

Case Summary
Office of the Judge Advocate General

DEFENDANT: LEUT Watson

TYPE OF PROCEEDING: Defence Force Magistrate

DATE OF TRIAL: 13 August 2025

VENUE: Court Martial Facility, Fyshwick, ACT

Charges and plea

	Statement of Offence	Plea
Charge 1	DFDA, s. 34 Assaulting a subordinate	Guilty

Pre-Trial: Closed hearing and non-publication orders

Application made:	No
Determination:	N/A

Trial: Facts and legal principles

Nil, as the case proceeded by way of a guilty plea.

Findings

	Finding
Charge 1	Guilty

Sentencing: Facts and legal principles

The defendant pleaded guilty to one charge of assaulting a subordinate. He assaulted a junior female sailor in licenced premises in Darwin on 8 Nov 2024. She was in his chain of command and he was socialising with her and her group of friends. He touched her momentarily with minimum force on her buttocks which was captured on video. She made immediate complaint to her partner and another friend. The defendant pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity mitigating on the basis he touched his subordinate intending it to be a friendly gesture but accepted his actions were unlawful. In prosecuting for this offence, the prosecution disavowed any sexual element, intent or circumstance.

The defendant had a 21-year exemplary service as an enlisted member and commissioned officer (commissioned in 2022). He had a wife and two young children. He demonstrated significant remorse and pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity. He had good prospects of rehabilitation.

Punishments and orders

Charge 1	Forfeiture of seniority, new seniority to date from 24 Oct 23; Fined the sum of \$1,000 (\$1,000 suspended).
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- This summary is not intended to be a substitute for the reasons of the Service tribunal or to be used in any later consideration of the tribunal's reasons.*

Outcome on automatic review

The Reviewing Authority's decision on automatic review was handed down on 08 September 2025.

	Conviction	Punishments / Orders
Charge 1	Upheld	Upheld

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