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IN THE COURT MARTIAL

held at

MILITARY COURT CENTRE, BULFORD

on the

27th day of March 2026

in the case of

REX

V

30195645 Petty Officer Greg Ian Melrose

His Majesty's Ship Drake

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Judge England

Assistant Judge Advocate General

SENTENCING REMARKS

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Petty Officer Melrose you were convicted after trial earlier this month for three offences of sexual assault and one offence of exposure. It falls to us to sentence you for those offences. You were acquitted of one offence of sexual assault and one offence of battery and then we have taken no regard of those offences in reaching our sentencing decision.

Due to the nature of the offences of which you have been convicted you may be subject to barring from working with children or others, that is not a punishment of the court but it is my duty just to

tell you that that is a potential consequence. You will be told of any restrictions under the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

In terms of the offences each sexual assault was against a different female member of the submarine crew, all committed in the Summer of 2022, and all committed in an operational environment when the boat was at sea overseas. We heard evidence that there were only six females in the crew of over a hundred. There were two officers and four other ranks. You sexually assaulted three of those four other ranks.

Charges 2 and 4 were committed against the same victim with whom you had a brief consensual sexual relationship which had ended prior to your deployment in June of 2022. Although the relationship had not ended on good terms, the victim [name 1 redacted] was trying to be cordial with you, in order to make the best of her deployment in the close confines of a submarine, whilst also trying to avoid you when possible; both working in different parts of the ship.

At the time you were a Leading Hand and she was an AB [name 1 redacted]. You were both junior rates and all junior rates, regardless of gender, shared the same heads and those heads contained two shower cubicles. Those cubicles were opposite each other. Each shower cubicle had a shower curtain. That afforded some privacy but there was no means of securing it and no means of locking the shower cubicle.

[Name 1 redacted] was in the habit of putting her large and distinctive toilet bag at the bottom of the shower, so that it could be seen by parties and other witnesses said that they knew when she was in the shower because it was a distinctive shower bag. So it was straight away a message that she was in the shower.

She was in the shower cubicle, naked when you exposed yourself by putting your erect penis through the shower curtain intending her to see it and seeking sexual gratification by doing so. She was naked having just finished her shower, she was bending down to her toilet bag on the floor, she looked up, saw your penis and saw you laughing as you did this. She retreated as far to the back of the cubicle as she could get but it is a very confined space there was not far that she could go. There was no one else in the heads at this time.

It was a frightening and distressing experience for her feeling trapped in the shower cubicle while you behaved as you did. You did however back off, and she was able to leave the shower. That was Charge 2.

Sometime later in the deployment, during a fire drill, you sexually assaulted [name 1 redacted]. Your role was as part of the firefighting team. Her role was to support the fire fighters by helping them into their kit, checking it was correctly fitted.

It was the only time that she had to go to that area of the ship, she having avoided it for all of her other duties because it was the area of the ship that you worked in or frequented. As part of her duties, she was being professional, she was helping you into your kit, and you made suggestive comments to her. She turned away from you, and you took advantage of the melee around you to grab her bottom, that is Charge 4.

She turned and stared at you but did not say anything. She felt because she was on duty and because she was a professional person, that she had no option but to continue to do her duty. Once the drill had finished, she immediately told her then partner, who was onboard, what you had done but she swore him to secrecy. She did not want to report it.

In terms of why she did not report these offences, at the time, she said this, "Submarines are confined spaces, there were not many females. I didn't feel comfortable and the Navy culture, how women were discriminated against on submarines, and the fact we were also on active deployment' She felt it would be unsafe if she made a complaint against you. She did report it sometime later, when she felt able to do so.

Charge 5 relates to [name 2 redacted], Same rank as you at the time, and she counted you as her friend. You had socialised together; you had got on well together. She did not know that she had anything to fear from you at all. On a run ashore you were both at the pool bar, you had been drinking. You had not consumed alcohol for the previous two offences being onboard but, on this occasion, you had been drinking and you were drunk.

You asked her to go to your room in terms, to have sex with her. You were rubbing your leg against her trying to play footsie with her. She was laughing it off; she was not interested in you in that way and that must have been clear too. She was sitting at the pool bar, you put your hand down the back of her swimsuit, going past her bottom and ending up with your fingers in contact with the back of her vagina, skin-on-skin contact.

