

May 10, 1993:

Statement of Petty Officer Second Class Al Portes, U.S. Navy

(90) When you, if you do this [a communal shower situation) with a man who professes that kind of orientation, I find it morally and personally unacceptable.... I find it morally, morally incorrect. This is an act of rebellion. This is an act of rebelling against the God I believe in. I am sorry, I am 32 years old, and I cannot divorce myself of who I am as of this day, or what I believe.... Now, I came into this service because yes, I was not lied to, and I knew that there were no gays, openly, allowed in the military. 524

(91) But I will testify in front of this committee today and say that I hope, if Mr. Clinton decides to lift the ban and allow gays through, then also with that measure he gives us our outright release from active duty.

Because Al Portes will refuse... to serve with gays in the military; 525

Statement of Master Chief Harry Schafer, U.S. Navy

(92) Some people in the private sector may accept these sexually oriented homosexuals, or tolerate them, for at the end of the workday they go their separate ways....

It would be totally disruptive to good order and discipline if our American family of volunteers, our sons and daughters, were forced to work around people whom they feel have a sexual preference that is not consistent with what they believe is right....

... in my view sensitivity training will not work. How do you break with traditional family, religious value training that our society at large, and our parents, have ingrained into us?

Many excellent soldiers are seriously concerned about

their future in a smaller Navy. They may use this issue as a pivotal reason to get out, in pursuit of another career; a career with a more favorable and acceptable lifestyle. 527

QUESTIONS

(93) **Master Chief Schafer:** We would not only have people leaving our service, all branches of the service I believe. But the recruitment in the heartland of America--when I referred to families, moms and dads asking the question--I think they are going to be reluctant to allow their son or daughter to serve in our great services, especially the Navy. 531

(94) **Master Chief Schafer:** it is the belief and known practices of those people that is morally wrong. And that belief, that knowledge of what we traditionally--religious values, mom and dad raised us through the church and through society, for my 19 years, before I got 26 years of professional Navy experience, that's wrong, just bottom line wrong. And I will never accept that. 535

Statement of Lt. John Burnham, U.S. Navy

(95) Also, whereas someone may have that live and let live belief, their attitude may be changed when they are asked to respect and to follow someone who is doing something that they believe is wrong....

When homosexuals are exceedingly discreet about their lifestyle there has been no effect on the unit or on the mission accomplishment. However, were that person's homosexuality to be out in the open, the effect on a platoon or another small unit would be immensely disruptive... 539

Statement of Lt. Fred Frey, U.S. Navy

Statement of Comdr. James Pledger, U.S. Navy

(96) Frankly, I was surprised to find so many personnel who said that having to live and serve with homosexual men would be inconsistent with their religious convictions and would require them to separate from the service....They are repulsed by the prospect of having to shower in view of homosexual shipmates, as well as sleep no more than 2 feet from homosexuals.

These young men have been taught from birth by their moms and dads and their Sunday schools and priests that homosexuality is wrong. And this issue goes to the very moral fabric and values of these young men. 542

Statement of Comdr. Lin Hutton, U.S. Navy

Statement of Cant. Gordon Holder, U.S. Navy

(97) The admission of gays and lesbians into our military, and particularly on ships such as mine, is not right.... I find it morally wrong, and wonder for how many of our truly superior people this will be the last straw.
544

QUESTIONS

(98) **Lieutenant Frey:** I think prejudice based on racial issues is one of ignorance and can be educated out of a person. Time can be spent and command can change a person. But when you are dealing with prejudice based on strictly moral issues that are lifestyles, habits that are morally objectionable to members of the command, no amount of sensitivity training, no amount of time spent by the senior members of the command can change that. 547

(99) **Lieutenant Burnham:** Again, yes, homosexuals have served with distinction. But one of the primary reasons that they have served for full careers is that they served with discretion. And, again, that was one of the aspects of their lifestyle that they subordinated to the overall good of unit--was the fact that they were homosexual and it was not open. 556

(100) **Lieutenant Frey:** It is just too bad that because they are now openly homosexual too many people in the command will object to them in their personal behavior, and it will be just too detrimental to combat readiness of the squadron or the unit. It just cannot happen. There are too many too strong of objections to their lifestyle. 556

(101) **Commander Pledger:** I do not think there is any physical or mental or any other difference in their capabilities compared to the heterosexual. But as we have been talking about all day, it is the attitudes of the majority of the heterosexuals and their reactions to this type of behavior or orientation which begets behavior. Once it becomes known, it creates the problem that we would face.
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(102) **Commander Hutton:** ...by opening themselves out like that, they have eliminated and they have broken the bond with the rest of the group. And the rest of the group will just not trust them and they will not respect them. 557

Statement of Richard Dirk Selland, LTJG, U.S. Navy

Statement of Tracy W. Thorne, LTJG, U.S. Navy

QUESTIONS

(103) **Senator Nunn:** Could you tell us why you thought you had to come out in the open? And did you take into account by doing so, whether they are right or wrong, you were really making an awful lot of other people feel very uncomfortable in their surroundings?

