2020 Guide to the 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 includes a cadre of over 900 uniformed attorneys in the United States Navy who are commissioned naval officers in pay grades ranging from lieutenant junior grade (LTJG) through vice admiral (VADM). As judge advocates, we understand the Navy's mission and our role in achieving its objectives in everything we do. We are proud to serve as Navy Sailors and legal professionals.

To be a Navy judge advocate means to embody the warfighting spirit. We support the fleet and enable the Navy mission throughout the world, both ashore and at sea. As a naval officer, you will be expected to lead with character and integrity. Our advice and advocacy emphasizes fundamental fairness and respect for the rule of law, and fosters trust in our community, across the Fleet, and with the American people.

Being a naval officer instills certain intangible qualities that will last a lifetime: pride, teamwork, integrity, and a sense of purpose. As Navy judge advocates, we understand these qualities make us better leaders and lawyers, both now and in the future. We also strive to continuously learn, assess, and share knowledge – to deepen our expertise and provide the highest quality legal services. We must be agile in today's complex and dynamic operating environment – rapidly leveraging ideas that deliver sustainable improvements across the enterprise.

The Navy JAG Corps is a profession of law and arms. By commissioning as a judge advocate, the Navy offers you the chance to put your legal skills to the test, defend the Constitution, and serve our nation.

PRACTICING LAW IN THE NAVY

As a Navy judge advocate, you will experience the most diverse legal practice available to an attorney and in locations throughout the world. Some of the important areas of our practice include:

- Military Justice (Prosecution, defense, judiciary, and appellate)
- Legal Assistance (Personal legal services and advice to military members)
- 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)
- International Law (international agreements and foreign criminal jurisdiction)
- National Security Law (Rules of engagement, law of the sea, law of armed conflict, cyber and intelligence law)

PROFILE OF A JAG OFFICER

The ideal candidates for commission in the Navy JAG Corps are those who have demonstrated academic excellence, deep commitment to public service, strong leadership traits, diverse life experiences, positive attitudes, a sense of adventure, and engaging personalities. We look for leaders who are capable of being both strategic thinkers and tactical operators. In short, we apply the "whole person" concept in evaluating applicants.

COMPENSATION

PROMOTION PATTERNS

Successful applicants to the Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) are commissioned as inactive reserve ensigns (ENS) during law school. Inactive reserve officers do not receive pay or allowances while in law school. After passing the bar examination and reporting for extended active duty starting at Naval Justice School (NJS), officers receive a superseding appointment as a lieutenant junior grade (LTJG) in the Navy. Successful applicants to the Navy JAG Corps Direct Appointment (DA) Program are commissioned as active duty lieutenants junior grade (LTJG) before attending Officer Development School (ODS). Navy JAG Corps officers can expect to promote to lieutenant (LT) approximately one year after their first day at the Naval Justice School.

SP and DA applicants receive service credit (for promotion purposes only) of up to three years for the period they attended law school while not in a commissioned status (more credit is given if the student has prior commissioned service). Service credit accelerates an individual's promotion and determines rank. This means that one may expect promotion to LT after no more than 12 months of active duty as a LTJG. The granting of service credit does not alter an individual's pay rate. Basic pay longevity is computed in accordance with the pay entry base date (PEBD) established upon the officer's initial acceptance of a commission. Therefore, an earlier commissioning date results in higher overall pay when you enter active duty.

Officers in the Navy JAG Corps presently serve approximately six-eight years as LTs before they are eligible to promote to lieutenant commander (LCDR). LCDRs serve approximately four-seven years before they are eligible to promote to commander (CDR). Time-in-grade requirements are subject to annual congressional and Navy officer strength planning decisions. Navy JAG Corps officer promotion patterns for the most part match those of their sea-going counterparts. The promotion schedule below reflects averages and may fluctuate up to 20% as retention rates and other factors change.

Pay Grade	Average Number of Years in Rank
Lieutenant junior grade (LTJG/O-2)	1 year
Lieutenant (LT/O-3)	7 years
Lieutenant commander (LCDR/O-4)	5 years
Commander (CDR/O-5)	6 years
Captain/Flag (CAPT/O-6, Flag/O-8 or O-9)	Varies based on retirement

YEARLY SALARY

Active duty judge advocate pay currently starts at between $55,000 and $75,000 per year as a lieutenant junior grade (O-2) and between $65,000 and $95,000 per year as a lieutenant (O-3), depending on when the officer accepts a commission and where they are stationed. This amount includes basic pay and certain non-taxable allowances, such as those for housing and subsistence. Housing allowances vary according to the cost of living in the assigned area. Pay increases come with promotion and longevity.

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

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. In addition to your pay and allowances, you will receive:

HEALTH & LIFE INSURANCE

- Full medical coverage and care in Navy or civilian facilities for the service member and their dependent family (see http://www.tricare.mil/).
- Full dental coverage and care for the service member and their dependent family.
- $400,000 life insurance policy for $25/month (See https://benefits.va.gov/insurance/sgli.asp).

