

# **William J. Collins, Jr.**

## **Major, U. S. Marine Corps**

Major William J. Collins, Jr. is assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps and currently serves as the Program Manager for the Marine Corps Disability Counsel Program (MCDCP). In this billet he is responsible for Marine Corps wide policy and the personnel providing legal counsel to Marines and Sailors going through the IDES process. A native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Major Collins is a 1989 graduate of La Salle University and a 1994 graduate of Widener University School of Law in Harrisburg, PA. He is a member in good standing of the Bars of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and the Supreme Court of the United States. His Marine Corps career began while still attending law school, when he was commissioned a second lieutenant after graduating Officer Candidate School in August 1992. In 1994 he was promoted to first lieutenant shortly after graduating from law school. In August 1995 he received orders to active duty and reported to The Basic School to complete his Marine Corps training. From there he went on to Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island to be certified as a Judge Advocate and was promoted to captain in July 1996. On 1 August 2001, Major Collins was promoted to his current rank.

Major Collins' served in a variety of assignments over his career. His first duty station was Okinawa Japan (1996-1999), where he served as Head of Legal Assistance, Defense Counsel and as Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing. During this time he also served as the Staff Judge Advocate, 3D Marine Division Forward in Queensland, Australia, for Exercise Tandem Thrust 1997. In August 1999 Major Collins was assigned to the Navy-Marine Corps Appellate Review Activity, where he served as Appellate Government Counsel, representing the United States before appellate courts. In October 2001 Major Collins was assigned to serve as the Assistant Officer-in-Charge, Navy-Marine Corps Appellate Review Activity and as the Executive Assistant to the Assistant Judge Advocate General for Military Justice. Major Collins reported to the United States Naval Academy in August 2002 and served as the Deputy Director for Character Education and as an Assistant Professor of Law. Collateral duties included serving as the Officer Representative for the Men's Crew Team and as a Staff Platoon Commander for the Midshipmen's Summer Marine Corps Training.

In June 2005 Major Collins reported to Camp Lejeune N.C. and deployed to Iraq with Regimental Combat Team 2 (RCT-2) from August 2005 to January 2006 as the Regimental Staff Judge Advocate. In addition to being the SJA Major Collins was designated the Detention Review and Release Authority. In this capacity he conducted magistrate type reviews of detained persons and combatants. Major Collins personally conducted over 1,000 such reviews and oversaw several hundred more by subordinate Judge Advocates. Upon his return Major Collins assumed duties as the Chief Review Officer at the Legal Service Support Section (LSSS), 2D MLG, providing post trial review, processing and support to II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) and all Commands on Camp Lejeune, NC. During this time Major Collins was responsible to reducing a significant back log of courts-martial undergoing post trial review while running one of the largest Review sections in the Marine Corps.

In October 2006 Major Collins was assigned to II MEF (Fwd) and deployed again to Iraq. This time serving in the G-3 (Operations) as the Police and Boarder Forces Transition Team Coordinator responsible for the training, deployment, support and redeployment of Transition Teams throughout Al Anbar Province, Iraq. In May 2007 Major Collins was reassigned as Multi National Forces – West's Chief Investigations Officer, responsible for overseeing all command investigations with high visibility placed on allegation of violations the Laws of Armed Conflict. Throughout the deployment Major Collins also served as a key member of the Rule of Law Working Group which was responsible for coordinating the reestablishment of the Iraqi civilian criminal trial system in Al Anbar Province. Major Collins personal efforts to this end included meeting with judges, lawyers and police officials in Fallujah and the Provincial Capital of Ramadi, to seek out their support and cooperation in restoring the Rule of Law in Al Anbar Province. The first civilian criminal proceedings were held in August 2007.

Major Collins reported back to 2D MLG in December 2007 where he served in the Staff Judge Advocate's Office. On 30 August 2008 Major Collins was transferred to the Temporary Disabled Retired List (TDRL – temporary medically retired) for health issues that were aggravated during both deployments.

In February 2009 Major Collins was selected as a Fellow for the House of Representatives Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program where he served as an Advisor to Speaker Nancy Pelosi with a portfolio that

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included Veterans Affairs and Armed Services Issues. Major Collins was engaged in both policy and outreach projects for the Speaker and staffed many meetings with both foreign dignitaries and national leaders. On 10 November 2009 Major Collins represented Speaker Pelosi at the Ft. Hood Memorial Service and presented MG Cone, the Base CG, with the flag that flew over the Capitol on the day of the Shooting. He also oversaw the Speaker's visits to Walter Reed and Bethesda and coordinated the Speaker's VSO Roundtables at the Capitol. At the conclusion of the Major Collins' fellowship in Speaker Pelosi's office in February 2011 he was offered a senior staff position on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee by Chairman Jeff Miller. From February 2011 until May 2012 Major Collins served as the Staff Director and Counsel for the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. During his tenure the Subcommittee conducted very aggressive oversight of the VA, conducted numerous hearings and saw the House pass several major veterans bills. Major Collins also played a significant role in the authorization and dedication of the Jewish Chaplains' Memorial on Chaplains' Hill in Arlington National Cemetery.

In March 2012 the Physical Evaluation Board found Major Collins "fit to return to duty". On 1 June 2012 Major Collins returned to active duty in a full duty status with a re-commissioning ceremony presided over by Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi in her office in the Capitol. He currently is serving within Judge Advocate Division at Headquarters Marine Corps.

Major Collins is entitled to wear the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Naval Unit Commendation, the National Defense Service Medal with two stars, the Iraqi Campaign Medal with two stars, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with four stars. In addition he is entitled to wear the Expert Rifle Badge and the Sharp Shooter Pistol Badge. He holds a grey belt in Marine Corps Martial Arts and has run the Marine Corps Marathon seven times. Major Collins currently serves on the Board of Directors for the La Salle University Alumni Associations.

Major Collins is married to the former Jill Rissmiller, of Hamburg, Pennsylvania. They have three daughters.