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Mon, Nov 28, 2022 4:16PM 28:57

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

military, lesbian, discharged, air force, medic, called, witch hunts, deborah, women, knew, years, gay, army, dishonorable discharges, good, months, guests, enlisted, talking, friends

SPEAKERS

Kay Harper, Harvey Milk

00:01  open gates up did you miss me? Jimmy? I see that you found a new friend. Warden come down here here's me. Hello, girls I'm back home in Huntsville. Again

00:29  KPFT is prison program is devoted to cops courts, jails, prisons, probation and parole and the other minutiae of the criminal justice system. Tune in every Sunday afternoon from three to five kickback listen up and hear what you've been missing

00:46  tailor made shirts with them on and all it's gonna cost is 10 Use

01:01  the following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature that may be considered objectionable by some listener Discretion is Advised

01:15  I am what I am I have my own special creation so come to give me the all the Ovation It's my little Brighton and it's not a place to hide in lies not worth a damn too you can say

01:56  hi you've discovered after hours continuing tradition on KPFT



02:11

I don't want to die I don't want to bang my own drum bangs things from a different angle. God life is a sham until you can shout out I am at what I need no excuse to do my own deck sometimes is no deposit down till you can shout out



Harvey Milk 03:31

we must destroy the Miss versus ROI shatter them. We must continue to speak out. And most importantly, most importantly, every day versus you must tell your immediate family you must tell your relatives you must tell your friends if indeed they are your friends. You must tell your neighbors you must tell the people your work. You must tell the people in the stories you shop realized that we are indeed the children that we are indeed everywhere. Every every lie every innuendo will be destroyed you're much better. Used to



04:58

do my own deck Some time you may all come out



Harvey Milk 05:43

where will you be when they come?



06:33

Am I Am I



Kay Harper 06:50

good morning it's after hours a continuing tradition on KPFT Houston 90.1. And I'm Kay Harper and joining me in a little while will be Diane Williams. And who knows who else as far as regular personnel on this show? Anchors hosts, whatever we're called This Week, people. I'm getting a people from the peanut gallery No, don't take your guests and go home, Judy. There. I'll give you



07:21

a hot minute. So she punches me a light. What can I say? Hey,



Kav Harper 07:23

you know, you're gonna talk to me. You're gonna talk to the entire world. Now,

07:27

just for the record. I'm not miss peanut gallery. I'm Judy.

Kay Harper 07:31

Yes, this is Judy Reeves, who is one of our other co anchors on the show. Who's left her usual cohort and crime and Nick come to bring me guests.

07:42

Yes, I put them peacefully the bed and deserted the cat for the evening. When can I say? Hey, that's,

Kay Harper 07:49

that's wonderful. Actually, I very much appreciate the guests. Because I just didn't have any idea of where to find such people. For myself.

07:57

It's amazing when I can pull out of the woodwork if they'll Excuse me.

Kay Harper 08:01

They are much more interesting than just being pulled

08:04

out of the woodwork and much more interesting to me, too. That's why they're the guests. Well, no,

Kay Harper 08:08

you're here every week switch that at least gives you some sort of interest factor. That's true. You know, you're a radio personality. Oh, really? Yes.

08:10



07:00

Yeah. Well, I knew I was a lot of things. But that didn't enter into it.



K Kay Harper 08:22

According to my women's the source. That's what we are is media personalities are wonderful. We're not hosts, we're media personality. I



08:29

like that so much better than host I know.



K Kay Harper 08:32

Well, today, we're going to do tonight, whatever this is, we're going to be talking about gay and lesbian people in the military. And our two guests are Deborah and Sherry, who were both in the military in the armed services. Sherry was an Air Force medic for about nine months. And Deborah was in the army for over three years. And they're going to come talk with us about being gay, lesbian, whatever. They were in the military think that



09:05

was fun. I don't think so. That was a real trip. Hmm. Well, you know, if



K Kay Harper 09:10

you get off into uniforms, maybe for a while,



09:13

then maybe the only thing they'd get me into it now. Sure they act in the good good enough incentive. Do you know what I found out today? What did you find a trivia you wanna play trivia? Sure,



K Kay Harper 09:23

I want I'll play trivia. I've got one for you, too.