She shouted at you to get off that was overheard by someone standing nearby. Shortly after that, because of what you did she left and went to her room. She did later tell her boss the MEO what you

had done but she did not want to formally report it. She said she struggled with reporting it completely not least because you considered her to be her friend and when she said that in the witness box her voice broke. It was clearly very impactful on her that you were her friend. She had not expected you to do this to her as her friend and she knew that there would be an impact on you if she did report it and that made her feel bad because you were her friend.

She became aware that you had also targeted [name 1 redacted], and she felt that it was the right thing to do to say what you had done to her, and in our view, she was right to reach that conclusion. In terms of not feeling able or wanting to report it, she also said this, "The main reason is it is hard enough being a female on a submarine. You try to keep your head down; you try not to draw attention to yourself by saying something you make yourself a target".

Charge 6 was in June of 2022. You sexually assaulted [name 3 redacted] and she was in your chain of command. You were her Leading Hand you worked together, you acted as her mentor, but you also got on well onboard. You went to the gym together, you trained together. She considered you a friend, and she enjoyed your company when you were sober. Unfortunately, your behaviour changed when you were drunk. Notwithstanding that you knew that she was gay and, in a relationship, you would flirt with her and try to press your attentions on her and because of that she had agreed with you, that she would only socialise alone with you, if you were sober.

On that basis in June, when you were both ashore you met up for dinner on the agreement that it would be dinner and one drink only and that is how it started. As it turned out others then joined you, and you ended up socialising together in a group for longer. She did so because she felt safe then because there were other people round it was not just you and her.

You became very drunk you all by agreement went to a strip club and there is nothing wrong with that. On the way back from the strip club, you took advantage of her having to physically help you back to the hotel effectively having to hold you up, because you were so drunk and you kept trying to kiss her on the lips. You were grabbing her face in your hands; you were pulling her face towards you.

She described it as you trying to force yourself on her. She was able to pull away and deflect you, so you did not in fact manage to kiss her on the lips despite your efforts. So uncomfortable did you make her feel that she then passed over the supporting duty to one of the other people with you and distanced herself from you for the rest of the walk back.

The reality of what happened is clear from the messages that you sent her afterwards; these were in the early hours of the morning. "I am sorry for keep kissing you, I honestly like you that much I was hoping you would lose character and kiss me back once". "Text me back to reassure me I wasn't too bad." Those were your words; you did not dispute that those were your words. You also said in another message that you thought you would wake up together. An indication that you were seeking sexual contact with her. Your intention from those messages was clear and your evidence trying to explain away those messages lacked any credibility.

We have heard three very moving victim personal statements. We first heard from [name 1 redacted]. She struggled emotionally having to return to sea, despite wanting to, to carry on with her career, as these two offences occurred whilst you was at sea and whilst she was onboard going about her duties. Post the deployment she felt isolated; she struggled to motivate herself to move forward. She lost confidence in herself and because of that she became anxious about her career. She was not doing as well as she wanted to do and she thought that might reflect badly on her and could lead to her losing her career. She feels angry and frustrated about the impact that your actions have on her and continue to have on her to this day.

[Name 2 redacted] said that since reporting the incident she has lived with a constant sense of anxiety, affecting her home and work life. She was left to work on the same base as you. She was fearful of encountering you again for good reason, and she was told that she had to avoid certain areas and she had to avoid certain areas and certain timings, and that made her feel as though she had done something wrong when she had not.

The Royal Navy must consider whether that was an appropriate way to treat a complainant in such cases to put them on the same base as the alleged perpetrator. Such were her feelings about this that she did not feel safe and as she did not feel that the Royal Navy were protecting her, she took the decision to work from home. That was her decision, but it was a decision that was not made effectively voluntarily but because she did not feel that she as afforded protection to which she was entitled. Because she then worked from home, she missed out on the full experience of her Petty Officer course, a course that many people look forward to. It left her feeling isolated. It affected every aspect of her life, continues to do so, and left her feeling that in effect she had lost control of her life. A life that she used to be in control of.

[Name 3 redacted] said that she struggles to trust people. She constantly questions their intentions towards her because you broke her trust. You were her friend, her Leading Hand, and you broke her trust and even when boundaries were put in place, you broke those as well.

She isolated herself by not attending social events. She was worried about the stigma of reporting it as a woman in the Navy. She felt forced to change career path leaving the submarine service, a career stream that she had worked very hard for and was proud of what she had achieved. She has been diagnosed with PTSD as a result of your actions towards her and she is receiving some therapy for that. What you did affects her life every day. Both of the last two victims explain how it is not only them that have been affecting but also their spouses' feelings of anger, feelings of anxiety: will their spouse be safe if they are at sea or at work. That has put a strain on their relationships. It just shows that there are far reaching consequences, not just consequences for the individuals that you have targeted but consequences for their families as well. It must be as clear to you as it is to us the devastating impact your actions have had on these women. These women who were your colleagues and your friends.

