



NEAL A. PUCKETT, Esq.

Lieutenant Colonel, USMC (Ret)

Highly Qualified Expert in Complex and Sexual Assault Litigation

U.S. Navy Defense Counsel Assistance Program

Neal A. Puckett is known as one of the nation's most formidable and successful military criminal defense attorneys. He has represented military service members in Afghanistan, England, Germany, Hungary, Iraq, Japan, Kuwait and Spain and throughout the United States. He defended Army LTC Allen West against charges of detainee abuse in Iraq in 2003. Congressman Allen West later represented Florida's 22nd District in the 112th Congress. In 2004 he represented former Army BG Janis Karpinski in the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal. In 2008, Mr. Puckett represented CPT Roger Hill, who was accused of war crimes after staging a mock execution to convince Taliban spies working inside his camp to confess to avoid violating an arbitrary NATO limitation on holding detainees and to prevent their release by the Afghan Army. CPT Hill's story was featured on Anderson Cooper 360 on CNN, and will be featured in a book to be published later this year. In 2010, Mr. Puckett represented SO2 Matthew McCabe, a Navy SEAL accused of abusing an Iraqi detainee responsible for the slaughter and mutilation of four American contractors in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004. His story will be featured in a book to be released later this year. Mr. Puckett achieved a rare verdict of Not Guilty only by lack of mental responsibility (temporary insanity) in the case of a B-1 bomber pilot prosecuted for assault and carjacking in 2011. Mr. Puckett served as lead counsel for SSgt Frank Wuterich, who faced 19 counts of unpremeditated murder for the deaths of Iraqi civilians following a fatal IED attack on his squad in Haditha, Iraq in 2005, resulting in dismissal of all serious charges, a plea to negligent dereliction of duty and no jail time. They appeared together on CBS 60 Minutes, broadcast on three occasions in 2007, and which won a prestigious Peabody Award for CBS and Scott Pelley. Mr. Puckett has appeared on all major cable and broadcast networks several dozen times either on behalf of his clients or as an expert commentator on military law. Throughout his career, Mr. Puckett has successfully defended over two dozen clients accused of sexual assault.

Mr. Puckett was commissioned in 1977 through the Platoon Leaders Class program after earning a B.A. degree, magna cum laude, with a double major in Psychology and Speech Communication from Indiana University, where he was also a Phi Beta Kappa. He holds a J.D. degree from Indiana University School of Law (1984); an LL.M. degree in Criminal Law from the University of San Diego School of Law (1989); and an M.A. degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College (1993).

Second Lieutenant Puckett graduated from The Basic School in 1977 and was designated as an Intelligence Officer. Ordered to the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, he was reassigned to the 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade in Norfolk, VA and deployed to Northern Europe. Upon his return he was assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment where he served as the Battalion Intelligence Officer and as

a surveillance and target acquisition platoon commander. After completion of a six-month deployment to the Mediterranean Sea, then First Lieutenant Puckett assumed command of the 4th Counterintelligence Team. In 1981 he was selected for the Funded Law Education Program for three years to earn a law degree at Indiana University, where he was promoted to Captain in March 1982.

Completing the Naval Justice School in 1984, Captain Puckett served as a military defense counsel, chief prosecutor and Deputy 1stMarDiv Staff Judge Advocate at Camp Pendleton, California. While serving as a prosecutor, he was selected to join the National Security Task Force as a member of a trial team prosecuting Marine Security Guard cases arising from allegations of espionage at the U.S. Embassies in Moscow and Vienna. In 1988, he was selected for the Special Education Program (Law) to earn a post graduate law degree (LL.M.) in Criminal Law.

Promoted to Major and transferred to Okinawa, Japan in July 1989, he served as a general court-martial military trial judge. He was President of the Okinawa Bench and Bar Association, composed of American and Japanese attorneys. In 1992, he was selected to attend the College of Naval Command and Staff at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, RI. Major Puckett returned to the bench as a military trial judge at 29 Palms, CA, in July 1993. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in February 1995.

Lieutenant Colonel Puckett's final tour on active duty was as the Officer in Charge of the Legal Service Support Section (LSSS) on Okinawa, Japan. The LSSS provides military justice, review, legal assistance and administrative military law services to Marine units throughout Japan. During that tour, he also defended a military capital murder case.

Mr. Puckett retired from the Marine Corps on April 1, 1997. He was twice awarded both the Meritorious Service and Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals. Immediately upon his retirement from the Marine Corps, he served a year as an Assistant Federal Public Defender in Pensacola, Florida. He has been an Adjunct Professor of Law at Creighton University School of Law, and taught numerous trial advocacy courses, as well as college and graduate courses in political science, government, sociology, criminal justice and the legal process. He is admitted to practice in the State of Indiana, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Eastern District of Virginia and the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. Mr. Puckett is a past chair of the Board of Governors of the Military Law Section, Virginia State Bar. Mr. Puckett is married to retired U.S. Air Force Colonel Marceilyn Atwood. He has two grown children and five grandchildren.