



## Contrary to Good Order and Discipline

By the *Master Joust*er

**T**he cases of Lt. Kelly Flinn and General Joseph Ralston are currently dominating the American Political scene, occasionally even pushing the trial of "Lee Harvey McVeigh" into the background. Charges of male chauvinism and favoritism are rampant. Politicians are expounding on both sides of the issue, usually with a total lack of understanding of the issues involved! Ladies and gentlemen, I submit to you that the issues involved here have virtually nothing to do with morality as we normally think of it. The issues here are what make an effective and efficient fighting organization, not some Puritan rules that can be traced into antiquity.

Let's examine why the so-called adultery issue is even addressed in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ). While this Country's roots are predominately of the Judeo-Christian persuasion, the seemingly prudish provisions of the infamous Article 134 of the UCMJ have virtually nothing to do with morality per se. The prohibition against adultery is addressed in Article 134 to prevent an erosion of combat efficiency within the Armed Services. As a sort of lesser included offense, the prohibition also extends to something called "fraternization"... let's take a look at the dictionary definition of these two terms.

**a-dul-ter-y** n., pl. *a-dul-ter-ies*. Voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse.

**frat-er-nize** v. *frat-er-nized, frat-er-niz-ing, frat-er-niz-es*. 1. To associate with others in a brotherly or congenial way. 2. To associate on friendly terms with an enemy or opposing group, often in violation of discipline or orders. --frat"er-ni-za"tion n. --frat"er-niz"er n.

These little jewels are inserted into the UCMJ to prevent blood feuds and indeed blood **shed** within our military community. The resentment felt by any person when they find out that their spouse is cheating on them is magnified many times over if the individual is in a combat zone and not *home* to defend their marriage. Now crank the following factor into the equation. What if the individual "snaking" your spouse happens to be another member of the Armed Forces? Do you begin to get the picture?

Lets put a different spin on the military version of the adultery bit. Say the individual running around with your spouse is your military senior. The feeling on the part of the junior is often "well I can't compete with him (or her)", or worse yet -"why go to the 1st Sergeant (or

Captain), they aren't gonna' believe me, care, or do anything so why bother?" The individual so wronged is hardly going to be an effective part of his or her military team. Resentment will fester, the story will get around, and the senior officer or non-commissioned officer will be seen as taking advantage of his (or her) rank and position. He (or she) will lose the respect and backing of his (or her) juniors and thus his (or her) effectiveness will take a nosedive as will the effectiveness of the unit.

Worse yet, carried to the ultimate extreme, revenge or blackmail may well enter the mind of the aggrieved individual. How about a platoon sergeant "*romancing*" the wife of a subordinate, or the Company or Battalion Commander having an affair with the spouse of a member of his command? In the infantry during the heat of battle, many opportunities present themselves for a "stray" bullet to find its mark in the "blighter" perceived to be the violator of our hero's spouse. It doesn't take much imagination to add the details. Or, how about this one? What if Lt. Kelly Flinn's "sweetie" was married to a lady aircraft mechanic? Now what if this mechanic was assigned to maintain Lt. Flinn's aircraft... The possibilities boggle the imagination! Loose hydraulic fittings, "frayed wires", hydrocarbon eating microbes in the fuel tank... sabotage would be a tempting possibility to an outraged junior. *You* may be more forgiving, but such things would certainly occur to *me!*

So far we've just been talking about adultery, but what about "*fraternization*"? What could possibly be the harm of two unmarried individuals of the opposite sex holding hands? Well, the answer is that it all depends... Even though the details aren't covered in great detail, normally if the "handholding" is between two enlisted folks in entirely different units, the conduct is considered acceptable. The same goes for two officers (assuming that they are of the opposite sex of course). The crossing of the line between officer and enlisted is normally prohibited however. If a captain is "dating" a sergeant for instance, it has always been felt that the sergeant could possibly "twist the arm" of the officer to get his or her way, "skate" on duty or be perceived to be receiving special favors! If you are playing "kissie-face" at night, it might be a bit of a problem to take orders from your "squeeze" the following day! Even if you played it totally straight, others in the unit would *assume* that the "honey-wa" was receiving special favors. In the Marine Corps, it is (or at least was) considered to be in bad form for a Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) to even go on liberty with a "non-rated man"... This wasn't chiseled in stone, but it was seriously frowned upon.

