



GUIDE TO THE
U.S. NAVY JAG CORPS

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THE NAVY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL'S (JAG) CORPS

WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

The Navy JAG Corps, the cadre of uniformed legal experts in the United States Navy, is comprised of more than 800 attorneys who are commissioned naval officers in pay grades ranging from lieutenant junior grade (LTJG) through vice admiral (VADM). Navy judge advocates serve the Navy and their nation throughout the world, both ashore and at sea.

Our profession has inspired many groups and people, including Hollywood productions such as the television show "JAG" and the movie "A Few Good Men." We are told that "imitation is the highest form of flattery" and many of the storylines in these dramas incorporate elements of real-life military events. However, theirs is fictional drama – ours is real.

LAWYERS AND NAVAL OFFICERS

Being a naval officer instills certain intangible qualities that will last a lifetime: self-confidence, pride, teamwork, and a sense of purpose. As Navy judge advocates, we understand these are qualities that make us better leaders and better lawyers, both now and in the future. Experience as a Navy judge advocate can make you more responsible, a better leader, and more adept at overcoming challenges. In short, the Navy offers you the chance to put your legal skills to the test, to defend and serve your country, and develop yourself personally.

PRACTICING LAW IN THE NAVY

As a Navy judge advocate, you will experience the most diverse legal practice available to an attorney. JAG Officers are required to pass one bar examination and could be assigned to practice anywhere in the world. Some of the important areas of our practice include:

- International Law (Law of the Sea, law of armed conflict, international agreements, and foreign criminal jurisdiction)
- Operational Law (Rules of Engagement)
- Military Justice (Prosecution, defense, judiciary, and appellate)
- Administrative Law (Government ethics, regulations, and legislation)
- Admiralty and Maritime Law (Admiralty tort and salvage claims, and international and domestic maritime issues)
- Civil Litigation (Cases incident to the operation of the Navy, in conjunction with the Department of Justice)
- Environmental Law (Laws protecting human health, the environment, and historic and cultural resources)
- Legal Assistance (Personal legal services and advice to military members)
- Information Operations and Intelligence Law (National security and cyberspace matters)

HISTORY OF THE NAVY JAG CORPS

In July 1797, Congress enacted the Rules for Regulation of the Navy as a temporary measure after authorizing construction of six ships. In 1800, Congress enacted a more sophisticated code adopted directly from the British Naval Code of 1749. There was little or no need for lawyers to interpret these simple codes, nor was there a need for lawyers in the uncomplicated administration of the Navy prior to the Civil War.

However, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles named a young assistant U.S. Attorney in the District of Columbia to present the Government's case in complicated courts-martial during the Civil War. Without any statutory authority, Secretary Welles gave Nathaniel Wilson the title of "Solicitor of the Navy Department," making him the first House Counsel to the United States Navy.

By the Act of March 2, 1865, Congress authorized "the President to appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, for service during the rebellion and one year thereafter, an officer of the Navy Department to be called the 'Solicitor and Naval Judge Advocate General.'" Congress maintained the billet on a year-to-year basis by amendments to the Naval Appropriations Acts. In 1870, Congress transferred the billet to a newly established Justice Department with the title of Naval Solicitor.

In 1878, Colonel William Butler Remy, USMC, became the first uniformed chief legal officer of the Navy. Colonel Remy was able to convince Congress that the Navy Department needed a permanent uniformed Judge Advocate General and that Naval law was so unique that it was better to appoint a line officer of the Navy or Marine Corps. The bill to create the billet of Judge Advocate General of the Navy was signed in 1880.

The Naval Appropriations Act of 1918 elevated the billets of Navy Bureau Chiefs and Judge Advocate General to Rear Admiral, and in July 1918, Captain George Ramsey Clark was appointed as the first Judge Advocate General to hold the rank of Rear Admiral. In 1947, the Navy created a "law specialist" program to allow line officers restricted duty to perform legal services.

By the Act of May 5, 1950, Congress required that the Judge Advocate General be a lawyer. The Act required each Judge Advocate General of any service be a member of the bar with not less than eight years of legal duties as a commissioned officer. The Act also enacted the first Uniform Code of Military Justice.

By 1967, the Navy had 20 years of experience with the law specialists program. However, there was increasing pressure to create a separate corps of lawyers. That year, Congress decided to establish the Judge Advocate General's Corps within the Department of the Navy. The legislation was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on December 8, 1967, and ensured Navy lawyers' status as members of a distinct professional group within the Navy similar to physicians and chaplains.