09:25

Oh, God. I mean, okay.



Kay Harper 09:28

Closely related,



09:29

I can go. This is going to be a long night. No, actually on the on the subject of military. I found out that there is one country in this lovely world of ours, that actually, many, many years ago accepted hair nets as a part of their military uniform.



Kay Harper 09:52

The cafeteria workers of the world army.



09:57

Well, that sounds good, but it's not quite yet and guess What else they have adopted as part are an acceptable part of their uniform, regardless of sex.



Kay Harper 10:07

br Zers



10:10

I won't even come. Now actually, it's earrings, earrings, which I thought was fascinating. And it's in the Netherlands. A little mini dinky country way out in the middle of nowhere close to Belgium. And they just you talk about uptown as opposed to the United States of America.



Kay Harper 10:28

Yeah. And I hear tell there are lots of hot looking women in in Amsterdam.



10:32

Oh, honey, I nearly died when we went to Europe a couple years ago. Yeah, I mean, you could you could actually strain something turning your head so fast so often. Oh, it was worth it. Yes. Sounds like an uncomfortable plane trip, but it was worth it. You just make



Kav Harper 10:47

sure you've got one of those big furry you know, big, thick foam collars to hold your neck.

10:52

And anything that will warm you it'll do well, yeah.

Kay Harper 10:55

But um, so we are going to be talking with Deborah and Sherry, Deborah And Sherry about gays in the military. We'll also be talking about Colonel Margarita Kenna Meyer, who is the big fight. Yes. A woman who's racing. Yeah, well, actually, she is the the person with the highest rank. Who was

11:19

men, okay. You can't talk and at the same time, No, not today. We'll stick things in your face while you're talking.

Kay Harper 11:25

Yeah, she's the one who is the the person who's had the highest rank who's been kicked out of the military for being gay or lesbian. Uh huh. Juan Palomo also wrote an article a few weeks ago about gays in the military and his feelings about that. And we'll read a little bit of that. We'll be doing this way out at 115 which is an international gay and lesbian magazine produced by Greg Gordon and Lucia Chapelle. Wonderful, nice

11:51

people. Yeah, I'm

Kay Harper 11:52

not sure exactly what they're doing this week, but they're doing something they're always a surprise. And then we will be doing hearing WX PN in Philadelphia did a show called unfriendly fire lesbian and gays in the military. And we'll be playing that sometime after two o'clock. I'm not exactly sure when

12:12

fancy mean like you're gonna be busy. I might as well go home. Well, no, I

K

Kay Harper 12:15

wanted you to stick around for a little bit. Well, okay, fine.

O

12:19

It's nice to be needed. wanted

K

Kay Harper 12:21

wanted. I mean, I need you to but I also want you and I think the wanting is probably more important than anybody has

O

12:27

to be someplace and this is where I'd like to be at midnight on Saturday night.

K

Kay Harper 12:31

Well good. And we hope that people will join you maybe not necessarily here on the studio but with your ears on while I'm

O

12:38

sure if somebody wanted to call and say they wanted to join us here and do a little bit of work we could take those calls to where easy Yeah, not cheap, but easy. Definitely. We're cheap. We did volunteer this time. Yes. Well, this is not anything I'm getting paid a huge salary for pay is not good, but the rewards are many.

K

Kay Harper 12:55

Really you get people who like I know that voice. I've heard that voice somewhere.

