

Just news

Jealousy and revenge in the USMC

Ex-drill sergeant Cheryl Jameson paid for her lover's jealousy with the loss of a 10-year career and nearly a year in prison

BY DELL RICHARDS

When Barbara Baum and Cheryl Jameson joined the United States Marine Corps, neither one expected to end up in jail.

But both served more than six months in the brig for "sodomy and indecent acts." The formal charge: they were lesbians.

"I could have gotten 43 years max," said Baum. "They said they had to protect society from me."

Ironically, the closed, male-dominated society of the Marine Corps afforded neither Baum nor Jameson any protections — not even those guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.

Their shocking saga of jealousy and revenge began routinely enough.

Homosexuality was the farthest thing from Baum's mind when she signed up. An Indiana University student before she enlisted, Baum answered the standard USMC question of whether she had any homosexual tendencies with perfect honesty.

She could. She was straight.

"I came out in the military," said Baum. "This was my first experience."

Baum was so naïve that when another recruit asked her if she thought one of the drill sergeants was gay, she said the woman couldn't be: everyone had to sign a paper saying they weren't in order to join. Therefore, Baum reasoned, the corps was free of homosexuals.

Jameson — who would later become Baum's friend and ally — knew better.

A professed lesbian from the liberated city of San Francisco, Jameson knew from the start she'd have to lie. Covering up her sexuality was the only way she would be admitted.

"It's fraudulent enlistment if you lie," said Jameson, but she was willing to pay that price. She hoped to become a policewoman, and to get some training in the Marines.

But Jameson was wary from the start. And as a result of her circumspect behavior, she served two four-year terms with honor and re-enlisted each time.

"I needed a top security clearance and got

it," said Jameson, who held the tough and coveted post of drill sergeant.

"Cheryl was an outstanding drill instructor," added Baum.

Baum was less careful. Once she realized that over half the women were lesbians, she, too, became involved with another woman. And because she saw lesbianism all around her, she thought there was no need to hide.

But time was against the two women, as was the system, which pits lover against lover, woman against woman.

While the debate about homosexual rights rages on a philosophical plane, Baum and Jameson bring it down to much simpler dynamics: jealousy and revenge.

According to them, the melodrama that could rival any daytime soap started when the ex-boyfriend of Baum's girlfriend tried to get the woman to return to him.

He was infuriated. The thought of Baum and his girlfriend together drove him wild.

The man — who was also in the military — parked his car behind Baum's to block it, then broke into the two women's motel room to talk to them.

"He held me hostage most of the night," said Baum.

When that strong-arm tactic didn't work, he turned their names in to the Naval Investigative Service (NIS) — the arm of the military that investigates alleged cases of homosexuality and other "crimes."

When nothing came of that, the 24-year-old military policewoman thought she'd be okay.

"When I wasn't discharged then, I didn't worry," said Baum. "I trusted my lover not to say anything."

But the wheels had been set in motion and when Baum's lover was called in, she gave intimate details of their encounters. It was enough to bring Baum into the widening net — and later to convict her.

Baum was on her way to a prime assignment in Hawaii months later when she got the bad news: she was being charged with "sodomy and indecent acts."

She would also be charged with obstruction of justice for not cooperating and

held just two days after she was charged. "I suspected it but I didn't want to believe it," Jameson said.

During the hearing in front of a standing-room-only crowd, Jameson's judge brought in a copy of a medical textbook in order to get specific information about the sex acts involved.

"He wanted all the gory details," said Jameson.

Even though she was a career veteran, when found guilty she was stripped of rank, pay and retirement benefits. She paid for her lover's jealousy with the loss of a 10-year career and nearly a year in prison.

During her time in the brig, she was not allowed to talk to Baum even though they were in the same area.

"We were told not to even look at each other," said Jameson.

She was given a computerized list of women she was not allowed to communicate with, including the woman who held power of attorney for her.

Whenever she was deemed insubordinate, she was put in segregation — an isolated cell — with no word when she would be released.

