



# Why Should You Become a JAG Officer?

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Are you interested in learning more about what it's like to be a JAG officer? By becoming a JAG, you are guaranteed a career that has rotating assignments by location and practice area, exposing you to the world and the law in ways you could have never imagined. It provides unrivaled practical and hands-on experience to springboard your career.

## A Day in the Life

Every day is different. As a JAG officer, you are not fighting on the battlefield, but you are in a supporting role to the troops. You take care of the soldiers' legal issues so that they can focus on their mission. Throughout any given day, a JAG officer sees various legal issues, from ethics

advice to military justice. For example, a JAG officer can also advise commanders on whether they can accept gifts from foreign leaders. If a JAG officer serves as trial counsel, as opposed to legal assistance, that office has an active caseload to manage and prepare for trial

In addition to a JAG officer's legal duties, exercising is part of the job. An officer must meet the same physical fitness requirements as other servicemen and women. If deployed, a JAG officer can travel the world while practicing law.

## Upsides and Downsides

A common challenge for JAG officers, and what one may consider a downside to the job, is the continuous moving. JAG officers often move every two to three years. However, this challenge is easily overcome by the people you work with in the JAG Corps. The people willing to commit to the service of their country are the type of people you want to work with every day, which is an upside. Another benefit of the JAG Corps is the variety of practices. You do not have to quit your job to change your job. For example, if you are no longer interested in litigation, you can request a transfer to serve as legal assistance.

## Considering Whether to Join the JAG Corp

Many people may be surprised at how competitive the pay and benefits of a JAG officer are compared with private practice. People often believe that public service means they will have to sacrifice their lifestyle to serve

their county, but that does not have to be the case. In addition to having competitive salaries, JAG officers receive a housing allowance, which is not taxable, and a food allowance. The military also offers free healthcare. The Army gives \$60,000 toward your student loans during your first four years of service with the option for additional payments over the next four years. When you consider the totality of the benefits offered by the military, your lifestyle may not be significantly affected.

## Career Path

The career path to the JAG Corps is not uniform, and there are multiple ways to become a JAG officer. Much of the JAG Corps join after graduating from law school, but it is possible to join the Corps later in your career.

Regardless of where you are in your career, the JAG Corps can be an attractive option for an attorney seeking a varied practice while traveling the world and serving their county.

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*This video is a part of the ABA Career Center's [Career Choice Series](#), which is designed to help you choose your career path. Whether you're a law student, young lawyer, or transitioning attorney, find out what it's like to work in various practice areas and the best way to position yourself to get there.*