Today, the Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps is a worldwide organization of approximately 2,340 personnel providing legal and policy advice on matters concerning military justice, administrative law, environmental law, ethics, claims, admiralty, operational and international law, litigation and legal assistance.

UNITED STATES NAVY

Visit the Navy's website at www.navy.mil to learn more about the Navy and what we are doing around the world.

BECOMING A NAVY JAG OFFICER

PROGRAMS

The Navy JAG Corps offers a variety of programs designed to attract the best and brightest lawyers. Below is a description of these programs:

(Please note that the Navy's Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program does not have an option leading to commission as a Navy JAG Corps officer.)

STUDENT PROGRAM (SP)

The Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) permits law students to commission as Ensigns in the inactive Naval Reserve while attending law school. Upon law school graduation, passage of a bar examination and the completion of Officer Development School, SP participants serve on active duty for four years. This is our largest recruiting program and the most common way to become a Navy JAG Corps officer.

DIRECT APPOINTMENT (DA) PROGRAM

The Navy JAG Corps Direct Appointment (DA) Program permits licensed attorneys to be appointed directly into the Navy JAG Corps as Lieutenants (junior grade). DA participants are obligated to serve at least four years on active duty. This is a small program designed to supplement the JAG Corps with experienced and capable legal professionals.

LAW EDUCATION PROGRAM (LEP)

The Law Education Program (LEP) is designed for current Navy officers to enter law school, earn the degree of Juris Doctor and then serve as a career judge advocate. Applicants must be on active duty as commissioned officers, be college graduates, and be in pay grades O-1, O-2, or O-3, with 2 to 6 years' total active service (including any active enlisted time) at the time of proposed entry into law school. Applicants must also be able to complete 20 years of active service as a commissioned officer before their 62nd birthday, and must have taken the LSAT and applied to an ABA-accredited law school. Look for an annual NAVADMIN announcing the deadline and application procedures for the LEP board each year.

INTERN PROGRAM

The Navy JAG Corps offers unpaid, volunteer internships and externships for credit. As a Navy JAG Corps volunteer you'll be assigned to a legal office and gain experience in traditional practice areas like military justice (criminal prosecution and defense) and legal assistance (providing general legal advice to Sailors and their families).

Visit our website at www.jag.navy.mil/careers for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for selection through the Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) or the Direct Appointment (DA) Program an applicant must:

- be a United States citizen of good moral character;
- be younger than 42 years of age at the time you begin active duty;
- meet the physical requirements for commission in the Navy;
- have taken the Law School Admission Test (LSAT); and,
- be a law student with at least one year of school completed, attending an American Bar Association (ABA)-accredited school, or a graduate of an ABA-accredited law school.

For complete information on the requirements for all Navy JAG programs, visit www.jag.navy.mil/careers.

TRAINING PIPELINE FOR ATTORNEYS ENTERING THE NAVY JAG CORPS

As an officer in the Navy JAG Corps, you will not undergo basic training in the traditional sense, but will attend Officer Development School (ODS) in Newport, RI. ODS is a five-week course of instruction designed to acquaint newly commissioned officers with the customs and traditions of naval service. As an ODS student, you will learn the basic principles of shipboard navigation, damage control (firefighting, flooding measures and first aid), naval administration and disciplinary procedures. You will also be required to march to and from classes, participate in physical fitness training, and stand personnel and room inspections.

ODS is the first step in the Navy JAG Corps training pipeline and is normally attended after completion of your bar examination.

After completion of ODS and upon attainment of successful bar examination results, Navy judge advocates attend the Basic Lawyer Course (BLC) at Naval Justice School (NJS) in Newport, RI. Successful completion of this course is required to be certified for service as a Navy judge advocate. The course of instruction is ten weeks and covers civil and military law, as well as intensive trial advocacy training.

THE NAVY JAG CORPS OFFICER CAREER

TYPICAL JOB ASSIGNMENTS

Navy judge advocates will be exposed to a variety of practice areas within their first tour of duty including providing essential legal advice to Navy leaders and commanders, criminal prosecution and defense, legal assistance, and operational law. Navy Judge advocates will participate in litigating criminal cases, often at the felony level, and have opportunities to serve as counsel at the trial level within 18-24 months after being certified as a judge advocate. Legal assistance attorneys begin seeing clients on a wide variety of civil matters immediately following graduation from Naval Justice School. First-tour JAGs have deployed to Iraq/Afghanistan and advised military commanders in combat operations.

