

## VETERAN COAST GUARD PETTY OFFICER CLEARED IN DOUBLE RAPE TRIAL

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A military court-martial held at the federal courthouse in New Orleans Louisiana cleared Petty Officer Second Class Greg Cooper of charges that he raped two women in 2011 and 2012. The court-martial acquitted Cooper of four counts of sexual assault as well as other charges including indecent acts and adultery. He was found guilty of one charge of violating his command fraternization policy for having a consensual relationship and sentenced to a one grade reduction to pay grade E-4.

1. The defense team was led by Military-Veterans Advocacy's Executive Director, retired Navy Commander John B. Wells. A U. S. Navy JAG. LT Paul Hochmuth was assigned to the team and retired NCIS Special Agent Ken Lord of Columbia Tennessee provided investigative support.

"Early on we discovered credibility issues with the complaining witnesses," Wells noted. "We were disappointed that the Coast Guard Investigative Service (CGIS) did not conduct even a basic investigation into the matter. The charges just did not make sense. In one case the outcry came after Petty Officer Cooper broke up with the complainer after living with her for six months. The other allegation was made after the newly married woman found out that a one time liaison had come to light."

As well as credibility issues, other witnesses directly contradicted the sequence of events related by the two women. The supposed one night stand occurred in a room where other Coast Guardsmen were sleeping. Evidence in the other case indicated that the complaining witness may have actually pursued and seduced Cooper.

Wells blamed the "witch hunt atmosphere" permeating the military after military sexual assault allegations by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D NY) and Congresswoman Jackie Speier (D CA). "The faux outrage has done nothing but cower military commanders into pursuing every sexual assault case no matter how questionable. This led to a reduction in due process for military members charged with sexual offenses and a narrowing of the fair and impartial investigation required by military law."

"In this case," Wells noted, "the preliminary hearing officer could not find probable cause for one of the alleged rapes because of the poor credibility of one of the complainers. Yet the then Commander, Rear Admiral Kevin Cook, still sent that case to court-martial." Wells also noted that Admiral Cook refused to meet with defense counsel and that Cooper had passed a polygraph exam.

Wells did have praise for his investigator, Ken Lord who conducted "the only proper

investigation in this case. Unfortunately, the client had to pay for his services. While Ken Lord was very reasonable, this was a cost the individual should not have to bear. A proper investigation may have kept this case from going forward, even in this toxic environment."

Wells also praised his co-counsel, a Navy Lieutenant stationed in Pensacola Florida. "He is an outstanding lawyer who played an important part in the acquittals. He is an extremely sharp individual who excels as an attorney and as a Naval officer. I would look forward to working with him again. He was able to help vindicate this grave injustice."

"This case is a wanton example of political correctness gone amok," Wells noted. "It has to stop if we are going to have an effective military. The military has been plagued by political correctness, a liberal social agenda and a lack of leadership for too long. There is a place for women in the military and they can play an important role. But like everyone else, they must be held accountable for their actions. In this case, no action will be taken against the two women who brought the charges."

Wells would not comment about whether or not civil actions will be brought but did not rule out that option.