

Sean T. Pribyl | Associate
Maritime

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Sean Pribyl is a member of our Maritime Emergency Response Team (“MERT”).

Sean focuses his practice on maritime and international law, environmental and regulatory matters, white collar criminal law, civil litigation, and advanced automation in the transportation sector. His practice involves:

- defense of administrative, civil, and criminal enforcement actions
- maritime environmental compliance
- pollution incident and marine casualty response
- Jones Act coastwise trade, citizenship, and crewing issues, including outer continental shelf exemptions and U.S. build/rebuild standards and exemptions/waivers
- unmanned/autonomous/remotely operated vessels (“USV” or “MASS”) and small unmanned aircraft systems (“sUAS”) or “drones”
- marine casualties and collisions and vessel limitation of liability actions
- risk mitigation strategies in pollution incidents
- legislative and regulatory affairs in the transportation sector
- maritime security
- onshore/offshore energy and infrastructure projects
- Coast Guard credential suspension and revocation hearings
- fisheries industry compliance

Before joining Blank Rome, Sean served for six years as a U.S. Coast Guard officer and judge advocate (“JAG”). While serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, Sean was appointed as Special Assistant U.S. Attorney and Special U.S. Attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice in multiple cases.

During law school, he competed on the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Team, and earned a Certificate of Concentration in International and Comparative Law.

Before law school, Sean worked for eight years as a deck officer aboard U.S. and Marshall Island-flagged offshore supply, container, roll-on/roll-off, break bulk, and fiber optic cable vessels.

Select Engagements

- Vessel owners/operators (cruise ships, cargo vessels, fishing vessels), defended regarding allegations of environmental and recordkeeping violations in criminal and administrative cases.
- An energy exploration company, advised in administrative challenge to federal agency Jones Act (cabotage) rulings and manning requirements in the offshore sector.
- Counseled international clients on achieving compliance with environmental laws related to U.S. ballast water management regulations under domestic legal framework and international conventions.
- A commercial vessel autonomous technology client, advised on regulatory compliance matters and service agreement to conduct on-the-water testing domestically and in Europe.
- An international energy industry parts supplier, defended in an oil field personal injury case related to gross negligence claims.
- A dock owner, advised in allision case alleging negligence against vessel; drafted motions on limitation of liability.
- A ship pilot, in marine casualty investigation involving negligence claims and provided pre-trial litigation support.
- A merchant mariner, defended in attempted revocation of professional credentials by Coast Guard, resolution allowed for continued employment without suspension of credentials.

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International
- Maritime Law Association of the United States
- Propeller Club
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association
- Women's International Shipping & Trading Association

Recognitions

- 2015, "Outstanding Young Military Lawyer Award," from the American Bar Association and Judge Advocates Association

Professional Activities

Sean is the Vice-Chair of the American Bar Association TIPS Admiralty and Maritime Law Committee (“AMLC”) and serves on the Homeland and National Security Committee.

He is also an associate member of the Maritime Law Association of the United States (“MLA”) Cybersecurity Committee and serves as the MLA Government Counsel Liaison.

Sean is also the Secretary of the Washington, D.C., Chapter of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association.

Outside The Firm

Sean supports military veterans through pro bono activities such as the Veterans Consortium Discharge Upgrade Clinic and the National Veterans Pro Bono Consortium.

He is also a long-time volunteer judge for the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, having judged both regional or international rounds of competition for several years.

Sean is the proud father of two daughters, Grace and Matilda, devoted husband to his wife, Sylvia, and dog-walker to the family’s terrier, Nola. He is a soccer-player-turned-soccer-dad, dedicated weekend runner, occasional chef, and semi-occasional artist (acrylic paints). He has sailed the Seven Seas and set foot on all seven continents, and remains an avid world traveler.