As to you, you are 32 years old, so you are about 28 when these offences were committed. You are married; you have no children. You served for 23 and a half years. You were promoted to Petty Officer in 2023, that is post these offences but before they were reported to the service police.

There are three-character references, those were available at trial and we have re-read them. All speak to your personal qualities, and none can envisage that you would behave in the way that you have. Perhaps that reflects that they do not know you as well as they think you do or perhaps you choose not to show the worst aspects of your behaviour to them.

You have one previous matter for theft of alcohol in 2023, post-dating these offences. It does support the suggestion that you have something of an alcohol problem. You were not able to get alcohol legally, so you stole some.

We have listened very carefully to everything Mr Green has said on your behalf. Nobody could have said anymore: he has highlighted to us everything that we must take into account. We have already read the pre-sentence report, we note that in the assessment of the experienced probation officer, you take little responsibility for these offences. You partially recognised the impact that such offences could have on your victims and the wider Armed Forces. You pose a medium risk of reconviction generally and a high risk of committing sexual offences, likely to be increased with alcohol misuse. You pose a medium risk of causing serious harm.

When we sentence someone, we must have regard to certain sentencing guidelines and we have had regard to both offence specific guidelines, the imposition of community and custodial sentences

guidelines, the totality guideline and also the sentencing guidelines issues by the Judge Advocate General.

Dealing with dismissal first, you sexually assaulted three separate females on a single deployment within a four-month period. In our view, this was not blurring boundaries of friendship, this was not just being overly touchy feely. In fact, your suggestion that you made to the report writer, is insulting to characterise this behaviour in such a way. This was, in our view, predatory sexual behaviour towards three of the four accessible females onboard.

Despite already having been in a long-term relationship, you had a sexual relationship, with one. We are not here to judge your morals but that relationship with the first victim had ended, and it was clear to you that no further sexual engagement was welcome. Two offences were then committed against her when she was at work either on duty or doing daily personal admin following a duty shift or a duty watch.

The other two were your friends, and you took advantage of that friendship to sexually assault each of them when they were not expecting it, despite it being very clear to you that neither of them were sexually interested in you. You simply did not care. You just wanted whatever you could get.

Two were junior in rank to you, one was in your chain of command. Your behaviour was utterly disgraceful towards each of them. Your conduct has left each of them with long-term impacts it still affects them today, some three to four years later. All have called into question, or most have called into question whether they can continue to serve and that is an unfortunate impact. They have done nothing wrong, but it calls into the question their trust in the Service that they wish or wished to be in.

One has had to move from her original role because of your behaviour, and all feel their careers have been affected. There is an operational impact to your offending. The impact of such offences on the reputation of the Navy and the wider Armed Forces the impact of recruitment of women into the Navy and recruitment or retention into particular career streams cannot be understated.

It is clear to us that you have no place in the Royal Navy, and you will be reduced to the ranks and dismissed from service. We were significantly concerned at the evidence that we heard when all three women told us about their concerns as to their position as females on the submarine crew. Certainly, two of them did not feel in a position to report it and the reason for that was discrimination against women by the male members of the crew. That reporting it would make them more vulnerable and

would make them the subject of targeting by male crew members simply for reporting that somebody had committed an offence against them.

We have heard today that the Royal Navy has taken steps to address the misogynistic culture both within the Royal Navy and within the submarine service since these offences were committed and that is encouraging. Those efforts are still at the embryonic stage, in their early years, and there is still much work to do. That is clear because this behaviour has not disappeared, notwithstanding that these offences were some four years' old, there are other similar, more recent cases coming to these courts. We hope that the Royal Navy continue in and review the efforts that they have made to further work on stamping out such behaviour towards females.

Our approach to sentencing in terms of classifying the offences and overall sentence is to treat Charge 5 as the lead offence uplifted to reflect the totality of offending and to impose concurrent sentences for each of the other offences. Now, that is not to suggest that any of these offences is any more or less serious than any other, but we must simply take one as the lead offence. We must classify each offence, identify aggravating and mitigating factors. We have taken a fairly pragmatic approach to adjusting each sentence to reflect those aggravating and mitigating factors, given our overall approach to sentence and on the basis, given that we must balance in any event for totality, making sometimes quite small adjustments will not affect our overall sentence.

