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AFJAGS Podcast: Episode 72

"At the Very Heart of Warfare" with Col Richard Major and Lt Col Derek Rowe

Hosts: Major Laura Quaco and Major Victoria Smith

Guests: Colonel Richard Major and Lieutenant Colonel Derek Rowe

In this episode, Major Quaco and Major Smith sit down with Colonel Major and Lieutenant Colonel Rowe to discuss the importance of doctrine, its development, and provide resources for learning more about doctrine. They also discuss legal doctrine, and the role of judge advocates in an operational environment.

[Intro music – The Air Force Song (Instrumental)]

Introduction

Major Laura Quaco:

Good morning, afternoon, and evening listeners. Welcome back to The Air Force Judge Advocate General's School Podcast. I'm Major Laura Quaco.

Major Victoria Smith:

I'm Major Victoria Smith.

Maj Quaco:

And today we have a special episode for you on doctrine.

Major Smith, can you tell us a little bit about what they're going to hear?

Maj Smith:

Absolutely. So Maj Quaco and I had the opportunity to interview Colonel Richard Major and Lieutenant Colonel Derek Rowe. During this interview, Col Major talked about the basics. What is doctrine? Why is it important to Airmen who are not working in operational type career fields? Lt Col Rowe talked about the interplay between legal professionals and doctrine development. He also spent some time talking about the practical application of doctrine in the operational and deployed environments.

Maj Smith:

Major Quaco, anything I'm missing?

Maj Quaco:

One thing I just wanted to add for our listeners, so you all are going to hear our interviewees talk about Chief Brown or General Brown. And for those of you who don't know, they're talking about Chief of Staff of the Air Force, [General Charles Q. Brown, Jr.](#) So, he's the highest-ranking officer in the United States Air Force. And then also by his position as Chief of Staff, he's one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and thereby serves as an advisor to the President, National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense. So, General Brown, he has actually written his perspective into the beginning of Air Force Doctrine Publication, [AFDP 1](#), and I would like to read a snippet of what he says.

He says, "Doctrine is an opportunity to educate, empower, and prepare for the future fight." He goes on to say, "I'm relying on every Airman to understand the lessons of doctrine, and then draw on them to innovate and incorporate concepts and technologies that will develop new best practices to shape future doctrine." So, this is a really important topic for our Air Force, for our military and I'm just going to turn it over to the interview.

Col Major and Lt Col Rowe, thank you so much for joining us today to discuss doctrine. Before we get started, I'd like to have you both introduce yourselves, give a little bit of your military background. So, Col Major, over to you, sir.

Colonel Richard Major:

Hi. Well, first off, thanks for having us here today. This is going to be a really great opportunity. I'm Colonel Richard Major. I'm currently the Vice Commander at the [LeMay Center](#), but I am a career intelligence officer. Throughout my career, I've got experience working at the unit level. I've worked in air operations centers as a targeteer. I've been an intelligence squadron commander for 36th Intel Squadron at Langley doing primarily targeting. Most recently here at the LeMay

Center, I worked in our Intelligence Directorate, and then about a year ago, I served as the Director for Air Force Doctrine Development in the LeMay Center, and then just this past June, I moved up to be the Vice Commander at LeMay.

Maj Quaco:

Great. Thank you, sir. And Lt Col Rowe, over to you.

Lieutenant Colonel Derek Rowe:

Thank you. So I am currently the Staff Judge Advocate [SJA] to the LeMay Center for Doctrine. It's just a one deep position. And I'll just mention a couple of things in my career kind of relevant. Doctrine is mostly about ops law. And in 2019 to 2021, I was the SJA at the 379th Air Expeditionary Wing at Al Udeid where we had on our installation, of course, the Combined Air Operations Center, the 609th AOC. And so I served as an installation SJA, but I was involved in ops law and it kind of prepared me for this assignment working in doctrine. Also, in my career, I served for one year at the Joint Global Strike Operations Center at Barksdale, which is also called the 608th Air Operations Center [AOC]. It's the bomber AOC. So those two assignments kind of got me familiar with ops law, which is what doctrine for JAGs is kind of centered on.

