Judge Advocate General Corps

I. U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General – General Information

General

Most Air Force base legal offices have between three and ten Judge Advocates assigned. Judge Advocates are involved with problems concerning discipline and criminal law; claims for and against the government; legal assistance; and other areas such as environmental and real property law, general law, civil law, international law, operational law and labor law.

Programs

Three programs are offered that pertain to law students: the Direct Appointment Program for civilian attorneys or third year law students; the One Year College Program for second year law students; and the Graduate Law Program for first year law students.

Direct Appointment Program: Attorneys and students who have completed their second year of law school may apply for a direct appointment as a Judge Advocate. Applicants must be citizens of the United States. Selection is contingent upon graduation from an ABA-approved law school and admission to practice law in the highest court of any state, territory of the United States, or a federal court. All applicants must complete an Air Force medical examination and be medically qualified by the Air Force Surgeon General prior to commissioning. By regulation, the individual must be commissioned before their 35th birthday.

One Year College Program: The One-Year College Program (OYCP) is a one-year Air Force ROTC program for law students in their second year of law school. OYCP students are guaranteed a position as an Air Force judge advocate upon successful completion of the AFROTC program, graduation from an ABA-approved law school, completion of legal licensing requirements including admission to practice law in the highest court of any state, a territory of the United States, or a federal court, and medical qualification. Applicants must (1) be attending an ABA-approved law school which has, or is located near, an AFROTC detachment, (2) be in good academic standing, and (3) meet AFROTC entry standards, such as U.S. citizenship, Air Force Officer Qualification Test minimum scores, and AFROTC weight and medical standards. The selectees for this program must be under age 35 at the time of commissioning.

Graduate Law Program: The Graduate Law Program (GLP) is a two-year Air Force ROTC program for law students in their first year of law school. GLP students are guaranteed a position as an Air Force judge advocate upon successful completion of the AFROTC program, graduation from an ABA-approved law school, completion of legal licensing requirements including admission to practice law in the highest court of any state, a territory of the United States, or a federal court, and medical qualification. Same application requirements as for those students applying for OYCP, above.

Applications and Interviews

Applications: Depending on the program, selection boards are held every other month (August, October, December, February, April, June). Applicants need to schedule their interview appointment as early as possible, but not later than the 15th of the month prior to the board deadline date. For example, if a student wishes to meet the April board, they need to schedule their interview by 15 March. This will allow the interviewing office enough time to assemble and submit the student’s completed application file to HQ USAF/JAX by the mandatory deadline date of the 1st day of the scheduled board month.

Interviews: Call the nearest Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) for the formal interview. Bring the completed application to the interview and provide it to the SJA who will forward it along with their
recommendation. Students need to have the interview by the first of the month (February, April, June, August, October or December). The student will know by the middle of the month after the board meets whether or not he or she has been selected. That is, if a student applies to the June board, they will know the status of their application by mid-July.

In North Carolina, call either POPE AFB, Fayetteville, (910) 394-2341, or SEYMOUR-JOHNSON AFB, Goldsboro, (919) 722-5322

Documents needed when applying

Each program requires a number of different documents be submitted, but, generally, AF Form 1759 is a checklist that is helpful when applying. AF Form 24 is required by all programs, as is the LSDAS (copy of LSAT score and percentile; can be in a letter from the law school or report that was sent to you). Letters of recommendation (no more than five) also are required.

For the complete list of documentation needed when applying, go to http://www.jagusaf.hq.af.mil/Brochures/index.htm or call 1-800-JAG-USAF

U.S. Air Force Judge Advocate General – Direct Appointment Program For 3Ls Only

General

Most Air Force base legal offices have between three and ten Judge Advocates assigned. Judge Advocates are involved with problems concerning discipline and criminal law; claims for and against the government; legal assistance; and other areas such as environmental and real property law, general law, civil law, international law, operational law and labor law.

Programs

The United States Air Force offers the Direct Appointment Program for civilian attorneys or rising third year law students. In this program, students who have completed their second year of law school may apply for a direct appointment as a Judge Advocate. Applicants must be citizens of the United States. Selection is contingent upon graduation from an ABA-approved law school and admission to practice law in the highest court of any state, territory of the United States, or a federal court. All applicants must complete an Air Force medical examination and be medically qualified by the Air Force Surgeon General prior to commissioning. By regulation, the individual must be commissioned before their 35th birthday.

Applications and Interviews

Applications: Selection boards are held every other month (August, October, December, February, April, June). Applicants need to schedule their interview appointment as early as possible, but not later than the 15th of the month prior to the board deadline date. For example, if a student wishes to meet the April board, they need to schedule their interview by 15 March. This will allow the interviewing office enough time to assemble and submit the student’s completed application file to HQ USAF/JAX by the mandatory deadline date of the 1st day of the scheduled board month.