O

13:00

Yeah, then you run down the street so they can't get

K

Kay Harper 13:03

Yeah, it's like the voice that haunts your nightmares. Okay, well we've got music and we're going to start with yes the only way is up



13:16

I won't comment just play the music



Kay Harper 13:27

and that was new to Hendrix with women who fly before that was I think a ratio and then yours with different from whatever I announced Nick put the CD up and I can't remember stand up for your love rights. That was what it was. Our next song is maybe not quite as energetic but um, it's off of holly nears 1983 album journey. And the little promo or the little explanation piece in front says Gi is in Vietnam vets taught me good life lessons about wars. They protested the US invasion of Vietnam, and the military presence in Hawaii, the Philippines and Okinawa in the late 60s and early 70s. Today, NATO soldiers in Europe protest nuclear war, as always risking stockades and dishonorable discharges. This song is for the soldiers who will forever rock the boat and protest military madness. And this is Holly near with a song called gi movement. That was obviously Holly near with her song gi movement. I'm sitting in the studio with me today are Deborah And Sherry. Actually not today. This very late this evening. are just Deborah And Sherry who were both in the military and who were discharged. Partially for well, for various reasons. I'm going to let you all introduce yourselves a little bit. Tell us a little bit about what what you want to say about being in the military, and how you left the military. Um, I know one of us got to discharges and that kind of sounds kind of funny and unusual. And, and you're shaking your head you can't. head movements don't translate well on radio, you got to be vocal. Sorry.



15:16

It's not unusual. Okay? It's not. No, I didn't want to over you UPS gets discharged as in under react.



Kay Harper 15:23

Oh, okay. I didn't know that life was gonna have



15:28

my dad gonna have to



15:31

re enlisted.



15:32

Someone dumb enough to re enlist.

K

Kay Harper 15:36

Okay. So Deborah, you said you you served in the army? Yeah. And you're the one that that I knew had two different discharges.

Ω

15:45

What's unusual about them is the fact that they're four months apart.

K

Kay Harper 15:50

So you'd like re upped and then got kicked out again,

Ω

15:53

I've re enlisted with an option for my contract to remain in the United States. I then got a new CEO, who was a very gung ho person, and there were some problems and I had made I fell in love. And there were problems with that he decided he was going to send me to Germany. Uh huh. Which was a violation of my contract and being young and foolish and not knowing any better instead of getting of violation of contract discharge. I said, I'm a lesbian. And that really did it.

K

Kay Harper 16:28

Yeah, I bet. So that's, that's why you have the one that's dated later that says it's a dishonorable discharge, not

Ω

16:35

a dishonorable it's a honorable under General. This was in late 77. And they had already changed it from a dishonorable to a general under honorable conditions.

K

Kay Harper 16:50

Okay. And sure, you were in the Air Force, as a medic. Correct. And you come from a long, you just said, your dad's got what 10 or 12 or whatever. How are discharges in

Ω

17:05

reality five years? I had an honorable discharge only because I was very fortunate back in 69,

and 70, you're given dishonorable discharges for being homosexual? Uh huh. I luckily got a medical discharge. And the witch hunts still continue in the military today. Oh, hmm. They, they were going on while I was in there. Yeah. And I got swept up in one of the witch hunts. Okay. Even after I was discharged, they came back to my home about four months after I'd been out here because they'd started another witch hunts. And they were picking up people who are already out. They thought they could intimidate me to say something. Oh, trying to implicate. Right. Yeah.

K

Kay Harper 17:50

So one of the reasons that that we started doing the show, chose this topic for this show, was because of Mark Hamill Meyer, the colonel, the colonel who's being discharged or has been discharged, I guess, at this point, because of her, her being a lesbian. What, what do you all think about her case?

♂

18:13

I mean, pisses me off.

K

Kay Harper 18:17

Yeah, it's kind of a an extreme case. I mean, this is this is somebody who served in the military for how long has she been in? 20? some odd years. 24 years, I think 26 years, served for 14 months in Vietnam. And they're throwing her out of the army because, goodness, she likes to sleep with women. Um, okay, you you were in late 6970. When were you in

♂

18:46

74? To 77? Okay,

K

Kay Harper 18:49

so kind of it's been a while for both Oh, yeah. So how causative were people? I mean, were there other gays and lesbians in the military at that time?