Maj Quaco:

Yes, sir. Thank you for that.

So I think what today's plan is for all of us who don't know much about doctrine or even what doctrine is, we're going to do a little crash course Doctrine 101. And then for the legal eagles out there or those who are interested in the law, we are going to focus a little bit more specifically on the legal aspect of doctrine.

So, Colonel Major, the big question, what is doctrine?

What Is Doctrine?**Col Major:**

That is the million-dollar question. But in reality, you know, doctrine is something that we should all, as

uniformed service members, understand and have an appreciation for. So fundamentally, what doctrine does it provide us with a common frame of reference for our military on the best way of going about doing our operations and how we go about employing our forces based off of the best practices that we have learned over time.

We should view doctrine as a guide—a guide to action on how we need to go about organizing our forces and conducting those operations, because these are all things that have been put together over time that we have learned through various operations, exercises, experiments, and as such, it'll give us a common starting point to build off of and deviate from if need be, to get after whatever the situation or the operation is.

Maj Quaco:

And have we always had doctrine in the Air Force or when did it come about?

Col Major:

Yeah, I would submit that doctrine has been around ever since the world has been involved in military conflict or operations. Now it may not have been written down on a piece of paper, *per se*, like we see it today, or electronically, as we see it today. But I know—I would submit that military forces have always shared information amongst themselves on, hey, this is how we did this, this is what we learned from it, and we think that this is the best way to go about doing our operations. So whether it was word of mouth or more recently, if you look to a time frame of around the 1800s where we had what we called Field Service Regulations, that was some of what I would consider the earliest forms of written doctrine. And then over time, as you transitioned into the 1900s and 1940s, the U.S. Army in this case had already established what are known as Field Manuals, and those Field Manuals have developed and evolved to what we know is our various doctrines that we have across the service, whether it's service level doctrine or whether it's joint doctrine or even if it's some of the coalition style doctrine that you see with

like NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] STANAGs [Standardization Agreements], for example.

How is Doctrine Created?

Maj Quaco:

So who is it that is creating or how is doctrine created?

Col Major:

Well, as far as who is creating doctrine, it's—doctrine is created at various levels. So, all of this—all the branches of our military service create service-level doctrine, so I'll focus specifically here on the Air Force. So in the Air Force, here at the LeMay Center in our Air Force Doctrine Development Directorate, we primarily focus on developing operational-level Air Force service doctrine.

All of those documents are called Air Force Doctrine publications. And we have a library of approximately 30 or so doctrine publications that touch on various topics that Airmen can use. Now, our role in that capacity as Air Force doctrine development here at the LeMay Center is to help manage, maintain and ensure that our service doctrine is current, relevant and in line with what we do as a service. But we also want to ensure that that doctrine complements and is supportive to joint doctrine. We also want to ensure that it's complementary to our tactical level doctrine. And then also, as I mentioned earlier, that our coalition or, you know, for example, NATO-style doctrine and so, on the Air Force Service side of the house, our Air Force Doctrine Development team, we serve as the Air Force's representative to the joint community on all things related to doctrine.

How Do You Get Input from the Field?

Maj Quaco:

And how is it that you do that, sir? Who do you get your marching orders from? How do you get input from the field?

Col Major:

So, a lot of the ins and outs of how we do our business is codified and laid out in Air Force Policy and Air Force Instructions. We really lean heavily on subject matter

experts across the Air Force to help develop the doctrine that we have, the operational level doctrine that we have on hand. So, you know, the 30 or so publications I mentioned earlier. For example, you know, the Legal Support Air Force Doctrine Publication, we have a very small team of members that makes up our Air Force doctrine development team here at Maxwell. We have Lt Col Rowe that's part of that team, but all of this work of building the Air Force Doctrine publication for legal support doesn't sit on his shoulders. You know, he's not the end-all be-all. We will open that up and we will coordinate with subject matter experts in the legal career field, for example, in this case to do coordination, provide inputs, and make those updates through a coordination process. You know, we do a staff summary sheet. We send it out across the Air Force.

