

Veterans and Military Law Section Conference Call
March 15, 2016 at 3pm ET

Chair's Report--Bob DeSousa pointed out that the purpose of this meeting is two-fold. It is a quarterly meeting of the VMLS board of directors and a semi-annual opportunity for VMLS members to make comments and ask questions prior to the FBA mid-year and annual meetings. Bob noted the favorable developments in membership (goal to increase membership from 145 to 300), CLE (a number of programs already in various stages of development) and communications (newsletter coming out in April). Bob also encouraged attendance at the upcoming mid-year meeting since most events are open to all FBA members.

Committee Reports

Military Justice—A written report has been filed. VMLS Secretary Alan Goldsmith reported that the panel discussion on the Military Justice Reform Act, originally scheduled for January 2016 but cancelled due to snow, had not yet been rescheduled. Carol Scott, Legislative and Regulatory Committee Chair, reported that she had spoken with Senior Judge Andy Efron of the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, who said it would be rescheduled. John Wells, a member of that committee, reported that the Military Veterans Advocacy Group had submitted an analysis of the proposed legislation and was in contact with the House and Senate Armed Services committees. John was advised as to how to get his analysis to the Military Justice Committee with a view towards getting the FBA to take a position on the proposed legislation.

Membership—Bob DeSousa said that in the upcoming edition of the *Federal Lawyer*, there would be an invitation for all FBA members to join the section. He also praised committee chair Ray Bily for calling individuals whose membership in the section had lapsed or was about to lapse, and encouraging them to rejoin or continue their membership in the section. Hillary Wandler, Chair of the CLE Committee suggested that CLE seminars be used to recruit members and Carol Scott said that the law school clinics sponsored by the Vets Consortium could be also a fruitful recruiting venue. Alan Goldsmith mentioned that the committee had asked the FBA staff to do some data mining that might be productive, specifically, looking for FBA members with a dot/mil e-mail address, seeking members who refer to themselves by a military rank, and looking for members who identified themselves as having an interest or practice in military or veterans law.

CLE—Hillary Wandler pointed out that the committee had eight CLE programs already planned out to some degree, with another three seminars in the developmental phase. Just recently, another program on sexual assault in the military had been proposed for co-sponsorship. Hilary encouraged other section members to come up with ideas for CLE.

Communications—Brian Schenk, a committee member, reported that the draft of the April newsletter had been completed and was being edited. He also noted that the committee was coordinating with the *Federal Lawyer* on a military/veterans law centric issue in 2017. This issue would encompass military law (UCMJ) administrative law, veterans law and reserve/guard issues. Bob DeSousa asked that the

committee get photographs from CLE programs sponsored by VMLS in order that they can be put on FBA's Facebook page and perhaps other social media.

Legislative and Regulatory—Carol Scott reported that VA will conduct a retreat, at which a number of organizations will be represented, to consider changes in the VA appellate system. However, the Veterans Consortium had not been invited to participate, and Carol was working to reverse this decision. Additionally, last week VA published in the Federal Register a proposed regulation of tribal representation and consultation which differs greatly from earlier drafts which were much more favorable to the interest of tribal veterans and tribal veterans organizations. The proposed regulation lodges authority within the states and not the tribes. Carol said there is a possibility of congressional hearings on this issue. John Wells echoed Carol's comments to the effect that the VA wants to make the appellate process more VA friendly instead of veteran friendly, and agreed that Carol and her organization need to have a seat at the table during the VA retreat.

New Business

Brian Lewis, a law student member of the section, mentioned that at the CLE concerning sexual assault in the military, it would be helpful to have some manning assistance because the local FBA chapter was not available to provide this service. He also encouraged the section to become involved in mentoring law students who wish to get involved and/or practice military and veterans law.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 pm.