



# RHUMB LINES

*Straight Lines to Navigate By*



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## A Legal Compass: The Navy JAG Corps

*“A staff judge advocate plays a critical role ... helping the commander project the right tone, expectations, and example, and occasionally serving as the commander’s conscience, to ensure that we conduct ourselves honorably even in the most violent, challenging, and heartbreaking times, and that we never become a lawless mob. ... The rule of law is so fundamental to what we are and to what we do.” - David H. Petraeus, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency*

Since the appointment of the first naval judge advocate general in 1865, the Navy’s mission has demanded legal expertise and counsel. Recognizing that need, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed legislation establishing a Navy Judge Advocate General’s Corps (JAGC) in 1967. Today, more than ever before, the Navy is operating in a complex legal and policy environment with the JAGC providing solutions to legal issues involving military operations, organization, and personnel matters.

### Operational Law and Command Advice

- Operational law advice directly affects a commander’s ability to plan, train and conduct military operations. Some examples are: [law of war](#), rules of engagement, [law of the sea](#), international agreements, rule of law, operational environmental law, counterterrorism, and [intelligence authorities and oversight](#).
- Judge advocates also provide advice for a wide variety of programs such as recruiting, training, organization, equal opportunity, military rights and benefits, military personnel promotions, retirements, [administrative personnel](#), [admiralty](#), [claims](#), and [civil litigation](#).
- The JAGC and [General Counsel](#) also provide advice on government ethics and standards.

### Military Justice

- The JAGC assists military commanders in maintaining good order and discipline of military personnel through investigations and proper disposition of offenses by such means as [nonjudicial punishment](#), litigation advice, [prosecution](#), administrative separation, and boards of inquiry.
- The JAGC provides Sailors and Marines charged with [Uniform Code of Military Justice](#) offenses or facing administrative action the highest quality defense counsel and personal representation services.

### Support to Sailors and their Families

- The JAGC supports Sailors and their families by providing [legal assistance](#) services for personal civil legal matters, including the provision of preventative law programs to educate eligible persons regarding their legal rights, responsibilities, and duties, as well as [pre-deployment and pre-mobilization](#) services.
- The JAGC provides legal assistance solutions for [Wounded Warriors](#) and assists active duty personnel through all stages of the disability evaluation system.

<b>Key Messages</b>	<b>Facts &amp; Figures</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The JAGC provides legal services ashore and afloat, across the globe.</li> <li>• JAG Corps personnel have been an integral part of major Navy evolutions throughout the year, including the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell;” support of NATO operations in Libya; piracy engagement and prosecution; and the emerging area of cyber law.</li> <li>• The Legal Assistance program provides free attorney assistance to service members and their families regarding personal legal matters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Navy Judge Advocate General directs a worldwide law firm of 2,581 personnel.</li> <li>• The JAG Corps has deployed 1,094 judge advocates and legalmen as individual augmentees since Sept. 11, 2001.</li> <li>• DoD reports that 56% of active duty personnel are married and 44% have children. Legal assistance offices saw 70,980 clients for family law and estate planning in FY11.</li> <li>• Approximately 35% of active duty judge advocates provide operational law advice to commanders in joint, combined, afloat, deployed, and command/staff billets.</li> </ul>