INITIAL DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

All commissioned Student Program (SP) and Direct Appointment (DA) Program participants have the opportunity to state their duty preferences. Students are briefed on the detailing process while at Officer Development School (ODS). Approximately two months prior to beginning Naval Justice School (NJS), the Accessions Detailer initiates a conversation with each new officer about how his/her preferences match the billets available at the time when that officer will finish the training pipeline. The Accessions Detailer normally makes initial contact with the officers in the order in which they commission, unless unusual circumstances require an exception to this rule, such as a military co-location necessity.

Every effort is made to assign new officers to a geographical area matching one of their choices, but no guarantees can be made in this regard – the changing needs of the Navy drive the location of assignments for all of our attorneys. No assignment is made before a conversation between the officer and the detailer takes place. Usually, new officers have the opportunity to meet their detailer during “Track Day” at ODS.

INITIAL RANK

Attorneys entering the Navy JAG Corps via the Direct Appointment (DA) Program are appointed as lieutenants junior grade. They may expect promotion to lieutenant approximately one year after the first day of training at Officer Development School.

Individuals who enter through the Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) will be commissioned as ensigns in the inactive Navy reserve while in law school. Depending on when they commission, they may be promoted to lieutenant junior grade as an inactive reservist while still in law school. For those that do not promote before arriving at the Naval Justice School, all SP officers will be promoted to lieutenant junior grade on the first day of the Basic Lawyer Course. Navy JAG Corps SP officers may expect to be promoted to lieutenant approximately one year after their first day of the Basic Lawyer Course at the Naval Justice School.

PROMOTION PATTERNS

Officers in the Navy JAG Corps presently serve approximately six years as lieutenants before they are eligible for promotion to lieutenant commander (pay grade O-4). Lieutenant commanders serve approximately six years before they are eligible for promotion to commander (pay grade O-5). Time in grade is subject to annual congressional and Navy officer strength planning decisions. Navy JAG Corps officer promotion patterns generally match those of their sea-going counterparts.

The current Navy JAG Corps promotion patterns are as follows:

Pay Grade	Average Number of Years in Rank
Lieutenant junior grade (LTJG/O-2)	1 year
Lieutenant (LT/O-3)	6 years
Lieutenant commander (LCDR/O-4)	6 years
Commander (CDR/O-5)	5 years
Captain/Flag (CAPT/O-6, Flag/, O7 thru O-9)	Varies based on retirement

COMPENSATION

YEARLY SALARY

For information regarding basic pay and allowances, visit: www.dfas.mil.

Housing allowances vary according to the cost of living in the area to which you are assigned. Pay increases come with promotion and longevity.

BENEFITS

When you join the Navy JAG Corps, you become an important part of the Navy and will receive an impressive array of benefits designed to keep you and your family healthy, comfortable and secure. And the best part is that all of these benefits are above and beyond your Navy pay and allowances. These benefits include:

INSURANCE

- Full medical coverage and care in Navy or civilian facilities for the service member and his/her dependent family (see <http://www.tricare.mil/>).
- Full dental coverage and care for the service member and his/her dependent family. (See <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/default.htm>).

TIME OFF

- 30 days paid vacation each year.
- 10 paid federal holidays per year.
- Sick leave for personal medical needs or care of family members and adoption.

RETIREMENT

- Generous retirement income after 20 years of service (see <http://www.defenselink.mil/militarypay/retirement/index.html>).
- 401k-like Thrift Savings Plan (see <http://www.tsp.gov/> for more information).

LIFE AND WORK BALANCE

- Family-friendly workplace with child care, an exceptional family member program, and youth programs (see <http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/>).
- Department of Defense schools in some geographic locations (See <http://www.dodea.edu/home/index.cfm>).
- Alternate work schedule possible in some instances.
- Recreational discounts and services through Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs (see <http://navymwr.org/>).
- Family support services including Family Advocacy, Parenting, Personal Financial Management, Relocation Assistance, Spouse Employment Assistance, Spouse Tuition Aid, and Transition Assistance Programs (see <http://www.militaryonesource.mil>).

TRAVEL

- Foreign duty and travel opportunities through temporary or permanent assignments.
- Discounted travel.