Interviews: Typically, the USAF JAG interviews twice a year on campus, during the fall and spring. See the Career Center for OCI details. In addition, a student also can call the nearest Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) for the formal interview. Bring the completed application to the interview and provide it to the SJA who will forward it along with their recommendation. Students need to have the interview by the first of the month (February, April, June, August, October or December). The student will know by the middle
of the month after the board meets whether or not he or she has been selected. That is, if a student applies to the June board, they will know the status of their application by mid-July.

In North Carolina, call either POPE AFB, Fayetteville, (910) 394-2341, or SEYMOUR-JOHNSON AFB, Goldsboro, (919) 722-5322. SEE NOTES FROM PROFESSOR SCOTT SILLIMAN, BELOW, BEFORE CALLING.

Documents needed when applying

Each program requires a number of different documents be submitted, but, generally, AF Form 1759 is a checklist that is helpful when applying. AF Form 24 is required by all programs, as is the LSDAS (copy of LSAT score and percentile; can be in a letter from the law school or report that was sent to you). Letters of recommendation (no more than five) also are required.

For the complete list of documentation needed when applying, go to http://www.jagusafr.hq.af.mil/Brochures/index.htm or call 1-800-JAG-USAF

From Professor Scott Silliman

Professor Silliman enjoyed 25 years as an Air Force JAG and is more than happy to talk with students who want to pursue a JAG career. He notes that the Air Force bases are smaller and more nicely appointed than those of the Army or Navy, in large part because the AF wants to retain their pilots. In addition, the AF uses only a small cadre of civilian attorneys, so AF JAGS get significant legal work, right away. The selection rate is about 1:7 or 1:8, fairly competitive.

When applying and interviewing, the student should not write or say that they want to spend the rest of their life in the military, or that they are “patriotic” (the patriotic portion is assumed, or they wouldn’t be applying to the JAG Corps). Should show up for the interview neatly dressed, no earrings for men, no tattoos showing, be inquisitive, and answer questions with sincerity.

II. U.S. Army Judge Advocate General

General

The Army Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAGC) is the Army's source of legal support to operations. As an Officer in the JAGC and a practicing attorney, responsibilities include everything affecting military operations, focusing on the following areas: criminal law, legal assistance, civil and administrative law, labor and employment law, international and operational law, and contract and fiscal law. The JAGC offers a wide range of opportunities—whether serving as prosecutor or defense counsel at a court-martial, advising a commander on an international law issue, helping soldiers with personal legal matters, and the like. Duty locations include the continental United States and many installations and locations overseas.

Programs

Applicants who accept a direct commission in the JAGC serve a four-year tour of duty. At a minimum, applicants must:

- Be a citizen of the United States
- Have earned a J.D. or LL.B. from an ABA-accredited law school
- Have been admitted to the bar of either a federal court or the highest court of any state in the United States or the District of Columbia (note: 3L students may also apply)
Applicants must be able to serve 20 years of active commissioned service before reaching the age of 62. Thus, for most applicants, the age requirement is to be under the age of 42 at the time of entry onto active duty.

Applications and Interviews

Applications: Applications and supporting materials are due to the Judge Advocate Recruiting Office on or before March 1st for the spring selection board, and on or before November 1st for the fall selection board. The board meets four to five times a year in Washington, D.C.

Interviews: Students must interview before the application deadline. Students can interview on-campus during either the fall or spring, or may contact a Field Service Officer to set up an interview at www.jagcnet.army.mil/jaro.

See http://www.goarmy.com/jag/applications_procedures.jsp for application procedures and the required documentation.

Notes

Professor Scott Silliman is willing to speak with any student interested in pursuing a JAG Corps career. He strongly suggests that, for both the written application and during the interview process, students not say that they want to spend the rest of their life in the military or state that they want to serve because they are patriotic. Instead, a student should be prepared to sincerely state why he or she is interested in pursuing a JAG Corps career.

Further, Professor Silliman notes that the selection rate is 1:7 or 1:8.

III. U.S. Coast Guard Judge Advocate General

General

The Direct Commission Lawyer Program: The Coast Guard offers qualified 3Ls and law school graduates the opportunity to serve as military judge advocates. The Coast Guard's legal program reflects the service's missions. Judge Advocates frequently are involved in such diverse areas as Military Justice, Trial Advocacy, Tort Law, Administrative Law, Maritime and International Law, Environmental Law, Labor Law, Procurement Law, and Law Enforcement, among other areas.