We must consider culpability and caused by the offences. In each case we consider that the Service factors of being on a ship at sea, having to live in the close confines of that submarine at sea, and having to trust each other to act appropriately in such closed confines is a raised culpability factor.

As is damage to the reputation of the Armed Forces, that such offence is inevitably caused, and the damage to operational effectiveness that is clear had to have been caused by your offences, by the impact on your victims. Those are all raised harm factors.

Charge 5 the victim was junior in rank to you which is also a raised harm factor. Dealing with the offences in turn, Charge 2 exposure, both parties agree that culpability and harm are raised by the Service factor including the Council guideline factor of an abuse of trust of the command relationship.

In terms of harm, even though you have been in a relationship with the victim that does not mean that she was any less harmed by seeing you expose your penis to her, in a shower cubicle when there was no one else around. She was entitled to expect you to behave professionally towards her. The

start point for a higher culpability and harm, offence of exposure is 26 weeks or 6 months in prison with a range going up to a year.

The aggravating factors are your rank, but we have already taken that into account in terms of the abuse of the trust relationship and we do not double count it. The location is also aggravating because she was trapped in the shower, when you exposed yourself to her, she did not know what your intention was. She did not know if it was just going to be you exposing yourself to her or something else. She was trapped, she could not get out, she was at your mercy. As it is, you did let her out, but she did not know what else you might do to her.

It is balanced by the fact that you had no previous convictions at the time and that is a statutory factor. On balance it may be that the location outweighs the mitigation, but we are going to at least leave that at 26 weeks for the reasons that we have already stated.

In terms of Charge 4, sexual assault on [name 1 redacted]. This ship was at sea, there was an abuse of the command relationship, we placed it towards the top of category B. In terms of harm the victim was junior in rank, but again we have taken that into account in terms of the abuse of the command relationship, but we do consider this to be a 2B offence.

That has a start point of 12 months with a range of up to two years. The aggravating factors that she was doing her duty. She had no choice but to be where she was and no choice but to interact with you. Notwithstanding that she has done her best to avoid you and you took advantage of that. Against is your no relevant previous convictions.

Charge 5 was the sexual assault on [name 2 redacted]. Again, the Service factors of the ship at sea, the effect on operational effectiveness, reputation of the Armed Forces again a category B offence towards the top. Now it is harm 2 as touching of her naked genitalia. She was not junior in rank to you; there is no abuse of trust here other than you abused her trust as a friend. That is not a factor in the guideline.

That is a 2B offence with a start point of 12 months ranging up to 2 years. You were under the influence of alcohol, you held the rank of Leading Hand, and more is expected of you in that rank. In mitigation there are no relevant previous convictions. We do note that you tell the probation officer that you accept you have an addiction to alcohol. You have taken some steps to address your drinking. You have managed to secure yourself a place on a residential course.

Whilst we accept that drinking was a factor in two of these offences, drinking was not a factor in the other two offences when you committed offences when you were sober. You told the Court that you had not consumed alcohol onboard.

Whilst drinking may have been a factor in Charges 5 and 6, we are not convinced that it was the main or even a significant contributor factor. We think the motivation behind your offences was your desire for sexual gratification whether you were drunk or not. It is some mitigation, but it perhaps does not go that far.

Charge 6, sexual assault on [name 3 redacted]. Again, the same culpability and harm factors apply as they do to Charge 4. We have categorised this as a 2B offence with the same category range. Again, the aggravating factors are alcohol, your rank, and you were in her chain of command. The same mitigating factors apply as to Charge 5.

Although we have not mentioned the impact on each victim as a harm factor that is not because we disregard the harm that they have been caused it is clear that they have been caused harm. It is because the level of harm suffered in each case is already taken into account of in the guideline in setting the start point for each category. It is only if the harm suffered is over and above that and moves into the significant category that an upwards adjustment can be made.

PTSD can amount to significant harm, and we are sure that it gets very close to it in this case, but we are not sure that we have sufficient information to move it into the higher category, and we are not encouraged to do so by the prosecution.

We take Count 5 as the lead offence, if we were sentencing that on its own then it would have a start point of a little over 12 months, but we uplift Count 5 to a sentence of 30 months to take account of the other Charges. In our view, your offending against these three women is so serious that a community order cannot be justified and 30 months is the minimum sentence that we can impose. 30 months is out with the maximum sentence that can be served at MCTC once the appropriate uplift is applied.

For Count 2 there will be 6 months concurrent. Count 4, 12 months concurrent. Count 6, 12 months concurrent.

