



Military-Veterans Advocacy, Inc.
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John B. Wells
Commander USN (Ret)
Executive Director

Admitted to practice:
Louisiana
Pennsylvania
District of Columbia

ADVOCACY GROUP URGES NAVY TO KEEP BIBLES IN THE NAVY LODGES

Military-Veterans Advocacy has demanded that Navy Exchange Chief Executive Officer Rear Admiral Robert Bianchi, USN (Retired), reverse his decision to remove Gideon Bibles from Navy Lodge hotel rooms. In an August 13, 2014 letter, Military-Veterans Advocacy Executive Director attorney John B. Wells decried what he called the “decision to discriminate against Christians and Jews by overturning the tradition of providing Bibles in a night stand drawer at Navy Lodges.” Wells, is a retired Navy Commander who served 22 years as a surface warfare officer before becoming an attorney.

In the letter to Bianchi, Wells noted that he stays at Navy Lodges and often reads a verse or two from the Bible before retiring. He went on to note that many of the organizations members and board of directors are also eligible to stay at Navy Lodges.

“There is nothing illegal or unconstitutional about providing Bibles in the drawer of a night stand,” Wells said. “The Bibles are there to be used or not used at the individual’s discretion. That policy upholds a long tradition of religious freedom and allows individuals to express their religious beliefs or gain solace from Scriptures.”

Wells noted that his organization is reviewing whether or not to bring legal action. Military-Veterans Advocacy has brought three suits within the past year concerning religious freedom issues in the military and the Department of Veterans Affairs. They have also brought a suit to force the VA to grant Agent Orange benefits to those who served aboard ships in the bays, harbors and territorial seas of Vietnam. More recently, they brought a suit on behalf of a burn pit whistle blower who was forced out of the Navy after raising concerns.

A copy of Wells’ letter to Bianchi is attached.

For interviews, contact John B. Wells, 985 641-1855 or 985-290-6940. Email JohnLawEsq@msn.com For more information about Military-Veterans Advocacy see www.militaryveteransadvocacy.org



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August 13, 2014

BY FACSIMILE 757-631-3615
RADM Robert J. Bianchi (SC) USN (ret)
Chief Executive Officer
Navy Exchange Service Command
3280 Virginia Beach Blvd.
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5724

Re: Decision to Remove Bibles from Navy Lodge Hotel Rooms

Dear Admiral Bianchi:

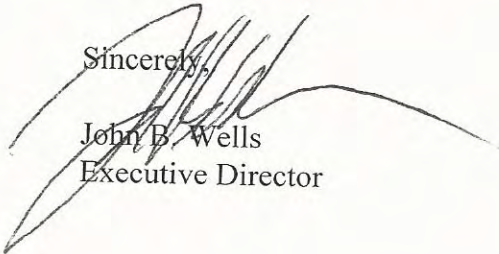
I have recently become aware of your decision to remove Gideon Bibles from Navy Lodge Hotel Rooms. As a retired Navy officer I personally utilize the Navy Lodges and often gain solace from reading a verse or two in the bible before retiring for the night. Your actions will effectively deprive me of that right and perhaps force me to stay at non-Navy Lodge facilities.

Military-Veterans Advocacy is a non-profit organization who, as the name implies, advocate for present and former members of the United States armed forces. Our mission is to ensure the rights of active duty personnel and those who have previously served are protected. This includes the right to religious freedom and an expression of that freedom. Many of our members and most of our board of directors are eligible to stay at Navy Lodges. Depriving us of access to religious solace via the Scriptures would appear to be discriminatory and anti-Christian.

The Gideon Bibles have long been a tradition in hotels throughout this country. Your decision to discriminate against Christians and Jews by overturing this tradition is troubling indeed. I intend to review this matter closely to determine whether or not Military-Veterans Advocacy should litigate this matter.

To preclude any legal action in this matter, I urge you to reverse your decision and allow the Bibles to stay.

Sincerely,


John B. Wells
Executive Director