Selectees are required to serve on active duty as Coast Guard officers and receive four-year contracts. Currently, selected are commissioned as Lieutenants in the Coast Guard Reserve and receive three years of constructive active service credit (for promotion purposes only). They attend a five week Direct Commission Officer Course at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, followed by a two-week Operations Orientation Program on board various Coast Guard Cutters, and a ten-week Basic Lawyer Course at the Naval Justice School in Newport, Rhode Island. From there, the newly commissioned judge advocates report to their initial duty stations.

The Direct Commission Lawyer Program will hire 12 new attorneys between now and April 2010 for training beginning in August 2010. There are two remaining deadlines for application for the 2010 class: 07 December 2009 and 16 February 2010. After that deadline, completed applications will be considered in fiscal year 2011.

Requirements

- U.S. Citizenship.
• Be over 21 and less than 40 years of age.
• Meet prescribed physical standards.
• Not be on active duty in the military (except USCG) at the time of commissioning.
• Be a final year law student at, or graduate of (earned a J.D. from), an ABA accredited law school.
• Present evidence of admission to the bar of the highest court of a state or the District of Columbia, or present evidence of application to take such a bar prior to entering the service.

Application Process

Each year the Coast Guard hires between 6 and 12 new DCLs from a pool of roughly 80 fully qualified applications, from hundreds of candidates. Interested students should contact a recruiter through http://www.gocoastguard.com/get-the-answers/find-a-recruiter, obtain the necessary forms through him/her, and schedule an appointment. The recruiter then will help the student assemble the appropriate forms, schedule an interview, and help arrange for a military physical exam.

Applications for the DCL program are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year, with panels meeting to decide on applications on, roughly, a quarterly basis. Note that the recruiter, rather than the student, submits the student’s package to the DCL liaison for consideration.

For information regarding the DCL program, please see http://www.uscg.mil/Legal/recruit/Career_Home.asp.

For application and interview information, please see http://www.uscg.mil/Legal/recruit/DCL_Application.asp

IV. U.S. Marines Judge Advocate General

General

Students interested in pursuing a career as a Judge Advocate for the US Marines attend the Naval Justice School after initial officer training at The Basic School. Unlike the other JAG branches of the armed forces, there is not a mechanism whereby law students can enter the Marines’ Judge Advocate system as a commissioned officer after law school and passing a state bar exam. Instead, all individuals wanting to become a Marine JAG must first go through Marine officer training and then apply for JAG. The Naval Justice School is where Navy and Marine Corps officers go to receive special indoctrination in military law after they are on active duty.

V. U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General

General

The JAG Corps’ Student Program (SP) provides the most common way to become a Navy JAG Corps officer. It enables selected law students to commission in the inactive Navy Reserve while attending law school. Upon law school graduation, bar admission and successful completion of the Navy Officer Development School (ODS), participants are appointed as active duty Navy judge advocates.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the JAG Corps Student Program, applicants must:

• Be a citizen of the United States
• Be younger than 42 years of age at the time they begin active duty
- Have taken the LSAT, and
- Be a law student with at least one year of law school completed, or a law school graduate who has not yet had the opportunity to take the first available bar exam following graduation.

**Application Process**

This application process consists of two phases. In Phase One, the student fills out an application and sends it to the JAG Corps Accessions Office. The student then interviews with a JAG Corps appraiser before the deadline (see below). The JAG Accessions Board meets four times a year to select candidates. If a student is selected, he or she will be considered “professionally recommended” and then move on to Phase Two of the application process. Note that a professional recommendation does not guarantee a commission. In Phase Two, the student meets with a local Navy recruiter to complete the commission requirements, which include a medical examination and a security investigation. Upon satisfactory completion of these requirements, the student/candidate could then be offered a commission.

**Applications 2009-2010:** For 2Ls and 3Ls graduating between May 2010 and May 2011, the deadline to submit an online application is February 19, 2010.


**Interviews:** Students must interview before the application deadline, and bring the completed application with them to the interview. Again, please see [http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/apply.html](http://www.jag.navy.mil/careers_/careers/apply.html) for a list of JAG Appraisers and guidance on how to obtain a Navy JAG interview.

**Notes from Professor Scott Silliman**

Professor Silliman is willing to speak with any student interested in pursuing a JAG Corps career. He strongly suggests that, for both the written application and during the interview process, students not say that they want to spend the rest of their life in the military or state that they want to serve because they are patriotic. Instead, a student should be prepared to sincerely state why he or she is interested in pursuing a JAG Corps career.

Professor Silliman stated that the Naval JAG corps is about half the size of its Army and Air Force equivalent, with about 750 commissioned officers. The two largest legal offices are located in San Diego, CA and Norfolk, VA. In addition, the Navy uses a large number of civilian attorneys for much of its litigation needs, hence the legal experience obtained by junior Naval JAG officers may not be as extensive as JAG officers in the other branches of the armed forces.