In light of the above ground rules, let's take a look at the conduct of Lt. Kelly Flinn. We'll do this in a question and answer format:

**Q.** Wasn't Lt. Flinn's affair with a civilian, a Mr. Marc Zigo?

**A.** Yes, but he was married to a woman on active duty in the Air Force.

**Q.** Weren't Marc and his wife separated?

**A.** Their initial status was not announced, but after the incident they certainly were!

**Q.** Didn't Marc tell Lt. Flinn he was single?

**A.** Supposedly, but when his wife ("Airperson" Zigo) complained to her superiors, Lt. Flinn was called in and counseled concerning the situation. Lt. Flinn was told to sever

her relationship with Marc because it was causing hate and discontent in the unit and that she (Lt. Flinn) was in violation of Article 134 of the UCMJ.

**Q.** What happened then?

**A.** Lt. Flinn acknowledged that she understood and would obey the order. Instead, she continued to see Marc in defiance of a direct order and lied to her superiors that she had terminated the affair.

**Q.** Then Lt. Flinn wasn't being disciplined just for adultery?

**A.** That's correct. Until Lt. Flinn was counseled concerning Marc's status, her conduct could have been written off to poor or questionable judgment. After the situation was clarified by her senior officer(s) she placed herself in a position of disobeying a direct order by continuing her affair with a married man and lying to her superior officers that she had terminated the relationship... worse yet to a man whose wife was in the U. S. Air Force. No matter what your sex, whether you were first in your Air Force Academy Class, or the first woman allowed to fly B-52 Bombers, *direct disobedience of a direct order cannot be tolerated in the U. S. (or any Military!* ...And when you tell your commanding officer that you have in fact terminated the relationship when you have not, you are now lying to him as well. Now lets just suppose that the individual who knowingly lies to a superior officer and disobeys a direct order is also one trusted to fly B-52 bombers armed with nuclear weapons... Humm, scary, eh what?

OK, well let's assume that you will now buy the rationale of "sacking" Lt. Flinn, but you ask why it is apparently perfectly alright for General Joseph Ralston to do the same thing and get away with it. This would seem to be a double standard. Here is a **MAN** who is committing adultery and he's apparently going to be allowed to skate! Isn't this just another example of male chauvinistic behavior? It's *OK* for a man, but the woman is forced out of the Air Force, is that right? Isn't this a double standard?

**Q.** Isn't General Joseph Ralston being given preferential treatment because of his rank and because he's a man?

**A.** Not really, we have two entirely different sets of circumstances here. The object of General (then Colonel) Ralston's affections was an *unmarried **civilian lady***, in no way connected to the military establishment. His actions were unlikely to affect or influence the military community in any way... except possibly in a positive fashion assuming the lady made him happy. Remember I said that I was going to argue this from a perspective of military efficiency, not morals.

**Q.** Well, I thought we were talking about adultery here, how is adultery any different between Lt. Flinn's romance and General Ralston's affair?

**A.** Good question. Lt. Flinn's "squeeze" is (was?) married to an active duty military member. "Airperson" Zigo became extremely agitated and unhappy that an officer in "her" service could take her husband away from her while the Air Force simply looked on! Allowing this sort of behavior to go on definitely destroys morale and performance in our military services. General Ralston's adultery concerned his own estranged wife and

a *totally detached unmarried civilian woman*, and did *not* have the potential to effect the morale of any military organization. Remember military efficiency, not morality is the point here!

