

national news

Cammermeyer reinstated to National Guard

Judge rules government discriminated on the basis of sexual orientation

by Martha Allen

A lesbian nurse who was thrown out of the military after she came out was reinstated by court order in the Washington National Guard on June 1.

Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer of Seattle, a highly decorated Army nurse who earned a Bronze Star in the Vietnam War, was discharged from the military in 1992. After 26 years in the service, Cammermeyer was thrown out when she said she was a lesbian during a security-clearance interview.

U.S. District Judge Thomas Zilly ruled in favor of Cammermeyer, saying, "The government has discriminated against Col. Cammermeyer solely on the basis of her status as a homosexual, and has failed to demonstrate a rational basis for doing so." The judge added that government reasons for excluding gay men and lesbians from military service are "grounded solely in prejudice."

Cammermeyer, who works as a nurse in the Veterans Administration hospital near Tacoma, told reporters that she was ecstatic with the ruling.

"It seems like a vindication of all the struggles so many of us have had," she said. "It's so powerful and so vindicating, not just of my own struggle but thousands of others."

Nationally, more than 3,500 service members have been discharged since 1989, based on their

sexual orientation. The Justice Department is appealing Zilly's decision. Cammermeyer said she was prepared for more legal action.

"We'll go however far we need to go," she said. "Step one is that we have won." Military officials argue that the presence of gay men and lesbians in the service hurts the morale of fighting units. But Zilly said the argument was not valid, if the reason for decline in morale was simply that heterosexuals were prejudiced against homosexuals.

Anders Winther, founder and co-chairman of Veterans for Human Rights, said members of the group were delighted with the ruling.

"It's clear that the courts are not willing to let the military continue with a policy that subrogates people's constitutional rights," Winther said, adding that the Cammermeyer ruling was consistent with a nationwide trend to overturn a military policy that he believes "clearly is not working."

Zilly ruled on the military's former policy against homosexuals, not the "don't ask, don't tell" compromise currently in place.

"What's interesting is, the judge in that case was looking at many of the characteristics in the old policy that still remain in new policy," Winther said. "Those of us who are activists are excited and hopeful that the new policy will meet the same demise as the old one."



Margarethe Cammermeyer

Case against Oregon lesbian dropped

In Oregon, a National Guard investigation of First Lt. Elli K. Work of Bend was dropped, even before the Cammermeyer ruling. The Oregon National Guard has been investigating Work since she told a state legislative committee that she was a lesbian. Work, 33, has served with the guard for 15 years and is a supply officer who commutes to her base in Portland.

Lt. Col. Mike Caldwell, an Oregon National Guard spokesman, said that Brig. Gen. Alexander H. Burgin declared Work's case closed when he became interim director of the Oregon guard in March. Caldwell said the guard dropped the case against Work because of uncertainties about policy revisions on gay men and lesbians in the military, and because of legal challenges to past and present policies.

"As far as we're concerned, the issue is closed," Caldwell said.

Veterans for Human Rights co-chairman Anders Winther said that no one was really sure why the investigation was dropped.

"Elli got a letter in December, saying the investigation had been suspended indefinitely, depending on the results of court cases on military policy," Winther said. "On two occasions guard leadership, when questioned about Elli's cases, stated that it was a closed matter. We don't know why."

Winther added that Work had been promoted in February, and was now being considered for another advancement. If chosen for the promotion, Work would be stationed at Oregon National Guard headquarters in Salem.

"I talked to Elli yesterday," Winther said. "She said she'd heard that the selection committee had been told that their decision should be based on performance only, that they were not to consider sexual preference."

Martha Allen



A HAVEN BY THE SEA

Six spacious oceanfront units on a bluff above the beach, with easy beach access. The hot tub in the yard overlooks the surf and miles of sandy beach. Join us for a beautiful and restful stay. Gift certificates available. Your hosts, Marilee Haase & Sandy Pfaff. Lincoln City (503) 994-5007

If you or anyone you know uses prescription drugs, call us...

Community Prescription Service

1-800-MY-DRUGS

Let us help you to eliminate drug costs (gay- and HIV+-owned, confidential service)

The Pet Set The Pet Set The Pet Set The Pet Set

THE PET SET



8:30-6 Mon-Fri

8:30-5:30 Sat.

- Dog and Cat Grooming
- Pet Supplies
- Cat Boarding

1411 SW 14th Ave.
Located next to
Animal
Medical Clinic
241-4051

The Pet Set The Pet Set The Pet Set The Pet Set

NORWEGIAN CRUISELINE

on the Award Winning Seaward

5 Night package includes

Round trip air—

1 night Miami,

4 night cruise KeyWest—

Cancun—Cozumel.

From \$858 PPDO

You may extend in

Florida too!

WINDJAMMER

CARIBBEAN

HALLOWEEN

Oct. 23-29. Call for information. Cabins available starting at \$845 ppdo.

Can't decide where to go this year? We have a four-page list of gay events world wide thru December...call and I will send you a copy.

Flash! You may now pick up your copy of **just out** in our office.

FRENCH GERMAN JAPANESE SPEAKING AGENTS

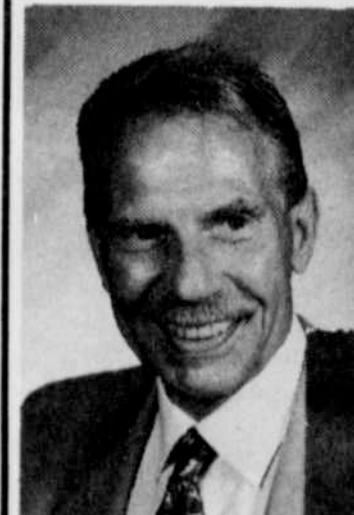
"WHAT ONE DOESN'T KNOW THE OTHER ONE DOES"

PARKING VALIDATED



"always park smartly"

all fares & rates subject to change - some restrictions apply



WAYNE BOULETTE



MEMBER



MICHAEL SCOTT

MIKUNI TRAVEL SERVICE

美国トラベルサービス

One SW Columbia, Suite 1010
Portland, OR 97258
(503) 227-3639
FAX (503) 227-0602
1-800-248-0624