



Navy sailor pleads guilty to indecent exposure after drunken night out

Campbell Gellie
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A drunken sailor has embarrassed his Navy family by exposing his penis and asking a fellow serviceman “who’s bigger” before kissing him.

Lieutenant Jarrod Chesher’s career was saved on Monday when an Australian Defence Force magistrate decided not to dismiss him after a court martial hearing on the HMAS Watson in Watsons Bay.

The 30-year-old lieutenant was instead fined \$8239 and his career set back three years. Lt Chesher pleaded guilty to indecent exposure in a public place and assault for an incident in Hobart on February 22. After mooring the HMAS Warramunga at Hobart, Lt Chesher had “three or four” glasses of champagne at a cocktail party for dignitaries.

When the party finished at 8.30pm, he changed into civilian clothes and hit a Hobart bar where other sailors were drinking. He told the court he had about 10 drinks with friends before the first incident.

“(At the bar) the complainant, Lt Adrian Weatherby-Fell, observed Lt Chesher opened his zipper with his right hand and pulled out his penis and testicles,” said prosecuting officer Squadron Leader Jonathan Miller. “Chesher then made the comment ‘who’s bigger’, directed at Leading Seaman Ben Thompson.” “Lt Weatherby-Fell then said ‘put it away nobody needs to see that’.”

Sq Ld Miller said Lt Weatherby-Fell told Lt Chesher to calm down his drinking. The court martial heard that an hour and three drinks later, Lt Chesher approached Lt Weatherby-Fell, said “I love you”, grabbed him by the upper arms and “kissed him fully on both lips”. Lt Chesher was then “observed to be laughing on his way back to the bar”. A statement made by Lt Weatherby-Fell said he felt “trapped” and that he was mainly affected by the kiss and not by seeing the genitals. “I could not escape” he said. “I felt completely violated and dirty. I felt completely shocked and rocked to my core.” The court martial heard Lt Chesher was a model sailor and came from a proud Navy family, who he had embarrassed through his actions. Lt Chesher’s wife, Lieutenant Rachel Scott, his father Commander Greg Chesher, and brother all serve the Navy. The court heard Lt Chesher had been under a lot of personal pressure at the time of the incident and had recently been promoted to navigator but had hardly slept on the 10-day journey from Sydney to Hobart. Lt Chesher said he was “ashamed”, “appalled” and had “embarrassed” his family by what he did. “I’m appalled, I never should have done that to him, to the reputation of

the ship or the Navy” he said. “I sent him a heartfelt apology email and tried in various ways to make contact with him.”

The court heard he sent the email two days after the incident where he apologised and said he would apply for leave so they didn’t bump into each other on the ship. He also didn’t drink for a month and has since curbed his already light drinking.

Defence Force Magistrate Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Hyde said the incident was out of character for Lt Chesher after reading references from Navy captains and commanders. The references described him as an “outstanding example to his team”, “high performing”, “professional”, “highly suitable for promotion”, “relaxed” and “impressive”. A Defence Force Magistrate fined Lt Chesher and extended his window for promotion from July 1, 2019, to July, 1, 2022.

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