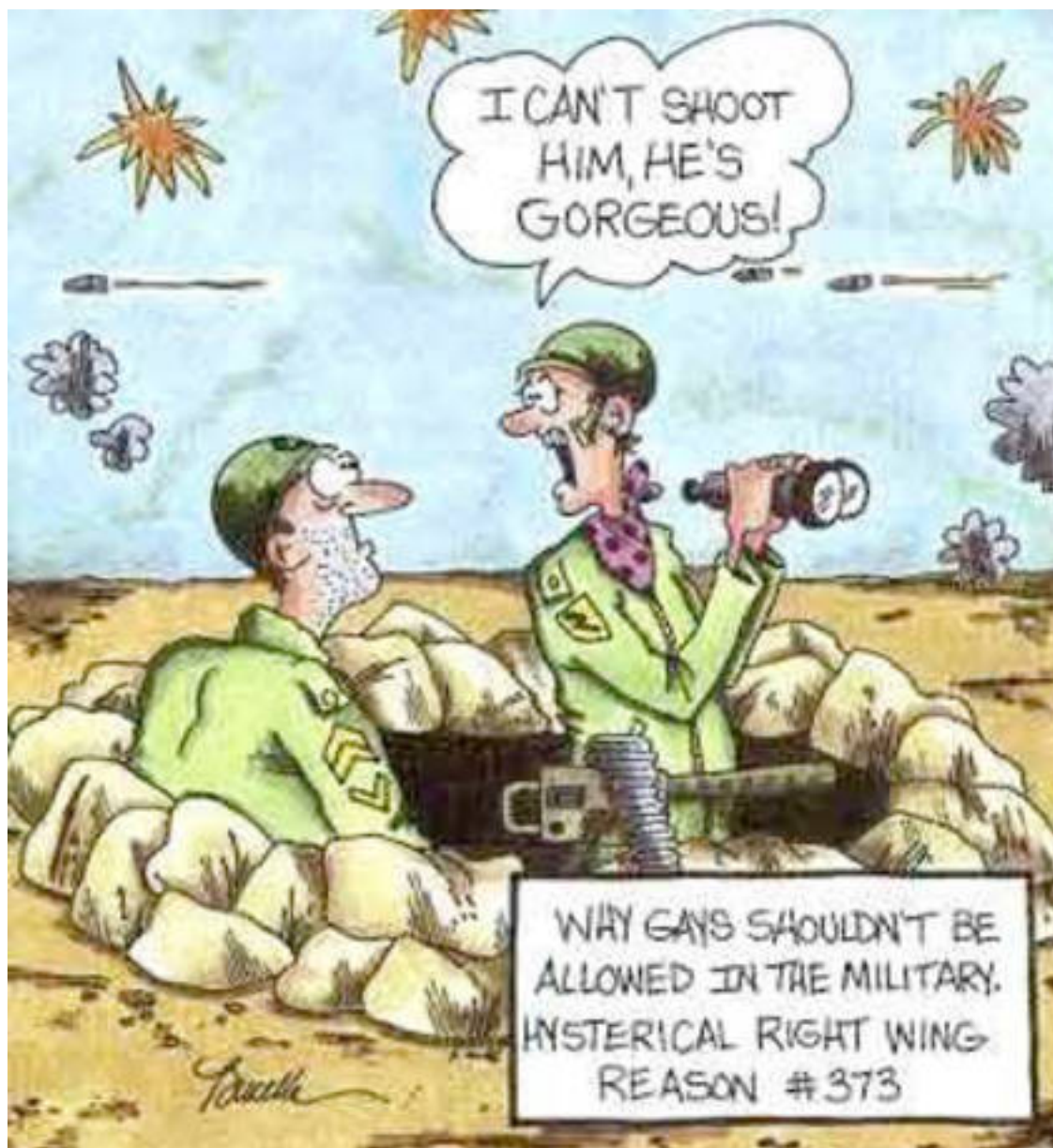




"Italian Gays May Drive" - Says the Court (after 6 years)

(July 12, 2008)



After 6 years an Italian court rules the government must pay 100,000 euros in damages to a gay man who was told to retake a driving test because he suffered from "sexual identity disturbance."

Six years ago, during a medical examination for military service, Danilo Giuffrida told doctors he was



gay. The hospital passed the information to the transport ministry, which ultimately declared him mentally unfit to hold a driving license. He was obliged to repeat his driving test, which he successfully did, but his license was issued for only one year, instead of the regular 10 years. The only reason for this decision was his homosexuality.

After a six-year long legal battle, an Italian court finally ruled the Italian government – represented here by the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Transportation – must pay 100,000 euros in damages to Mr. Giuffrida. The case was tried in Catania, one of the most important Sicilian cities. The judge who ruled on the case declared that the behavior of the two convicted Ministries showed "evident sexual discrimination" and violated the basic constitutional rights of a citizen. According to 26 year-old Mr. Giuffrida, this sentence represents "a step forwards for civil rights because from now on what happened to me can't happen again".

Mr. Giuffrida's attorney declared that it was the first time that the Italian government was convicted for sexual discrimination. He hopes that Prime Minister Berlusconi will personally apologize to his client "on behalf of the state and all Italians". Since the court ruling affirmed that the behavior of the Ministries caused Mr. Giuffrida to lose confidence in the Italian state and institutions, official apologies might be appropriate.

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