



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 11, 2014

Soldier Sues Army Over Reprisals for His Conservative Views

A decorated 25-year military veteran has filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Army, charging that he was drummed out of the service over his conservative and religious convictions.

The story of Master Sergeant Nathan Sommers, who was a member of the famed U.S. Army Band Chorus and a decorated soloist who sang at former First Lady Betty Ford's funeral, first gained traction after he served Chick-fil-A sandwiches at a 2012 celebration for his promotion to Master Sergeant, at the same time bringing to light his support for traditional marriage.



As reported at the time by [The New American](#), Sommers' promotion coincided with the controversy that erupted over Chick-fil-A president Dan Cathy's comments in favor of traditional marriage, which prompted homosexual activists to mount a failed boycott against the fast-food chain. Shortly after his promotion, Sommers received a letter of reprimand from his Army superiors, who took exception to his serving Chick-fil-A sandwiches at his party, along with his support of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

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Additionally, according to the [Army Times](#), Sommers was targeted for displaying bumper stickers on his personal vehicle during the 2012 election season that were critical of Obama. The partisan bumper stickers, which the *Army Times* emphasized are permitted under [Defense Department regulations](#), bore such slogans as: "NOBAMA," "Political dissent is not racism," "The Road to Bankruptcy is paved with Ass-Fault" (along with a cartoon of a Democrat donkey), and "Pray for Obama-Ecclesiastes 10:2," referring to the Bible passage that declares: "A wise man's heart tends toward his right, but a fool's heart tends toward his left."

Sommers said he was also targeted for his habit of reading books by neoconservative authors such as Sean Hannity, Mark Levin, and David Limbaugh, which his superiors said was offensive to other service members. According to [Fox News](#), in one instance Sommers "was backstage before a performance reading Limbaugh's *The Great Destroyer* when a superior officer told him that he was causing 'unit disruption' and was offending other soldiers."

Sommers told Fox, "I was told they were frowning on that and they warned me that I should not be reading literature like that backstage because it was offensive."

A group called [Military-Veterans Advocacy](#), which is representing Sommers in his complaint against the Army, noted in a press release that although the decorated veteran of both the Air Force and the Army had enjoyed a sterling career with no hint of black marks, following the harassment "he found himself the victim of trumped-up charges and non-judicial punishment and was given a sub-standard



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evaluation.”

That evaluation prompted a review by the Army’s Quality Management Panel (QMP), and while the evaluation was still under appeal, the QMP ordered him discharged as of July 31.

Among the allegedly bogus charges against Sommers that led to his dismissal, he and his attorneys argue, were not obeying a lawful order, being absent without leave (AWOL), and making a false official statement.

According to the *Army Times*, Sommers insists that “the charges were false — that he had evidence to refute the AWOL claim, that the false statement was actually a mistyped date on an email, and that obeying the order, which related to the AWOL charge, would have required disclosing private family medical information.”

Retired U.S. Navy Commander John B. Wells, executive director of Military-Veterans Advocacy, said that Sommers is, in reality, a “true hero” whose career was harmed by higher-ups who were angry because Sommers dared to stand up for his convictions. He noted that “Congress has enacted laws to protect the free expression of religious beliefs in the armed forces. The Army Band broke those laws and they will be held accountable.”

Wells pointed out that both the 2013 and 2014 National Defense Authorization Acts included specific protections for members of the armed forces, protections that the Defense Department wrote into its regulations in January of this year.

“Just because someone joins the military, they do not give up their rights as a citizen,” Wells said. “This has been repeatedly recognized by the Supreme Court, Congress, and the Department of Defense itself. Unfortunately, in this world of political correctness, some commanders believe they can force their will on subordinates. That is especially true in cases such as this, where the commander has no real operation or combat experience.”

Wells pointed out that in all of his activities and expression, “Sommers did nothing to interfere with good order and discipline. He was the perfect soldier. The actions taken against him were pure reprisal. The Army Band has betrayed the core principles of the United States Army.”

Wells, himself a 22-year Navy veteran and surface warfare officer, has been a vocal critic of the politically motivated agenda that has infiltrated the military during the Obama years. “The social engineering, so-called diversity, and the lack of leadership is undermining our military readiness,” Wells warned. “More and more heroes are leaving or being forced to the curb, and their places are being taken by those who have little, if any, true leadership experience. Soon we will be unable to react to threats from abroad, even assuming we had the political will to do so.”

Sommers’ lawsuit against the Army calls for his return to active duty with full pay and benefits, along with the removal of negative evaluations on his record.



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