♂

18:57

I was on a baseball team that was probably 98% lesbian. Aha, the women's army baseball team softball team. And, like I say, is probably 98% lesbian. I didn't know they didn't invite me to their parties. They didn't know I was, and I wouldn't invite them out. It was it was unless you knew someone. Yeah. You just you all you did was you got off base at night. You went to the gay bars and hope that there were no raids. Yeah. And I got caught up in a raid one time. That was interesting experience.

K Kay Harper 19:35

How so?

19:38

The civilian police come in first. And they locked the doors no one can leave. Oh goodness. And there's women jumping up and going out back doors, actors exits and bars I never knew existed. And then the MPs come in. And it's like, your driver's license is from out of state. Yeah. And it's like, well, here's my discharge. It's in my wallet and you know, okay, you were discharged four months ago. Why are you still in Washington? I met my lover here. I'm staying. And they they, they thought it was good. They were gonna let me go. And about five minutes later I was sitting there at the bar having my drink and, and female MP walks back up to me and she says, Great Trimec B, you're enlisted? Oh, no. So you

20:29

were busted. They tried to get me to because I had a Texas driver's license. And I had been out of the military for 10 years. And so they just, they held me to for a while. Oh, goodness. Where was this at? Washington State in Washington

K Kay Harper 20:43

State. Okay, yeah. I saw you rolling your eyes. She was talking about the rate I was going to ask. I'm glad you volunteered.

20:51

It was a some people were turned into barmaids and backs and things that really didn't work there. But they were military. We were all trying to protect the military ladies. Oh,

K Kay Harper 21:01

yeah. I bet. It's nice that the bars were going to be that kind of supportive. But I'm sure a lot of their clientele were from the military bases, even if they weren't

21:14

very few are from the Air Force that came there, really. But there was a lot of army ladies in there.

...

 Kay Harper 21:19

Is it? Are there more lesbians in the army as opposed to the Air Force?

 21:25

Yes, it has to do with the score requirements to enter either one of those services.

 Kay Harper 21:32

Does that mean you get better grades and you end up in the air force? Yep. Deborah's sitting here and shaking her head. I won't say anything about what that might imply or could be construed. What about gay men? I mean, were there gay men around? Did you all know of anybody who was was? I mean, you already said that the women were kind of like if you didn't know somebody you didn't know anything? It was very, very.

 22:04

Yes. It was very, very cautious. Yeah, very cautious. That was the word. I was looking for closet cases, whatever you want to call it. Yeah.

 22:12

As far as I know, I never met a gay man while I was in the military.

 Kay Harper 22:17

Okay, I was just you know, it. Maybe it's just because I'm a I'm a lesbian, but I know more women who were gay, either in the military or realized it while they were in the military, or whatever. But you never hear about the guy's

 22:33

I never met a gay man until I had been out of the military for a couple of well till I moved to Texas. And I met my first gay male couple. And they were fantastic, guys, but I could never picture them in an army uniform.

 Kay Harper 22:49

At least not for any occasion. That wasn't dress up. Hmm.

 22:53

It would have been interesting. Yeah.

 K Kay Harper 22:56

Were there gay men in the Air Force?

 22:59

I'm sure there were but they were more cautious even than the ladies. Okay, I'm sure they would have been stopped somewhere or seriously injured if any of the men in their platoon had found out. Yeah, it was difficult if not being lesbian, you had to be cautious. And some of us were obvious. A lot of the more you know, but it was something you still had to watch carefully over.

 K Kay Harper 23:22

You can look and dress Butch but you better be real circumspect around the women.

 23:27

There's a lot of the straight ladies that dressed Butch so you couldn't really tell that way.

