

What is military practice?

- ◆ Military practice is the practice of law within the armed forces, where the attorneys are also military officers. Each branch of the United States military has its own department dedicated to the practice of law called the Judge Advocate General's ("JAG") Corps.
 - Note: Only the chief attorney within each branch is referred to as the Judge Advocate General, but colloquially JAG corps officers are known as JAGs.
- ◆ JAGs represent either the U.S. government or members of the armed forces and their families. Judge advocates assigned to assist individuals with personal legal problems are known as legal assistance attorneys. Young Judge Advocates ("JAs") are likely to start their JAG careers in the Legal Assistance Division.
- ◆ Judge advocates are stationed in the United States and around the world. Military legal assistance offices are located on almost every base, ship, and installation. Upon accepting a commission to join JAG, officers are obligated to serve for three (3) years, except the Air Force which requires JAGs to serve four (4) years.
- ◆ The Uniform Code of Military Justice ("UCMJ") is a legal code which applies to all members of the United States military, including military retirees and some other uniformed federal service-members.

Which branches of the U.S. military have JAGs?

- ◆ U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps.
- ◆ U.S. Marine Corps Judge Advocate Division
- ◆ U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps.
- ◆ U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps.
- ◆ U.S. Coast Guard Legal Division

How do attorneys become JAGs?

- ◆ Apply to be a JAG while in law school and participate in an on-campus interview
- ◆ If you already have military status, ask to delay active duty until after law school
- ◆ Work as a summer intern with your preferred division of the JAG Corps.

As a law student who wants to be a JAG...

- ◆ Take a wide-range of law school classes (In particular take criminal law, civil and criminal procedure, discovery, and pre-trial litigation)
- ◆ Take trial advocacy
- ◆ Participate in moot court
- ◆ Participate in clinical programs

What is that JAGs do? Like all attorneys, JAGs write, conduct legal research, counsel, and litigate. Military legal services are provided through four primary divisions.

- ◆ **Legal assistance:** The Legal Assistance Division provides legal counsel to soldiers, family members, and military retirees, advising on matters of family law, consumer law, state and federal taxes, estate planning, landlord-tenant issues, and immigration law.
- ◆ **Claims attorneys:** Claims attorneys in the JAG Corps represent the interest of the United States for all types of claims. While in the installation environment (working domestically), the job of a claims attorney is similar to the job of a civil litigator. When deployed, part of their job is to pay local civilians for damages to their land or property caused by tanks, equipment, and troop movement.
- ◆ **Administrative law:** Administrative law attorneys are like corporate in-house attorneys in that they provide legal advice and services to those making the big decisions: commanders, staff officers, and civilian management officials.
- ◆ **Military justice:** The Manual for Courts-Martial ("MCM") provides for which actions constitute crimes under the UCMJ and details evidentiary guidelines as provided by the Military Rules of Evidence. While military justice utilizes an adversarial system with defense attorneys and prosecutors, commanders make the final decisions concerning how the case is disposed.

