

**WARNING:** reporting restrictions apply to the contents transcribed in this document, because the case concerned is a sexual offence. Reporting restrictions prohibit the publication of the applicable information to the public or any section of the public, in writing, in a broadcast or by means of the internet, including social media. Anyone who receives a copy of this transcript is responsible in law for making sure that applicable restrictions are not breached. A person who breaches a reporting restriction is liable to a fine and/or imprisonment. For guidance on whether reporting restrictions apply, and to what information, ask at the court office or take legal advice.

This Transcript is Crown Copyright. It may not be reproduced in whole or in part other than in accordance with relevant licence or with the express consent of the Authority. All rights are reserved.



**IN THE COURT MARTIAL**

held at

**MILITARY COURT CENTRE, BULFORD**

on the

**18<sup>TH</sup> day of December 2025**

in the case of

**REX**

V

**30257300 Lance Corporal Frederick David Bradford**

**21 Multirole Medical Regiment**

**JUDGE ADVOCATE**

Judge Atwill

Assistant Judge Advocate General

**SENTENCING REMARKS**

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Thank you, take a seat. Corporal Bradford having pleaded guilty before this Court, for which you will get the requisite credit, it remains for us to sentence you for two charges of sexual assault. You are 33 years old, you joined the Army in April 2019, you have served for nearly seven years. You have held the rank of Lance Corporal since January 2023. You have no previous convictions or disciplinary findings.

The facts of this offence are that on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, you were serving in 21 Multirole Medical Regiment based at Dale Barracks in Chester. The unit was holding a Christmas social beginning with a lunch. Before the event, the Regimental Sergeant Major gave a brief to all of you, about safe behaviour while drinking which included a discussion about consent. This was a sad but sensible precaution ahead of the social season.

After lunch people gathered in the NAAFI bar on camp. One female member of your unit, [name 1 redacted], who you knew, was present. Some people had agreed to continue socialising by travelling together into Chester. [name 1 redacted] asked you if you were going to get changed and join them. You were sitting on a sofa at the time, and she had to lean down to speak to you. You bit her on the neck in an intimate and intrusive act. She was surprised and upset, she returned to her room and decided not to travel with the others because of your behaviour.

You went to that accommodation block where you had a conversation with another female soldier, [name 2 redacted]. You were heavily intoxicated, and you made inappropriate comments about [name 2 redacted] and about [name 1 redacted]. [name 1 redacted] subsequently went back to the NAAFI. You went back there too. You sought her out and you followed her into the female lavatories calling out for her. She told you she was not going to Chester and that you should leave the lavatories. Other people noticed that she was distressed by what was going on.

Later that evening, in a bar in Chester you approached [name 2 redacted] and uninvited you grabbed her by putting both your hands around her head and pulling her towards you before kissing her. She put it very simply, "I didn't want to create a scene; however, I don't feel there was any reason he would feel he could do this to me and I didn't give him any consent to do so".

You were interviewed by the police, and you denied both of the acts that were alleged but when you were charged before this Court, you pleaded guilty to both offences. You heard the prosecutor read parts of the victim's personal statements. It is as clear to us as it ought to be to you the impact that your offence had on both of those soldiers.

Section 237 of the Armed Forces Act sets out the purposes of sentencing in the service courts. They are the punishment of offenders, the maintenance of discipline, the reduction of service offences and other crime including reduction by deterrence. The reform and rehabilitation of offenders, the protection of the public, and the making of reparation by offenders to persons affected by their offences.

By Section 60 of the Sentencing Act 2020 it is the Court's duty in all cases to impose on the defendant in accordance with the relevant guideline, a sentence which is within the offence range. Where the guideline describes the categories of case, the court must decide which of the categories most closely resemble the defendant's case, in order to identify the starting point within the offence range.

Section 259 of the Armed Forces Act requires Service Courts to have regard to any guidelines issued by the Sentencing Council. We have had regard to a number of Sentencing Council Guidelines in this case specifically the offence specific guideline for sexual assault. The guideline on the imposition of community and custodial sentences. The guideline for reduction in sentence for a guilty plea and the totality guideline.

We have also had regard to the Sentencing Guidelines issued by the Judge Advocate General. We read with care the probation officer's report. We note that in the professional assessment of that experienced probation officer, you took partial responsibility for the offence. You partially recognised the impact your offence would have on your victim and the service. You pose a medium risk of reconviction, a medium risk of causing serious harm, but that the risk you pose can be managed in the community.

We listened carefully to everything that was said on your behalf by Mr Green, and we have also read your character references. They speak of an able and personable junior non-commissioned officer.

Classification of offences: I am going to deal with the Charges separately at this stage. With any offence be it service or civilian, the Court has to consider both your culpability and the harm caused by the offences. Dealing first with culpability, none of the factors from the higher level of culpability in the guideline are present and therefore your culpability falls into the lower bracket that being category B.

Turning to harm caused, there are none of the high harm factors present. Therefore, we place that into category 3 on the guideline. Having considered both culpability and harm we place your offence into category B3. There are service factors which are relevant, they are factors which are relevant to harm. They are the impact on unit cohesion. These two soldiers were members of your own unit. The impact on the reputation of His Majesty's Forces. Those do increase harm, but we do not consider that they increase harm to such an extent that it moves up to the next category on the guideline.

An offence of B3 has a starting point of a high-level community order, with a range from a medium level community order to 26 weeks' imprisonment. Having categorised the offence by reference to

culpability and the harm caused, we then go onto consider the aggravating and mitigating factors which are relevant to the offence. The fact the offence was committed while you were under the influence of alcohol is an aggravating factor, justifying an upward adjustment to the category starting point.