**Q.** Why was Lt. Flinn forced to leave the service with a General Discharge as a result of her adultery and General Ralston allowed to remain? ...And now it looks like General Ralston is going to be elevated to the job of *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff!* How can *that* possibly be fair?

**A.** Again it's not at all the same thing. The chances are great that *if* Lt. Flinn had heeded the counseling that Marc Zigo was married to an Air Force enlisted person, and that she (Lt. Flinn) should cease her adulterous activities, she would have been let go with a warning, and a finger shake. *If* she had done what she was told, I suspect that Lt. Flinn would *still* be flying B-52s and the incident would have died a natural death. Allowing an Air Force pilot to continue flying B-52s armed with nuclear weapons after having disobeyed a direct order and having lied to her superior officers borders on insanity. Conversely, General Ralston's adulterous actions (although perhaps morally reprehensible to Christian sensibilities) wouldn't necessarily indicate that he would be unsuited for the Chairman's job. Remember, it is not adultery per se that is addressed in Article 134, it is *conduct contrary to good order and discipline!*

**Q.** Well don't you agree that General Ralston's conduct is just as reprehensible as Lt. Flinn's?

**A.** Well, I thought I had made this point clear. From a religious standpoint, adultery is adultery, is adultery... but then Lt. Flinn was *really* disciplined for her actions following her adultery, and continuing her adultery after she had been told to cease and desist. The chances are very great indeed, that Lt. Flinn's adultery would have been swept under the rug if she hadn't defied her Commanding Officer. Conversely, General Ralston's conduct was fleeting, was known by his superiors, and did not affect the military. In other words, his conduct was not contrary to good order and discipline of the Armed Forces of The United States. The issue simply vaporized as Lt. Kelly's conduct would have vaporized if she had not continued to be guided by her biological urges... Remember the UCMJ is a practical working military document concerned with winning our wars... the Chaplain's Corp is concerned with winning our souls!

We must be very careful not to let politicians such as Senator Olympia Snowe from Maine make a "Femi-Nazi" issue out of this... Let's not allow the rabid feminists to shout "See! The male chauvinist pigs are trying to undo the feats of such wonderful girls as Lt. Kelly Flinn!... Look at that awful General Joseph Ralston! He "romanced" his mistress and nothing happened to HIM! This is a double standard! It's not fair! We demand that General Ralston be strung up by his b+++, and Lt. Flinn be reinstated in the Air Force!"

Another well-groomed **MALE** Senator was heard to say during the Flinn affair..."we've got to bring the Armed Forces into the mainstream of modern society!" The sad part was that the idiot (Senator though he may have been) didn't have a clue! What was his point? "*If it feels good, do it!*" (al-la the flower children of the '60s)? "My Gawd"... I certainly hope we've gone past that insanity! On the one hand we have the Femi-Nazis demanding the reinstatement of an officer who deliberately disobeyed a direct order and then lied about it (and wants to be allowed to continue to carry nuclear weapons on her aircraft). On the other

hand (*and just as dangerous*) are the remnants of the "flower children" who think everyone should get high and "romance" (to use a polite term) anyone they see fit regardless of the consequences... after all we've *gotta'* bring the Armed Forces into the mainstream of modern society! Oh my...

Well ladies and gentlemen, we just *may* have a war or two to win in the meantime. Playing "tit for tat" in this exchange sounds like a heck of a price (in the words of the immortal Dirty Harry) to pay for being stylish! The rationale (as I understand it), is to win wars, not popularity contests. I'll admit that General Ralston has a lousy sense of timing, but if we're gonna' get specific with our pointed pencils and adulterous conduct, we might consider FDR, John F. Kennedy, and LBJ. Of course they didn't "romance" one of their NCO's wives either! And then there's "Slick"... but since he's never fought in a war, how could he possibly know anything about winning one? Now what was that about "*contrary to good order and discipline*"? Allah help us!

*ROC '97*