 K Kay Harper 23:31

Well, that's that's a nice camouflage. You get to wear the fun swagger clothes and just not be

 23:38

you've got to have your hair off the collar anyway. So it's easier to cut it off than it is to put it up under a hat or a helmet. So most of the women that I knew in the military, chop their hair off. So how are you going to tell which one's a lesbian and which ones not? Yeah, it's like, the ones that wink at you and say, you want to go play softball or want to go out with me after work tonight. And it's like, Oh, why are they asking me out? Yeah. Because you never know. Is this person, an MP undercover? Is this an OSI person? Or, especially for someone new in the outfit and they come up in their real bold and it's like, Hey, want to go out for drinks after work is like, bells start going off. If you

 K Kay Harper 24:23

both of you, or I guess maybe just one of us mentioned OSI a couple of times. What do those initials stand for



24:29

Office of Special Investigations. That's a branch of the Air Force. Okay. They are witch hunters. Uh huh. Headhunters, whatever you want to call them? So therapeutic estoppel. Okay, American Gestapo and that's the way they treat people in the military. They will go through everything you own. They will look at every matchbook cover. They will read everything, every piece of magazine. It's really a mess to get put through one of those investigations.



Kay Harper 24:57

I bet yeah, I was I was talking with my lover but I came over here, and she's really interested in legal things. And she was telling me that that the military doesn't have to, like follow the rules of the Bill of Rights. The Supreme Court, if a case gets to the Supreme Court, they always end up supporting the military. Right to you know,



25:18

as a service personnel, you have no rights whatsoever, not even to life. Oh, goodness.



Kay Harper 25:23

Well, that's obvious. They send you out to get killed, right.



25:26

Your job is to kill my case, Medic. I'd kill and fix people.



Kay Harper 25:32

You know, get to do both sides of the coin. did both of you know you were were lesbians before you join the military? Most definitely. Most definitely. Why did you do when you knew what the what?



25:45

The I was framed into it? I was forced into it.



Kay Harper 25:49

Oh, this sounds like a story. Did dad do something?



25:53

That's for sure. Ah, I said I was going to quit college. He says then you're going to do this. That had a little power in the area. I had no choice. Yeah.



Kay Harper 26:03

What about you, Deborah, you're leading back. You've got to stay close to the mic. No,



26:09

I had no idea as a lesbian before I went into the service. And at 1.1 of my friends in high school, I was in marine ROTC in high school at 1.1 of the girls. We had come back from field trip. And she was mad at me. She looked at me and says you're a lesbian. I had no idea what the word meant. Oh, yeah. And I throttled her. I knew it was a bad word that throttled her I had no idea what the word meant. But the response? No, I I didn't know what the word lesbian meant until Sharon told me when we got together, which was we haven't figured that out yet. Three years after I got into the service, I found these six words meant.



Kay Harper 26:52

Oh, okay. I I think I just tweaked to the fact that you all are together now. Correct? Okay. This is like one of the pieces of information that God didn't tell me. Okay. to do with this



27:04

our 15th or 16th year anniversary, we're not sure which the end of this month well,



Kay Harper 27:09

happy anniversary, whichever one it is, I hope you throw yourselves a big party. I came up with a whole bunch of questions. And yeah, some of them we've kind of answered and some of them you've liked, told me wouldn't be appropriate to ask, sort of like sitting here and flipping through given to them. Because I can't answer any of these things. Well,



27:34

back on them on the being in the military. They'll tell you when you're in training that you are military property. And your if you go out and get a sunburn, a severe sunburn that you cannot do your job, then you can get what's called an article 15 For that, because you have damaged military property for going out and getting sunburned going out and getting sunburned and if you're really good



27:58

tore up, someone like me can come along and do medical things to you that no one else can do to anyone else. Except the doctor. I mean, I could sew you up I could put IVs in you drag you across a field in the middle of a battle and drop you because I'm more important because I can walk the new Yeah, so after all this fixing on I can throw this person down a cliff and run off



28:21

training do you have to have to be able to do their things and they probably



28:25

eight or nine months or mine was about a year? Yeah. The question



Kay Harper 28:29

was from somebody who doesn't have a mic was how much training you have to go through to be a medic. And you said eight or nine months



28:36

just takes about a year to be the full medic in that field. Paramedics on the outside can do some of the things and Medic can do but para means half are similar to similar to because because they would get all