



Feature

A Military Lawyer (JAG Officer) is an Option for Graduates from Ivy League Law Schools

This Article talks about Military Lawyers called Jag Officers. The Military employs law school graduates from the best Law Schools in the US. A Military Lawyer is referred to as a JAG (Judge Advocate General). A JAG officer consults for the government on courts-martial. Newly employed Jag Officers have no training in Military Law until they begin their entry level job working for the Military.

A JAG officer works within the military law that comprises rules and regulations for the armed forces. This is a very brief description of the law practiced by JAG officers because today in the military they practice the military law which has extended its boundaries to include the same law used by civilian attorneys. This means JAG officers have the opportunity to practice:

- Environmental law
- Estate planning
- Labor law
- Family law
- Government contract law

The real military law that includes international laws of armed conflict is only practiced by the most senior military officers. In summary it can be said that JAG officers really practice civilian law in the military departments to which they are assigned.

In addition to the civilian law practiced by the JAG officer he can also be general counsel for his assigned department. For instance, a JAG officer who practices on the Air Force base may also do labor law, criminal law and contract law as required by his division.

The JAG officer can also be found consulting in accidents and criminal investigations. If the investigations involve drafting policies, procedures or treaties concerning the rules of war, the senior JAG officers always handle those cases.

On a daily basis a JAG officer provides legal assistance to members of his/her department which can include drafting medical powers of attorney, divorce legal help, drafting wills

doing adoptions and within all this work they cannot go into civilian court.

Continuing education is available for JAG officers and graduate work can also be completed during assignment. There is a JAG school that all new graduates must attend when they enter military ranks. There are also other requirements that include exercise 3 times weekly for JAG officers and other military obligations are also given. This is what makes being a JAG officer unique as well as the environment in which he may work. It would not be unusual to find a JAG officer working in a tent in Bosnia and holding trials in the same tent.

The average salary for these brave men and women who are entry level is just above \$32K annually and up to \$37K after 6 months. A practicing JAG officer with the military for three and a half years can earn a higher salary that ranges from \$65K to \$70K. One must also consider the benefits offered for housing allowance, food allowance and medical benefits which are not included in the annual salary.

Where can military JAG officers work? The answer to that is they can only be employed by the government. Many Ex-JAG officers practice law which includes cases where they represent clients who have issues with the government. These civilian lawyers get paid better fees from their clients because they have the army or navy experience that gives them the edge in cases against the government.

In conclusion the most rewarding aspect JAGS have for practicing military law is the idea that they are working for serving their country and fighting for freedom. This is an intrinsic value that can only be found in Military Law.

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