She was put in isolation once for writing a letter to the woman who had power of attorney.

"They found a letter in my foot locker," said Jameson. "It was considered 'deception' and I was kept in the 'seg room' for the night."

Today, her hopes of becoming a policewoman are long gone. Instead, she talks of somehow using her computer skills and finally getting to travel.

Even though their lives have been ruined, both women are trying to pick up the pieces of their careers, wondering how they will hide a less-than-honorable discharge and 13 years of combined military service on their resumé.

But both Baum and Jameson have said good riddance to the military.

"It's a game with them, a scam," said Baum. "They play people against each other."

"They kept asking about what they called this world-wide 'Lesbian Mafia' that goes after people," added Jameson. Apparently, this "Mob" is a subversive unit that the military believes recruits and indoctrinates innocent, young heterosexual women into the ranks of lesbians.

The reason for this fallacious fantasy is obvious: the truth is too hard to face.

"If they kicked all the lesbians in the military out, there wouldn't be anyone left," said Jameson.

Jameson's scars don't seem as raw. With 10 years in the Marines, she learned one of the military's few valuable lessons: being stoic is the only way to survive, either mentally or physically. But the 28-year-old's pain comes through in other ways. She seems healthy, even brawny, but her humor is so brittle, it often nears the breaking point.

"I joined the military to travel but spent most of my duty in California," said the California native. "Then I got to Parris Island — the USMC recruit depot in South Carolina.

"There's this big sign as you come on base: 'Where it all begins.' It should have said 'Where it all ends.'"

Jameson was also the victim of betrayal. Her lover gave her name to the NIS when the woman found out Jameson had gone out with someone else at the beginning of their affair.

"My lover got angry with me and turned me in," said Jameson.

She wanted to get back at Jameson — and she did.

Jameson was called into NIS hearings three times and asked about other women's sexuality before she was actually accused of homosexual acts herself. And she didn't find out about her lover's allegations until she saw the woman's 15-page statement implicating dozens of women during the court martial



Accents Oriental

GRAND OPENING

New Larger Location


The most exciting new shipment has just arrived from China. Our buyers have made an incredible discovery... an entire warehouse filled with Chinese art show samples that date back as far as the turn of the century! China has been showing samples of its arts for centuries through trade shows. Samples from some of these shows were mysteriously collected in a warehouse for years. These just-uncovered pieces date 20-100 years old and have never before been seen in the United States.

During our *Grand Opening Sale*, we will bring in select pieces from our San Francisco warehouse. Please take advantage of this opportunity to see these one-of-a-kind showpieces and rediscover with us the timeless beauty of Chinese art.

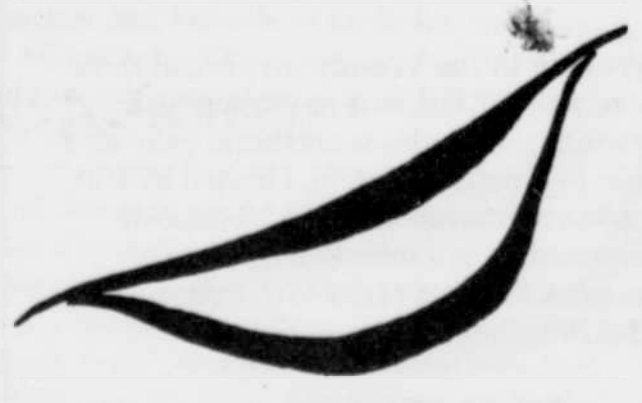
FINE ARTS FROM MAINLAND CHINA
1112 NE 21st • 288-3879 • 5 blocks East of Lloyd Center

STEPHEN D. YEW, D.M.D.

A GENTLE APPROACH TO DENTISTRY



The comfortable technique that removes decay while minimizing drilling and reducing the need for the needle



Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 8 am-5 pm
12200 N. Jantzen Ave., Suite 480

