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Reservist innocent of molestation

By KRISTINA SMITH Staff writer

PORT CLINTON - After nearly two hours of deliberation, a jury found a reserve U.S. Coast Guard officer innocent Wednesday of molesting a city woman in January at a local hotel.

As Judge Paul Moon read the verdict in Ottawa County Common Pleas Court, Craig Olszewski, 34, last-known of 117 Monroe St., Port Clinton, hugged his attorney and breathed a sigh of relief.

Olszewski was charged with one count each of gross sexual imposition, a felony, and disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor.

"I'm thrilled with this verdict," said his attorney, Thomas DeBacco of Port Clinton. "This was a very smart jury with a lot of common sense."

DeBacco said he advised Olszewski not to comment because U.S. Coast Guard officers observed the trial. DeBacco and Olszewski are concerned the Coast Guard may have some issues with Olszewski because of the charges, DeBacco said.

"He loves serving in the military," DeBacco said.

Meanwhile, Olszewski stood outside the courtroom, hugging his mother and talking with his girlfriend and another friend who came to support him. The women wiped tears from their eyes.

The woman, who was 31 at the time, said she was shocked. She was not in the courtroom for the verdict because the jury came out before she and her husband returned to the courthouse.

"I cannot believe it," she said. "He never denied that he did it. I cannot believe in the United States of America this sick man is out on the street. I'm devastated."

She said Olszewski called and apologized to her and her husband the day after the allegations came to light.

Olszewski, his girlfriend, the woman and her husband were at Mr. Ed's Bar and Grill on Lakeshore Drive in Port Clinton, where Olszewski had a hotel room at the adjoining Commodore Perry Inn and Suites. After an evening of drinking, Olszewski's girlfriend and the woman passed out in the room, court records show.

When the woman's husband went to check on her, he found Olszewski in a sexual position with her, he told police. The woman said she was unconscious.

Ottawa County Assistant Prosecutor Lorrain Croy also said Olszewski didn't deny the accusations and testified he was drunk and didn't remember everything that happened that night. "We're disappointed a person can be intoxicated and use that as a defense for their criminal actions," Croy said.

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