

NavyTimes

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[COOLCATAMARAN]

See the research vessel Sea Fighter in action off Panama City, Fla. militarytimes.com/sea-fighter

Dubious quals, questionable ribbons

Chief accused of embellishing record; lawyer says it's a misunderstanding

By William H. McMichael
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NORFOLK, Va. —The 22-year veteran was due to retire last year — and had a fine service record to underline for those who gathered on the battleship Wisconsin to honor that service, including a Gulf War-era hitch on the now-retired carrier America.

Someone perusing a copy of the retirement program he had printed up for the September 2009 event, however, thought it contained a few embellishments, and brought it to the command's attention.

Now, Chief Logistics Specialist (AW/SW) Aubrey Barbour Jr., 41, of Lynchburg, Va., faces nine counts of making false statements about his qualifications, six counts of wearing decorations without authority to do so and one count of altering his service record. He was assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron 106 out of Naval Air Station Oceana, Va.

Maximum punishment could be one year in jail, forfeiture of two-thirds pay for one year, or a combination of docked pay and a fine. He could also be busted down to E-1 and be given a bad conduct discharge.

The charges, some of which date back to September 2005, include his claiming to have been awarded the Combat Action Ribbon, qualifications for Seabee combat warfare and Fleet Marine Force, and medals for expertise with a rifle and pistol.

Four additional charges involving similar false claims, dated between 2002 and August 2005, were dropped because the statute of limitations expired, Naval Air Force Atlantic said.

Barbour, whose official January retirement was placed "in abeyance," according to Navy Personnel Command, was arraigned in Norfolk in late October. Barbour deferred entering a plea, according to his attorney, Virginia Beach-based Grover Baxley. He's

slated to face a special court-martial in Norfolk on Dec. 14.

Barbour remains administratively assigned to the fighter squadron but has been temporarily assigned to Oceana "for duty appropriate to his paygrade," said AIRLANT spokesman Mike Maus. Barbour could not be reached for comment.

Baxley said it's all a big misunderstanding and that he hopes any discrepancies between Barbour's official record and the Navy's charges can be ironed out before the case comes to trial.

"We're right in the middle of this case," Baxley said. "I'm very limited in what I can say. ... There's a disconnect, and some of the charges, many of the charges, that they've charged him with wearing unlawfully ... he's actually entitled to wear a great majority of ... the things that he's charged wearing unlawfully."

"We're trying to resolve that with the command," Baxley said. "And I think we're making progress. But other than that, at this point, I can't say much more than that."

Barbour has a solid official service record: A Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal, three Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medals, a Navy Unit Commendation and three Good Conduct Medals.

Among his assignments was a tour with SEAL Team 2 in Virginia Beach, where he served from April 2002 to December 2006.

According to Navy prosecutors, however, Barbour has puffed up his achievements over the years.

He is charged with making official statements and/or claiming on his 2009 retirement program, "with intent to deceive," that he earned the Combat Action Ribbon along with several other qualifications and awards.

Barbour is also charged with falsely telling a Marine Corps officer in January that he had earned

| KEY | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Awards and qualifications earned | Awards and qualifications questioned |

QUALIFICATIONS



Aviation warfare



Surface warfare



Seabee combat warfare



Fleet Marine Force



Expeditionary warfare



Basic parachutist



Navy and Marine Corps parachutist

SOURCE: NAVY PERSONNEL COMMAND, CHARGING DOCUMENTS

WHAT WAS EARNED, WHAT IS IN DISPUTE

Chief Logistics Specialist (AW/SW) Aubrey Barbour Jr. faces nine counts of making false statements about his qualifications, six counts of wearing unearned decorations and one count of altering his service record. These are awards and qualifications he earned, according to personnel records, and those the Navy alleges he claimed to have earned.

MEDALS AND AWARDS



Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal



Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal (subsequent awards)*



Combat Action Ribbon



Navy Unit Commendation



Good Conduct Medal with two gold stars



Navy Expeditionary Medal



National Defense Service Medal



Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal



Southwest Asia Service Medal



Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal**



Sea Service Deployment Ribbon



Kuwait Liberation Medal (Personnel officials could not specify Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or Kuwait version)



Expert Rifleman Medal



Expert Pistol Shot Medal

*Barbour was awarded the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal and gold stars in lieu of two subsequent awards. The Navy says he claimed additional gold stars.

**The Navy says Barbour claimed he received the award twice; no volunteer medal appears in his personnel records.

MARCIA STAMER/STAFF

the Seabee, parachutist and expeditionary qualifications, as well as the basic parachutist insignia.

It is unclear why there is no record of his being awarded a fourth and fifth achievement medal; Navy Personnel Command has no record of such awards.

Barbour is also charged with unlawfully altering his service record in December 2006.

Asked how the Navy became aware of the allegations, Baxley said only that "someone brought it to the attention of the command, that things didn't look kosher, and

the command started investigating it."

Baxley cautioned against a rush to judgment and said there's more than meets the eye in this case.

"This guy is not the type of sailor that these charges reflect," Baxley said. □