EDUCATION

- School debt repayment – Under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA), you may qualify for loan forgiveness and an income-based repayment plan.
- The Navy JAG Corps does not have scholarship programs to earn a Juris Doctorate; however, career officers are eligible for a total of \$60,000 in retention bonuses - paid over three installments at different career milestones (at approximately the four-year mark, seven-year mark and 10-year mark) - that can be used by officers to pay off their student debt.
- Opportunity for fully funded graduate education leading to award of an LL.M. Non-legal graduate education can be obtained through the Naval War College in Newport, RI.

ADDITIONAL PRIVILEGES

- Access to military exchanges (worldwide chain of tax-free “department stores”) which sell brand-name items at discounts (see <http://www.shopmyexchange.com/> or <https://www.mynavyexchange.com/>).
- Access to military commissaries (tax-free grocery stores) that save military families approximately 25% on their food bills (see <http://www.commissaries.com/>).
- Use of officers clubs around the world.
- VA Guaranteed Home Loan Program (see <http://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/>).

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Career officers are eligible for a total of \$60,000 in retention bonuses paid over three installments at different career milestones (at approximately the four-year mark, seven-year mark, and 10-year mark).
- School debt repayment – Under the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA), you may qualify for loan forgiveness and an income-based repayment plan.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Navy judge advocates have the opportunity for fully funded graduate education leading to award of a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree. Navy judge advocates have attended graduate programs at civilian law schools such as Harvard, Georgetown, Columbia, George Washington University, University of Pennsylvania, Berkeley, University of San Diego, Lewis and Clark, University of Virginia, and many others. Areas of study include military law, international law, environmental law, and trial advocacy. Post-graduate opportunities also exist at the Army Judge Advocate General’s School, Naval War College, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Defense University, and the Army War College.

FAMILY COVERAGE

One of the benefits of active duty military service is complete medical and dental coverage for the service member and his/her dependent family. For Navy JAG Corps officers, commencement of active duty varies depending on

their commissioning program. Student Program (SP) participants normally begin active duty with Naval Justice School (NJS). By contrast, Direct Appointment (DA) Program officers begin active duty with Officer Development School (ODS).

MOVING ASSISTANCE

The Navy (or another service depending on the location of your household goods) will contract with a commercial mover for the movement of your household goods to your first permanent duty station. Both you and your family are reimbursed for travel expenses from home directly to your first duty station. Subsequent moves to other duty stations, including your final move returning you to your home of record upon release from active duty, will be at the Government's expense.

Of note, only the officer is entitled to travel expenses to Newport, RI for Officer Development School (ODS) and Naval Justice School (NJS) training, and household goods are not moved to Newport, RI. This is because of the short amount of time the officer will remain in this location before moving permanently to his or her first duty station.

THE SERVICE

OBLIGATION

Applying for the Navy JAG Corps does not obligate you in any way. Once you have applied, if you are professionally recommended by the Navy JAG Corps and all Navy commissioning process requirements are met, you will be offered a commission by your Navy recruiter.

Only once you accept the commission will you become obligated – that is, after you have taken the oath of office for a commission and signed a Service Agreement. These events will not generally occur until approximately 90 days after a candidate is notified that he/she has been recommended for commissioning.

After you are commissioned, you will be required to serve four years on active duty. This time period starts when you report to your first duty station after your training is complete. After your four-year active duty obligation, you must remain an additional four years in an inactive status. While in an inactive status, you are not serving in the military but are subject to recall to active duty during the four years if a major war/conflict requires such a recall. At present there is no annual drill requirement, nor any requirement to take an active part in the Reserve Program once in inactive status. If you want to continue your military affiliation while pursuing a civilian career, you may continue drilling one weekend a month and two weeks a year in the active Navy Reserve.

SEA DUTY

Navy judge advocates have the opportunity to serve at sea with the operating forces of the Navy. Positions for men and women interested in sea duty are available aboard aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, submarine tenders, and with afloat staffs embarked on Navy vessels. Sea duty provides the opportunity to work closely with the operating forces of the Navy, and offers the adventure and challenge of overseas deployments. Deployments normally last six months and may include port-calls to locations such as Italy, Greece, Turkey, Spain, Japan, Thailand, Australia, Tasmania, and the United Arab Emirates. Depending on the ship's course, deployments may also offer the once-in-a-lifetime chance to sail fabled waterways such as the Straits of Malacca, Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf, Atlantic Ocean, and through the Mediterranean Sea to the Suez Canal and Red Sea. Due to their complexity, none of the sea-duty billets are available to officers as a first tour of duty with the Navy JAG Corps.