Did you take into account their thinking and their rights? 565

(104) **Senator Shelby:** What about the overwhelming majority of people who are heterosexual? Should not their views come into play here too? 569

(105) **Lieutenant Thorne:** ...prejudice can never be validated by unanimous consent. You know, the majority can never take away the rights of the minority. 569

(106) **Senator Cohen:** ...Every time you say something, there is a real hostility out there.

So now the question is: Is that a factor that we should take into account in resolving the issue? 571

(107) **Senator Lott:** I still have difficulty understanding exactly why it is necessary you feel such a need to make an announcement of your homosexuality. 574

Statement of Sgt. Brian Jenisch, U.S. Marine Corps

(108) If there is a homosexual identified, in the unit that I am in they cast them aside. They are not a team player. Now, my job as a leader, I have to guard that marine, because he is one of mine. I have to take care of his welfare, and to do that, the other heterosexuals may look at me and say, well, why is he being so nice, why is he taking up for that homosexual? Is he having homosexual tendencies? 581-82

Statement of 1st Sgt. Richard Forrest, U.S. Marine Corps.

(109) Myself and every marine and sailor I have spoken to see this as an immoral and deviant behavior and conduct... 582

Statement of Capt. David Wolf, U.S. Marine Corps

(110) Allowing a homosexual into that environment, someone who is not only homosexual, but openly homosexual, someone who has taken the effort to make themselves known as homosexual, would have a very detrimental effect on the effectiveness of that team.

We are taking someone who has gone out of their way to say, and chooses to say and live that lifestyle of a homosexual. Most of the members of the Marine Corps, in

the military, abhor that lifestyle, or simply will not accept that person as a member of a team. 584

Statement of Capt. Scott Hartsell, U.S. Marine Corps

(111) The unit does not suffer decreased capabilities, and the team does not suffer as a team, as long as the sexual preference is kept hidden to that individual. As soon as the word comes out that that person openly admits that he is homosexual...then there is a major problem. There is a very big problem. Immediately, distrust comes into that unit.

[extract continued]

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Lieutenant BURNHAM. With respect to the first question, were the ban to be lifted without a personal experience, in other words, without a direct situation in my platoon or at my team where I was called personally to make that decision, no, I would not submit my letter immediately, just on the principle that the ban was lifted. But the sticky question comes when you have a personal situation or you have an order that you are asked to carry out that you feel is wrong or that you cannot abide by. And that is when you make that personal decision.

With respect to the second question, yes, there are a number of different things, behaviors that people engage in, and if you want to cast it in a religious light and use the Ten Commandments or just cast it in a moral light, question of right or wrong. Married people go out and fool around on deployment, and they lose a lot of respect in the eyes of the crew. People embezzle or people pad travel claims, and they lose a lot of respect in the eyes of their crew. There are a lot of things that you can do as a military leader, as a person, that will cause you to lose respect and will cause you to be less of an effective leader. And so yes, I put those, and I think anybody up here would put those all the way across the board.

You are held to the highest standard as a military leader, and no aspect of your behavior or your actions can fall below that. And if it does, then you are starting to lose your credibility with the people that you are charged with leading.

Senator ROBB. Thank you. Lieutenant Frey?

Lieutenant FREY. I cannot say that I would immediately submit my letter of resignation. I think I would have to consider whether I would want to remain in the Naval service if homosexuals were allowed to serve alongside us.

And in answer to the second question, I think the example of adultery is a good example. It is a violation of UCMJ to be adulterous. And it is not so much that adultery is wrong, but that if a member of a unit is engaged in adulterous activity it is going to affect the morale and the cohesiveness of that unit.

If you have got some guy fooling around, maybe not with the wife or the husband of another member of the unit, but is just fooling around with a married person if he is married or another married person, that is going to affect how the other members of the unit look at him, how they judge him, and whether or not they will perform for him. He is objectionable and his activities are objectionable. So I think that is a good analogy.

Senator ROBB. Commander?

