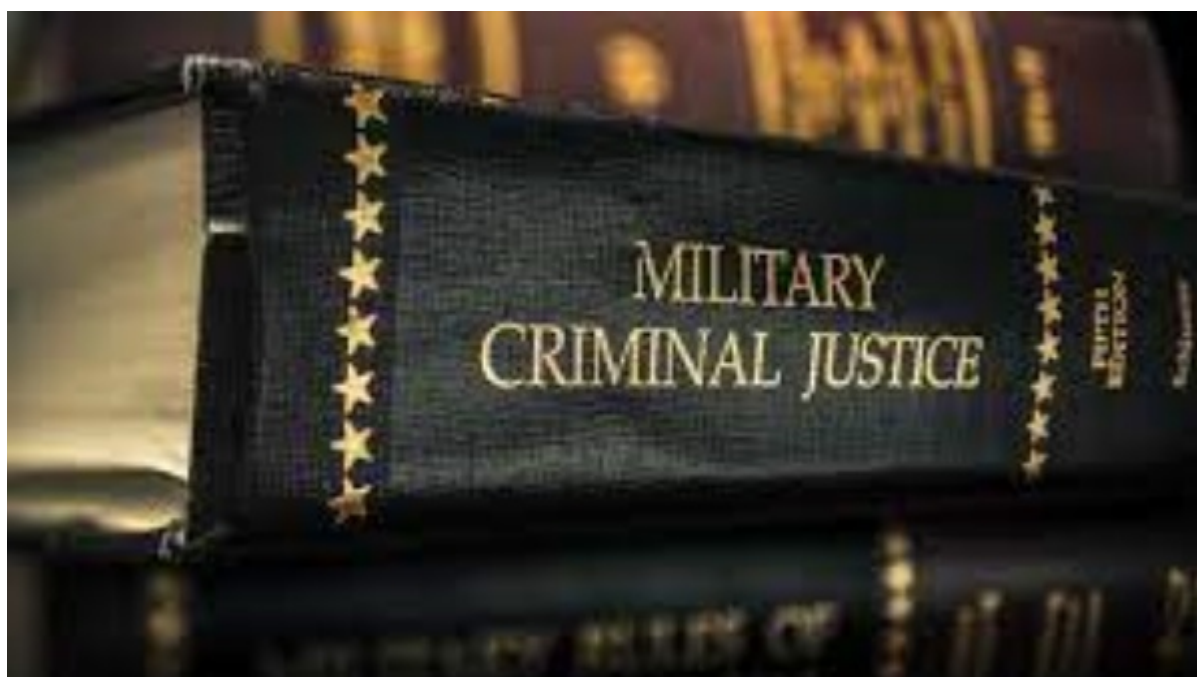


“Not guilty,” said court martial jury, but he was put on sex offense registry anyway

written by Sandy | December 4, 2021



By Sandy . . . Starting in the early 1990's, several high-profile cases of sexual assault in military academies brought to a climax previous years' concerns about military sexual harassment and sexual assault. The culmination was when, according to Wikipedia, "In an attempt to deal with this problem, the Department of Defense issued the Department of Defense Sexual Assault Response policy. A provision in the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act required investigation and reporting regarding sexual harassment and assault at the United States military academies."

As things tend to do with the government, what may have started as a good measure escalated and expanded, and before long the situation was such that incidents across the globe throughout all branches of the military were charged as sexual

assault that in fact were not and should not have been classified as such.

Following [a military sexual assault study released in 2010](#), civilian leaders and military officials started placing even more emphasis on sexual assault cases by demanding changes that would yield results. As [one source](#) phrases it, "The desire to appear 'out in front' of this problem . . . led to an emphasis on increasing convictions rather than true cultural change and holistic justice reform." (Sound familiar?)

Into the midst of this was thrust a young graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. Arvis entered the academy in 1991 at age 18 and was commissioned as an officer in 1995 when he was only 22 years old.

Fast forward a decade and a half. Arvis had served in the U.S., in Japan, and on battleships and other naval vessels all over the world. In 2012 and now a Commander stationed in Washington, D.C., he engaged in a very brief romantic encounter with a civilian coworker with whom he had previously enjoyed a two-year collegial relationship. The encounter consisted of two episodes of kissing and touching. Following her reporting him, Arvis was charged with multiple counts of sexual battery and conduct unbecoming an officer. At the subsequent court martial in 2013, he was found not guilty of all of the sexual battery charges except one, and the panel (jury) asked to "revote" that finding of guilty during sentencing.

In spite of the not guilty findings, Arvis was dismissed from the Navy with the type of release that is the officer equivalent of a dishonorable discharge and was placed on the sexual offense registry in the state of Virginia where he lives.

He became an activist and advocate for himself and others

similarly placed. He persisted in this and has recently been removed from the registry in Virginia, although he would most likely be required to register if he moved to another state.

He has been instrumental in organizing [a petition on Change.org](#). Titled "Falsely accused and wrongly convicted former military service members need your help," the petition lays out its case for military misconduct and for hundreds of wrongly convicted military personnel.

It gives the stories, with specifics, of several of these individuals. Of Arvis, the petition says, "His accuser told investigators that the kissing and touching was consensual, and during their encounter she changed her mind, but she also testified that she never expressed to Arvis that she had changed her mind."

The petition further explains the situation:

Arvis testified in his own defense and was found not guilty of all sexual assault charges except one (6 of 7). During sentencing, Arvis' accuser contradicted another earlier statement, and the jury asked to "revote" the single "guilty" sexual assault finding, but the judge, the convening authority (Navy Admiral), and later the Navy Court of Appeals decided not to overturn his conviction nor grant a new trial even when jury members wrote letters saying that he was not guilty of sexual assault.

NARSOL is very selective in supporting petitions; we find this one worthy and compelling. The request being made is that members of Congress direct an independent body to review the claims of false accusations and wrongful convictions of military personnel and to correct the wrongs.

This seems like a reasonable request.

[Again, the petition is here.](#) If you are military or ex-military and have been falsely convicted of a sexual crime,

there is contact information at the end of the petition.