Now, in terms of the sentence of this court, it is clear from a mathematical perspective that 30 months is less than sentences of a little over 12 months to more 12-month sentences and 6 months sentence all being added together. That would come to a little over three and a half years.

Again, I reiterate that is not because we do not consider these sentences serious, but we must apply the principle of totality and so we do not and cannot simply add them together. We have to reach a sentence that we think is fair and proportionate and reflects the overall offending. In our view, taking all of the factors into account, 30 months is the minimum sentence that we can impose.

That is out with the range of sentences that are capable of being suspended. Now, some legislation came in on 22nd March that would mean that had you been convicted after the 22nd March it would be within the range of sentences that could be suspended. It is not something that we can consider. We would say that looking at all of the factors and despite Mr Green's best efforts on your behalf we would not have suspended it, in any event, even if we could.

We do not feel that you have taken responsibility for your behaviour. We do not think that alcohol addiction is the sole reason for your behaviour because two of your offences were committed when not under the influence of alcohol and we think alcohol may be a factor but not the prevailing factor that led you to commit these offences.

You do not seem to think you have done much wrong, just been a bit overfriendly and a bit touchy feely. You do not accept that you have sexually assaulted these women and are not convinced that there is a real prospect of rehabilitation. There would be an impact on your wife, and you serving a prison sentence, financially but we note that having been dismissed you will get a resettlement grant and that will mitigate such impacts.

Your risk is medium to high, and there is limited mitigation so there is not much in favour of suspending and in any even if we could suspend, our view would be is that your offending in a Service context means that only appropriate punishment can be achieved by immediate custody. In our view that is the prevailing factor, and so we would not have suspended it in any event.

You will serve up to half of your 30 months' sentence in custody before you are released on licence. It may be less than half that is a not a decision of the Court it is a matter of legislation and it is for the prison to tell you when you will be released.

When you are released, you will be on licence and then post sentence supervision for the rest of your sentence. You must comply with the terms of any licence and supervision and commit no further offence or you will be liable to serve a further period in custody.

As you have been convicted of a sexual offence you must indefinitely from today, go on the Sex Offender Register and be subject to the notification requirements. Those include keeping the police informed at all times of your personal particulars. Your address, your name whether you change your name, where you are living, whether there are any children in your household and any alteration in your passport details. Whether you are going abroad and other restrictions. You will be given details of these requirements on a form, before you leave this Court Centre. You will be required to signatures that form to acknowledge these requirements.

It is important that you understand Petty Officer Melrose because if you breach these requirements the penalty can be up to five years in prison. Breaches are taken very seriously because this is a protection of the public measure.

We do not make any orders for service compensation that is not because we do not think that each of these victims are deserving of compensation, completely the opposite but we do not have sufficient information to be able to properly assess the right amount to impose and any amount that we may impose may seem derisory given that we do not have sufficient information to be able to reach that decision. There are other means available to them to claim compensation, and we hope that someone will make them aware of what those avenues may be. Neither do we mention compensation because we have any thoughts that it is being desired by the complainants. Our prevailing view of these complainants was that they reported these matters because it was the right thing to do. They wanted to stop you doing this to other people and they wanted to call out such behaviour in the Royal Navy. They were courageous to do so, they were right to do so.

Commodore Farrant is there anything that we have not dealt with. Anything I have not fully explained in terms of the sentences of the Court?

CDRE FARRANT: No, thank you, your Honour.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Mr Green anything from you?

MR GREEN: No, thank you.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Mr Green so that you are aware what will happen after the President has announced sentence is that your client will stay here under escort and he is under escort from the moment he is told to leave the Court. He will be held here until -- so you can have a conference with him so that he can sign the notification paperwork. He will then be taken over to the custody facility, that is just behind the court building. If there are any family members or any friends here, to support him that are not present in the Court Room they may be able to afford them a visit at that facility.

He will then be taken to the Military Corrective and Training Centre in Colchester either today or tomorrow and he will then be transferred by them to, as I understand it, Chelmsford Prison to start his prison sentence.

MR GREEN: Your Honour, yes, thank you.

JUDGE ADVOCATE: Petty Officer Melrose, would you stand. Escorts stand. The President will now announce the sentence of the Court.

SENTENCE

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD: 30195645 Petty Officer Melrose you are sentenced as follows.

For Charge 2, 6 months' imprisonment.

For Charge 4, 12 months' imprisonment.

For Charge 5, 30 months' imprisonment.

For Charge 6, 12 months' imprisonment.

Dismissal and reduction to the ranks for all sentences.

All to run concurrently. Court Orderly march him out.