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

- 401k-like Thrift Savings Plan (see http://www.tsp.gov for more information). Automatic 1% Department of Defense (DoD) contribution to the service member's Thrift Savings Plan, and up to 4% DoD matching contributions.
- Generous retirement income after 20 years of service (see http://militarypay.defense.gov/BlendedRetirement).

LIFE AND WORK BALANCE

- Up to 12 weeks paid maternity leave for service members who give birth; 14 days parental leave for servicemembers designated as secondary caregivers.
- Subsidized childcare, an exceptional family member program, and youth programs.
- Department of Defense schools in some geographic locations (See http://www.dodea.edu/home/index.cfm).
- 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.

EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- School debt repayment: Military service qualifies as public service for the Department of Education's Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program. Under this program, Navy JAG Corps officers who serve for 10 years on active duty military service or have had a qualifying public service job for the last 10 years may have their federal student loans FULLY discharged.

- Retention Bonuses: Navy JAG Corps officers are currently 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.
- Funded Graduate Education: As part of the culture of learning that the Navy JAG Corps fosters, Navy judge advocates have the opportunity to earn a Master of Law (LL.M.) degree fully-funded by the Navy. Navy judge advocates have attended graduate programs at civilian law schools such as Harvard, Georgetown, Columbia, George Washington University, University of Pennsylvania, University of San Diego, University of Virginia, and many others. Areas of study include military law, international law, national security law, cyberspace 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.
- GI Bill & Transferability: Transferability option under the Post-9/11 GI Bill allows service members to transfer some or all unused benefits to their spouse or dependent children.

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).

MOVING ASSISTANCE

The Department of Defense 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, Rhode Island for Officer Development School (ODS) and Naval Justice School (NJS) training; dependent travel and household goods moves are not covered. This is because the officer remains in Newport for brief periods of time before moving permanently to their first duty station.

INTERN/EXTERN PROGRAMS

The Navy JAG Corps offers summer internships and semester externships for qualified law students. As a Navy JAG Corps intern/extern, you'll be assigned to a legal office and gain experience in traditional practice areas like military justice (criminal prosecution and defense), legal assistance (providing general legal advice to Sailors and their families), and command services (providing in-house legal counsel to commanders).

For more information and eligibility requirements for the internship and externship programs, please visit our website at www.jag.navy.mil/careers.

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.

For more information and eligibility requirements for all our programs please visit our website at www.jag.navy.mil/careers.

STUDENT PROGRAM (SP)

The Navy JAG Corps Student Program (SP) permits law students to commission 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, beginning as a lieutenant junior grade. 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. DA participants are promoted to lieutenant junior grade on their first day of active duty in the Basic Lawyer Course. DA participants are obligated to serve at least four years on active duty. A smaller recruiting pipeline than the SP, the DA program is 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 active duty Naval officers to attend law school, earn a J.D., and then serve as judge advocates. Selected officers will remain on active-duty with pay and benefits while attending law school and taking the bar exam. Applicants must be on active duty as commissioned officers, be college graduates, and be in pay grades 0-1, 0-2, or 0-3, with 2 to 6 years of active service (including any active enlisted time) at the time of 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. Navy administrative (NAVADMIN) messages annually announce deadlines and application procedures for the LEP board.

IN-SERVICE PROCUREMENT PROGRAM (IPP)

The Navy JAG Corps In-service Procurement Program (IPP) provides a pathway to commission as a JAG Corps officer for active-duty enlisted Sailors. Applicants can apply as either a Direct Commission Applicant or a Funded Legal Education Training Applicant. IPP Funded Legal Education Training selectees will remain on active-duty, with pay and benefits, while attending law school and completing the bar exam. Navy administrative (NAVADMIN) messages annually announce deadlines and application procedures for the IPP board.

RESERVE LATERAL TRANSFERS

Currently, there is no program that allows law students or licensed attorneys without at least one year of cumulative active duty experience to commission directly into the Navy JAG Corps as a reserve officer. However, career-motivated reservists with the requisite education and professional experience may seek a direct commission or a lateral transfer into the Reserve JAG Corps. Availability of these programs is subject to the requirements and needs of the Reserve JAG Corps.

ACCESSION PIPELINE FOR ATTORNEYS ENTERING THE NAVY JAG CORPS

COMMISSIONING PROCESS

Applying for the Navy JAG Corps does not obligate you in any way. Once you apply, if you are professionally recommended for a commission and have met all Navy commissioning process requirements, your Navy recruiter will offer you a commission on behalf of the President of the United States.

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.

A newly commissioned officer is required to serve at least four years on active duty. This time period starts when you report to your first duty station following successful completion of Officer Development School and the Basic Lawyer Course. After your four-year active duty obligation, you must remain an additional four years in an inactive reserve, active reserve, or active duty 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 conflict requires such a recall. Presently, 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.

OFFICER DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

Applicants who have never served as a commissioned officer in the Navy will attend Officer Development School (ODS). ODS is a five-week course held at Naval Station Newport in Newport, Rhode Island. ODS provides training necessary to prepare you to function in your role as a newly commissioned Naval Officer. It provides a basic introduction into fundamental aspects of leadership while providing a working knowledge of available references.