So it's not only in this case, even the legal community that's looking at it. We have key agencies across the Air Force and organizations that are looking at this, all providing inputs that go into a comment resolution matrix. You know, so a lot of this is staffing that some of you may be familiar with on how we go about updating Air Force Instructions, Air Force Policy Directives, Air Force publications, very similar process. We get all of those inputs, but it is our doctrine team here at LeMay Center and at Maxwell that will consolidate those inputs, help bring everything together and put together those drafts of the publications that ultimately get reviewed out by the field and approved. And once they're ready for that final approval, they will then be presented to the LeMay Center Commander, in this case it's now Major General Holt, who will do a final review, approve it, and, you know, clear us to publish it on our website.

Why is Doctrine Important?

Maj Quaco:

Sir, it sounds like it's some pretty high-level stuff. What can you say to our listeners, our lower ranking officers and enlisted Airmen about why they should care? Why is it important to them?

Col Major:

Well, it's important because, as I said earlier, it provides that starting point for our Airmen to understand what we do as a service. And I'm just talking Air Force level doctrine here. I'm not you know, I'm not even touching on the other aspects of doctrine, whether it's joint or even—even multi-service, where we have a couple of different services that work together to develop multi-service tactics, techniques, and procedures. But it's important for our Airmen at the lowest levels, because through that basic understanding, they will now be able to see those common terms and the definitions of those common terms that the Air Force uses. Our Airmen will, through their reading and understanding of doctrine, be able to have a better understanding of how they and their respective career fields can better support an air component commander who's, you know, working at the operational level of war at an air operations center, for example.

So as a legal expert, you know, it's important that you understand doctrine from an air component standpoint because as legal experts, you may find yourself sitting or being assigned to an air operation center providing that expertise on the laws of war, laws of armed conflict, and providing that expertise and that guidance to senior level commanders on things they need to consider when we're conducting operations. And a lot of that stuff is oftentimes captured in doctrine and can be used as a point of reference. So with doctrine, you should be getting what we like to say is you're getting an 80 to 90% solution on how to go about doing business. Because again, as I said earlier, these are extant best practices, things that we've learned over time across operations and exercises and throughout history.

So, in theory, doctrine provides a fantastic starting point to go about doing business, and then you can deviate from there based off of the unique situations that are presented in whatever the operation or the scenario is that you're—that you're working through. What we find a lot of times is that our Airmen, when they first come into the service, when they're young airmen, young

lieutenants, young captains, for example, they're very focused on their day-to-day job at hand and the—at the tactical level. And that's great. That's what they should be doing. But there's an aspect of doctrine that they should be understanding, as well. And sometimes that, you know, because of the day-to-day grind and doing the mission every day and getting after the job, that gets put off to the side. And oftentimes it isn't until we see our Airmen make it to, the more senior NCO ranks or senior NCO ranks and our officers get up to the field grade officer level ranks before they really have a chance to start looking more into doctrine and understanding it more and developing that knowledge and mindset. So we're trying to work on shifting that culture a little bit across our service.

Maj Quaco:

So right now it's kind of like they're thinking about how I do my job, I just need to learn how to do my job, but not so much why we do our job the way we do our job.

Col Major:

Right.

How to Get More Involved

Maj Quaco:

So, how—for those Airmen who do want to get more involved with the creation, implementation of doctrine, how can they do that? Is that through the staffing process that you talked about, or are there other ways they can get involved?

Col Major:

It is. A big part of it is through the staffing process, but there are other ways, as well. So on the staffing process side of the house, oftentimes when we send out a coordination request for any given doctrine publication, it will go out to, you know, it'll go out to Headquarters Air Force and all the respective staff agencies within Headquarters Air Force. It will also go out to the MAJCOMs [major commands] for their review and inputs, as well. And ideally, the MAJCOMs will push those coordination requests down for doctrine updates

and reviews to their respective wings and then down to their staff. So, I would offer up to anyone listening that's at a MAJCOM or wing level in this case, when they get those requests for inputs for a doctrine update that they that they make sure that they do provide that out to their lower subordinate units, as well, to give them opportunities to provide input because the more input and expertise that we get with these updates that we're making to our doctrine, the better it's going to be, because this is for our Airmen.

