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Marine ready to end career to protest policy change

By Michael Hedges
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Marine Corps Maj. Charles B. Johnson, a decorated veteran of Lebanon and the Gulf, refused in January to accept the Pentagon order altering policy on homosexuals. He offered to resign.

Barring what he terms a "miracle," the 17-year Marine, who also holds a Ph.D. in policy analysis, will leave the Corps on July 15 and become a tangible example of the costs of President Clinton's drive to integrate homosexuals into the military.

For the 40-year-old Maj. Johnson, a father of three, it was at once one of the hardest decisions of his life and one of the easiest.

"To change the policy is not only stupid, it is illegal," he said. "It will cause unnecessary deaths in combat of soldiers, sailors and airmen. Those will be capricious deaths that won't accomplish anything, and that makes them illegal.

"This is not a big choice. If you see it as unlawful, you have a duty to the oath you swore to resign."

The decision was conveyed in a one-sentence letter he wrote to the Corps on Jan. 29: "The new interim policy on homosexuals serving in the military consti-

Photo by Walter Oates, The Washington Times

Taking a stand: "This is not a big choice," Marine Maj. Charles Johnson says of his resignation in the face of change in the military's policy on homosexuals. "If you see it as unlawful, you have a duty to the oath you swore to resign."

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