Conversely, we find the fact that you have no previous convictions, positive character, your remorse, your prospects in work and the steps you have taken, to some extent, to address your offending behaviour are all mitigating factors justifying a downward adjustment to the category starting point.

There are two service factors which are relevant. The first is that you hold rank, that increases the seriousness and the fact that you have a good professional record, reduces seriousness. Taking into account both aggravating and mitigating factors we would consider it fair to make a slight downward adjustment to the category starting point. The sentence after trial would be a high-level community order, or the detention equivalent. You are entitled to a one third discount for your plea, which was entered at the earliest opportunity. I will deal with the overall sentence in due course to take into account totality.

In respect of the second Charge, the factors are the same. We would categorise it as B3, the aggravating and mitigating factors are identical. The sentence on that Charge alone would be a high-level community order or detention equivalent with appropriate adjustment.

The category starting points and ranges are for a single offence. We are sentencing you for two offences, which are of a similar kind, which took place one after another so concurrent sentences are appropriate, but all courts when sentencing for more than a single offence, should pass a total sentence which reflects all of the offending behaviour before it and is just and proportionate. Therefore, concurrent sentences will ordinarily be longer than a single sentence for a single offence.

We are going to set the tariff on Charge 1 and then increase that to reflect the totality of your offending.

Dismissal: these offences taken together are so serious that dismissal is appropriate. Service personnel have little choice where and with whom they serve and live. Sexual offending severs the bond of trust that must exist between service personnel. In simple terms predatory behaviour of this sort drives good young people out of the Army. Dismissal is appropriate in all but the most exceptional cases. This is not one. You will be dismissed from His Majesty's Armed Forces.

You may have thought, Corporal Bradford that you would leave the Army under your own terms. You were mistaken. There is no place for behaviour of this sort in His Majesty's Forces, and you and others must listen and learn from the consequences.

Reduction in rank. No non-commissioned officer could expect to behave this way and retain their rank. Those who hold rank have a responsibility for the maintenance of discipline. Reduction to the ranks is wholly appropriate in addition it is an automatic consequence of your dismissal. You will be reduced to the rank of Private.

Taking our decision to dismiss you into account we have decided that the appropriate penalty in this case is a service community order. That means that you will be under the supervision of the probation service, for a period of two years. You will be required to undertake unpaid work in the community as the punitive element of that sentence.

The sentence on Charge 1 would have included 180 hours of unpaid work as a punitive element. We are going to increase that to 210 hours to take into account the presence of Charge 2. We then apply the discount for your guilty plea, which reduces the amount to 140 hours of unpaid work. You must complete that work as and when you are directed by the probation service. You must do it to a proper standard. If you fail to do those things, and complete that number of hours within 12 months, you can be brought back before the Court for breach of this order and resentenced.

If you are resentenced, you can go to prison. Further, you must not offend during the period of your probation. If you do you can be brought back to court and dealt with again. Compensation, in light of the fact that you will not have a means to pay on dismissal from the Army, and that therefore recovery would be at an extremely low rate, we do not believe that compensation is appropriate in this case. We think that all it would do, modest as it would have to be, is prolong the impact of your offending, on the victims in this case. We are not going to make an order for compensation.

Sexual offences are invidious. They harm victims, they undermine trust at an individual, unit and societal level and they fracture units. You made dreadful choices that day and the consequences for you far reaching. We have taken all of those consequences into account when deciding your sentence. Those young women were entitled to your respect. As a junior NCO, your protection. You failed them and yourself and the Army.

As a result of this sentence, you are required to comply with the requirements for registration as a Sex Offender, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. You must notify the police of your whereabouts within

three days, and notify them immediately of any change of address, or living arrangements. A failure to comply with these requirements is an offence for which you can be sent to prison. That requirement will last for five years. This conviction may also be one that affects your entitlement to apply for hold certain appointments under the vetting and barring scheme. You will be informed of the details of that separately.

I want to say a word for the two soldiers that you assaulted. You both showed considerable courage in standing up to this behaviour and considerable grace in the way that you dealt with the consequences of that courage. We hope that the completion of these proceedings helps you now to move on from it. I am going to make a reminder to all that the law makes it an offence for any person to publish information which could lead to the identification of a person who is a victim in this case. That protection is permanent. Breach of it is a criminal offence which is imprisonable. It includes any publication on social media.

Corporal Bradford taking into account the appropriate Sentencing Council Guidelines the conclusions of the probation officer, considering your personal mitigation and giving you an appropriate discount for your plea, we therefore sentence you as follows:

Charge 1: Dismissal from His Majesty's Service. Reduction to the rank of private. A service community order for two years with requirements that you complete 140 hours of unpaid work.

On Charge 2: Dismissal from His Majesty's Service. Reduction to the rank of private. A service community order for two years concurrent to Charge 1.

I will now ask the President to formally pronounce sentence. Would you stand up, please?  
Mr President?

### **SENTENCE**

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD: Lance Corporal Bradford, the sentence of the Court is as follows:

Charge 1: Dismissal from His Majesty's Service. A service community order for 24 months with the requirements previously described.

On Charge 2: Dismissal from His Majesty's Service. A service community order for 24 months concurrent with Charge 1.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Mr President, I apologise there is an error in the note that I gave you so I will ask you to also pronounce that there is the sentence of reduction in rank in respect of both Charges.

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD: Lance Corporal Bradford there is also a reduction in rank, to the rank of Private, on both Charges.