ASSIGNMENTS

Wherever assigned, Navy JAG Corps officers perform legal or administrative duties as legal counsel. Like all members of ships' crew, Navy JAG Corps officers participate in the ship's damage control organization and have the opportunity to assist in ship control functions. Senior Navy judge advocates (lieutenant commanders, commanders, and captains) are frequently involved in mission planning and execution.

LIFE IN THE SERVICE

TOUR ASSIGNMENTS

New Navy judge advocates begin their careers by building a foundation in the three core practice areas: Government services, legal assistance, and defense. This foundation gives new judge advocates the skills they need to take advantage of other opportunities advising commanders, deploying at sea, and honing additional legal skills.

Every effort is made to assign new officers to a geographic area that they desire, but no guarantee can be made in this regard. The changing needs of the Navy drive assignments for all of our attorneys. You will have the opportunity to discuss assignments with your detailer before orders are issued.

ASSIGNMENT LOCATIONS

Navy Judge advocates have the opportunity to serve in exciting and diverse assignments throughout the world. Major fleet concentration areas include Naples, Italy; Yokosuka, Japan; San Diego, California; Norfolk, Virginia; Bremerton, Washington; Jacksonville, Florida; Pensacola, Florida; Groton, Connecticut; Washington, DC; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Additional future overseas job opportunities are available in Rota, Spain; Sigonella, Sicily and Rome, Italy; Souda Bay, Greece; Stuttgart and Garmisch, Germany; Diego Garcia; Guam; Sasebo, Japan; Seoul, Korea; Bahrain; Singapore; the Central Command theater of operations; and others. The vast majority of new Navy judge advocates are assigned within the continental United States.

ON BASE AND OFF BASE LIVING

Officers may live on or off the military base where they are stationed. The advantages to living in military housing include avoiding the difficulties associated with purchasing and selling a home in keeping with the mobile lifestyle of a naval officer, and close proximity to commissary, exchange, medical, dental and recreational facilities. For more information about on base housing, go to <http://www.acq.osd.mil/housing/housing101.htm>.

Officers who do not live in base quarters receive a monthly Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), which is set consistent with average rental levels in the local economy. BAH is non-taxable and averages approximately \$1,200 per month. To find out how much you will receive in BAH, go to the calculator located at <http://www.defensetravel.dod.mil/site/bah.cfm>.

LENGTH OF STAY AT DUTY STATION

Orders to duty stations within the United States are for an average period of three years. After at least 24 months at a particular location, officers may pursue or be offered subsequent assignments consistent with their career needs and the needs of the naval service. Prospective candidates should be aware that geographic mobility is a key aspect of naval life. Those who welcome the opportunity to see various parts of the country (and the globe) by traveling to different locations on permanent orders approximately every three years will find the Navy lifestyle to be a good fit.

APPLICATION PROCESS

PROFILE OF A JAG OFFICER

The ideal candidates for commission in the Navy JAG Corps are those who have a deep commitment to public service, strong leadership traits, interesting life experiences, positive attitudes, a sense of adventure, demographic and experiential diversity, and engaging personalities. We are looking for those who are capable of being strategic thinkers, as well as being capable of executing items quickly at the tactical level. In short, all applicants are judged on the “whole person” concept.

PROCESS

Application materials, deadlines, and instructions are available on the Navy JAG Corps website at: http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/apply.html.

Submission of an application does not obligate you in any manner. Your application will be considered by a selection board comprised of Navy judge advocates. If this board selects you, you will be “professionally recommended” for a commission. You will then undergo the Navy commissioning process that all Naval officers go through (medical examination, background investigation and reference checks). This process is not run by the Navy JAG Corps; it is controlled by Navy Recruiting Command.

Once all requirements are met, you will be offered a commission by your Navy recruiter. Individuals become obligated only after they have actually taken the oath of office for a commission and signed a Service Agreement. These events will not generally occur until approximately 90 days after a candidate is notified that he/she has been recommended for commissioning.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please visit our website at www.jag.navy.mil/careers.

To speak with an active duty Navy JAG Corps officer, please contact the Navy JAG Corps Accessions Detailer by phone at (901) 874-4084, or by using the form located at http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/contact.html.

To speak with a Navy representative or to find the nearest Navy Recruiting District office, please call 1-800-USA-NAVY or go to www.navy.com.