Commander PLEDGER. Concerning the change in the law, your question was not very specific as to how the law would be changed but assuming that you are saying if the restrictions were lifted on homosexuals in the military, I have not made any sorts of on what my actions will be if that were to happen. would say that if I saw something coming down the road that I felt was going to damage the service, I think I would hope that I would stand fast and do everything I could to avoid or to minimize the damage in order to apply whatever leadership capabilities I have to the situation.

I believe that I would do that. I do not believe I would resign or retire, which I could. I think I would try to do everything I could to, as I say, minimize the situation with regard to the percentage issue that you mentioned. I could not help but think of the 10-pound bag analogy, and how many one-pound weights you can put in it. I am just wondering how much of that bag is going to be consumed by the leadership in the Navy in trying to deal with this problem if in fact the ban is lifted, and how that, in itself, will affect the readiness of the military - specifically, the Navy, which we are discussing here today.

We have to keep readiness as our number one issue. We have to dedicate the hours of our day toward items which deal with readiness. And, quite frankly, right now, I think most of the leaders at this panel dedicate probably better than 50 percent of their day right now on social issues which are not directly related to the readiness of our unit. We would like to be able to, but we cannot.

This particular issue, I can see it consuming an inordinate amount of time, not just on my part, but all the leadership in my chain of command, not just to educate and to train, but to deal with the disciplinary problems which are going to more than likely occur.

As far as religion, I would prefer not to discuss my religious stance here. However, I will say that from talking to the members of my crew, I found that the sailors of today are a very religious bunch of guys, and they have very strong views on religion. I was a bit surprised to find out just how strongly and emotional they were on this particular issue from a religious point of view and a moral point of view.

Senator ROBB. Commander Hutton.

Commander HUTTON. Yes, sir. I would not put my letter in to resign. First, I believe in civilian control of the military. I think it is the right and proper thing to do. And I think that is the function we are going right here, as you are asking our opinions and we are trying to give them to you.

If it is the will of Congress and the President that we lift the ban, I quite frankly-I think I am an extraordinary leader, and I would stay because I want to make sure that we make it work. And I will make it work if that is what the will of Congress and the President is. And I will do the very best I can for you.

The point is well taken, however, the majority of my time would be spent in trying to deal with those types of leadership issues, and not spent on the on-scene training that is so very vital to our military.

The religious issue, the Ten Commandments, the one that strikes me is theft, stealing. My Command Master Chief would tell you right up front, if I have a young man or woman who comes to me and the crime is theft of some sort, I will hit them with the maximum punishment I can. There is nothing worse than stealing, particularly from your shipmates. They have so little to begin with, quite frankly. And it is such a crime to take a thing from each other and from themselves.

So I hit them with the maximum, and I quite frankly try to get them out of the military. I do not want them in my military. I do not need them.

Senator ROBB. Captain Holder.

Captain HOLDER. I would not resign. But I was 20 years old when I entered this Navy, and I do not think, quite honestly, my mother would have agreed and held up the honor that my older brother had when he was in the Navy. He has been retired for almost 15 years. So I would stay now, because of the prestige in which I hold this institution, and I would work.

As I said, who would educate me? Because I would be out there begging for the literature on how to do this. And that is a big problem. I do not think that anyone has the literature for how we go out to the heartland of our country and tell moms and dads that the things that they have been teaching their children no longer are quite as important because we have got to make sure that everyone has an equal right.

And we have said already, it is not a right, it is a privilege. And because we have discriminated-and I agree that we discriminate correctly to ensure the military readiness of our organizations-there is simply too many - there are too many events that require our total commitment. I cannot have adultery. I have had experience during this deployment with senior petty officers coming to me and saying, Captain, I have just gotten a letter, I have gotten a phone call from overseas, and I had men spend \$1,000 a month calling home from overseas, and for one of those men, a senior petty officer, to come to me and say I have to go home now, my wife is having an affair, or whatever that situation - that is dramatically detrimental to my unit.

And that man, while I have junior people that would step up and do their best, I do that at risk of their safety. And certainly we have qualification programs that allow us to produce people and allow them to step forward, but those programs take time. And we have talked what the detriment would be if people just left our service. If the senior petty officers that you heard, the Fleet Master Chief and the Force Master Chief, and that Master Chief of the Boat, talk about the impacts, I do not know that we can allow our military to slide down that trail and still check it and deploy within 96 hours, which is my commitment to my boss today - be ready to go within 96 hours.

The issue of adultery is wrong. Even more wrong is the issue of sodomy. I have had it on my ship. I had to deal with it. And that is a clear case of conduct. That is not just a man's persuasion. But I would ask you if those two men, one of which I am still not convinced was truly a willing participant, but because he was under the influence of alcohol and his statement said it had just been a