NAVAL JUSTICE SCHOOL

After completing ODS and receiving your bar results, you will be scheduled to attend the Basic Lawyer Course (BLC) at Naval Justice School (NJS) onboard Naval Station Newport. The BLC is offered three times a year with classes beginning in August, October, and January. The ten-week BLC trains Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard lawyers in the fundamentals of military justice and relevant civil law, with particular focus on the development of trial advocacy skills, administrative law and investigations, legal assistance, and basic national security law. Upon completion of the BLC you will report to your first permanent duty station.

THE JAG OFFICER CAREER

FIRST TOUR JUDGE ADVOCATE

Your first tour of duty will be as a First Tour Judge Advocate (FTJA). As a FTJA, you will rotate through the three core Navy JAG Corps practice areas. A FTJA will spend their first 12 months as a judge advocate split equally between Command Services and Legal Assistance. The second 12 months will be spent further developing litigation skills in a military justice rotation as either a defense or trial attorney. The FTJA program is intended to cement core competencies through supervised practice, independent research, cooperative learning, observation, and demonstration of skills.

SECOND TOUR & BEYOND

Officers can choose diverse career experiences in multiple practice areas or seek a professional specialty such as military justice litigation, environmental law, or national security law. JAG officers have opportunities to serve on a Fleet staff, to support Navy SEAL operations, or to deploy overseas or at sea.

Wherever assigned, Navy JAG Corps officers perform legal and administrative duties as legal counsel. You might find yourself in a combat zone or on a combatant ship. Although your primary duties will be legal in nature, Navy JAG Corps officers participate in the ship's damage control organization and have the opportunity to assist in ship control functions with all members of ships' crew. Senior Navy judge advocates (lieutenant commanders, commanders, and captains) are frequently involved in mission planning and execution.

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 include positions aboard aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, submarine tenders, and with afloat staffs embarked on Navy vessels as part of a carrier strike group. 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 to ten months and include port-calls to locations throughout Europe and Asia. Deployments 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.

LAND-BASED ASSIGNMENTS IN COMBAT AREAS

Navy JAG Corps officers continue to support land-based overseas contingency operations throughout the world. Navy judge advocates typically deploy from six months to one year in these critical positions. Currently, these overseas contingency operations assignments are strictly voluntary, as numerous Navy judge advocates continue to volunteer for these historic and challenging positions.

LIFE IN THE SERVICE

TOUR ASSIGNMENTS

Navy judge advocates typically serve in assignments for two to three years. Every assignment cycle, judge advocates review a list of open positions and geographic areas and submit their preferences to the Navy JAG detailers. While there are no guarantees, detailers make every effort to assign judge advocates according to their preferences. Ultimately, the changing needs of the Navy drive assignments, but judge advocates have the opportunity to discuss potential assignments with the detailer before orders are issued.

ASSIGNMENT LOCATIONS

Navy Judge advocates serve in exciting and diverse assignments around the world. Major fleet concentration areas include Naples, Italy; Yokosuka, Japan; San Diego, California; Norfolk, Virginia; Bremerton, Washington; Jacksonville, Florida; Pensacola, Florida; Mayport, Florida; Groton, Connecticut; Washington, DC; and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. 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; and others. Most 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. There are advantages to both lifestyles. The advantages to living in military housing include avoiding the inconveniences of acquiring private housing and being close to the commissary, exchange, base gyms, medical, dental, and recreational facilities. Officers who live on base do not receive a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). For more information about on base housing, go to https://www.cnic.navy.mil/ffr/housing.html.

Advantages of living off base include living within the local community and having closer access to off-base amenities. 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. 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 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 those of the Navy. Geographic mobility and practice diversity are key aspects of a Navy judge advocate's career. Those who welcome the opportunity to see different parts of our nation and the world, who seek out adventure and new experiences, and who are flexible and adaptable will find the Navy lifestyle a great fit.

CULTURE OF HEALTH AND FITNESS

Navy judge advocates are not only lawyers, but also naval officers in the profession of arms. Maintaining a prescribed level of physical fitness ensures personal and unit readiness to deploy worldwide, whenever and wherever needed. The Navy provides our sailors and their families with a support network of programs, resources,

training, and skills to overcome adversity and thrive. These programs work together to promote resilience in all service members, their families, and units. This collaboration and synergy across the spectrum of wellness maximizes force fitness and supports mission readiness. The Navy promotes a holistic approach to overall wellness that includes exercise, nutrition, weight control, and health and wellness education.

The Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) is a key component in the Navy's physical readiness program and is administered twice a year. The PFA is composed of three parts: the medical screening, the body composition assessment (BCA), and the physical readiness test (PRT). Once judge advocates pass the medical screening and the BCA, they perform the PRT. The PRT provides commanding officers with an assessment of the general fitness of members of their command by evaluating their muscular and cardiorespiratory endurance. The PRT includes three events: planks, push-ups, and a 1.5 mile run/walk. Alternate cardiorespiratory events may be approved.

READY TO APPLY?

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

To contact us with questions, please visit http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/contact.html.