



Outing and prison by Court Martial

Interested? Well let me give you some background history. I joined the Royal Air Force in 1987 age 17 and although I had experimented like so many others when younger I still wasn't defining, or accepting myself as the big scary and always used negative word GAY.

I did my bit for queen and country and fought in the first gulf war, which is where I learnt and accepted I was gay and had my first romance with a Norwegian Red Cross worker, how I would like to meet again and say sorry. We met around the pool of the Diplomat hotel, I was scared and broke it off and struggled to explain to the sarjeant I was sharing a room with why this man was crying in the corridor outside our room.

I now set about leading my double life in the armed forces, I had too, as it remained illegal in the forces to be gay. This continued until in a search of my room a copy of Gay Times was found. This now lead to a two year investigation, bugging my communications, having people follow me, placing officers outside the local gay bars to spy on my going in, using the local police stations to take my friends too, to interview them and altogether create terror and fear amongst friends and associates. Most of my responses to the multitude of interviews they gave me had consisted of "well am I not permitted to have gay friends??" As you can imagine frustration must of grown on their part and so began an increasing amount of dirty tricks on their part, such as giving me short term postings to far flung parts of the UK without giving me a means to get there, so if I failed to turn up I would be Absent Without Leave, however they hadn't bargend on my very resourceful family. I endured threats of violence from my fellow service men after they had been interviewed, and a general feeling from others that they

wish I would leave. And so after almost a couple of years I had had enough and finally confessed my “sins.” And so a COURT MARTIAL took place in Cornwall at RAF St Mawgan in October '93. I would finally achieve my 15 minutes of fame!!!! When sentenced to 6 months in prison of which I served 4, one month in solitary confinement and got 2 months off for good behaviour. As you can imagine my time inside wasn't a barrel of laughs, with threats and an attempt to be set up by those in charge, with further offences. However I now had lost my privacy and before it came out in the press I had to tell my very Catholic parents, RAF officer father and my brother who had apparently always known, and so my mother and brother accepted me with no problem, however my father took some time to accept the truth, and from then I was able to begin to have a more positive open relationship with my family. However we had to do battle with the RAF, and thanks to my lawyer's hard work, and My M.P. asking questions in the House of commons we got our honourable discharge back, our decorations and became part of the reason that the armed forces realised they needed to change and stop court-martialling and sending people to prison, for being gay.

Do I regret my military service?
 No, I went to war, I learnt to
 Scuba dive and have become
 A diving instructor, and the
 Skills I learnt have saved some
 Lives. And I now have
 Something in common with
 Oscar Wilde. A criminal record
 For gross indecency. And
 leaving the R.A.F. set me on
 the road to becoming a



Psychiatric Nurse. And I have

My Claim to fame - of being

the last UK Serviceman to be sent to prison for being gay. can anyone tell me otherwise?? I have tried to ask the Ministry of Defence but even with a freedom of information request I get the response,

“The M.O.D. is permitted to withhold information where an exemption is considered justifiable.”

But What most people don't realise is, with military law at discharge from your service they get to choose whether to list your offences or not, and what to list them as, with the civil authorities, and so I continue to lose my rights to a private life as I must declare my “criminal record.” This has meant that whilst I worked as a nurse, this declaration has resulted in my not obtaining a position, as one trust refused to say YES, though they did not say No either, otherwise apart from this being a talking point at interview I have had a very good career rising to managerial positions and enjoying the life I now lead without fear of having my secret found out.