And so, regardless of where you are, you can be the youngest airman working the flight line or in the legal office. You know, there should be opportunity there for you to provide input through your chain of command. Now, separately from that, there's also a way that you can go direct to the Air Force doctrine team here at LeMay Center. And you can just you can send an email directly to our organizational box and provide an input or ask questions about a specific doctrine publication or doctrine item that we'll gladly work with you on and answer any questions or concerns that the individual may have.

Updates

Maj Quaco:

So how many I mean, how much doctrine is out there? How often are you editing it?

Col Major:

So as I said earlier, our main focus here at the LeMay Center is operational-level doctrine. So we have the 30ish publications that we that we maintain and that we're responsible for ensuring currency of. Typically, we try to update doctrine on a—approximately a two-year refresh rate cycle. That doesn't always happen, but most of the time it does. And that is our that is our goal to push forward with and get the most timely and up to date information out to our Airmen and service members. Now, all that being said, even though the service-level doctrine is our main focus or one of our main focuses, I should say, or lines of effort, as I said earlier, we also tie

in to serving as the Air Force's lead for doctrine matters when it comes to the joint community.

And so there are several publications in the Joint Doctrine Library that the Air Force has heavy involvement with, and oftentimes we even serve as the lead on getting a joint doctrine publication updated, as well. And the same applies for certain NATO Doctrine. There are some NATO doctrine where the where the United States overall is responsible for certain NATO Doctrine publications, and there are some within that under that subset that the Air Force is responsible for.

Open Source

Maj Quaco:

Is this all open source information that the public can access?

Col Major:

So, the vast majority of it is with regards to our Air Force operational doctrine. In fact, all of our Air Force operational-level doctrine is open source. So if you go to www.dctrine.af.mil and go to our Air Force Doctrine website, all of those doctrine publications are openly available to the public. However, when you start going into researching joint doctrine publications, some of those are more controlled access. You do start getting into some that are classified, and the same can be said for some of our multi-service tactics, techniques, and procedure publications or our Air Force tactical level publications.

Agile Combat Employment (ACE)

Maj Quaco:

Thank you, sir. That's all very interesting. I want to shift gears now and talk about something that we discussed in a prior conversation: [ACE](#). And I'm not even going to try to describe it, so could you please tell our listeners what is ACE?

Col Major:

Sure. So what ACE is, first off, ACE stands for Agile Combat Employment and there's a lot of different pieces here to

ACE that can be talked about. But, but fundamentally what ACE is, is it's a proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver that increases our survivability while at the same time generating combat power against an adversary. So, we're in this environment right now where there's heavy focus and emphasis on great power competition and near-peer peer adversaries. And that changes the dynamic of how we as a service need to potentially operate in the future and in those types of environments. So what ACE does is it helps us to prepare and train our forces in a way so that they can adequately operate in remote, austere environments, in situations where we may not have all of the things that we've been used to having in deployed locations over the last couple of decades as we've been doing the global war on terrorism and in the operations since then.

So, this is a shift in mindset, and ACE sets that foundation and provides that framework for our Airmen to now all start working towards. We're figuring it out still as a service. But the good news is that what we have seen is that across the service, all of our wings out there and our MAJCOMS and our staffs are moving out and trying to figure this out. And so what do I mean by that? What I mean is, is especially when you look at the wing level, for example, they're constantly running different exercises that look at the different aspects of doing agile combat employment, exercising the notion of multi-capable Airmen.

So now Airmen who, you know, may have traditionally been a maintainer or a security forces Airman or a COMM Airman, now, you know, as under the guise of a multi-capable Airmen, they're going to potentially be turned to in some of these environments to do more than just that. You know, you may have a security forces Airman who now has to also understand and know some basics on putting weapons on an aircraft or doing some basic maintenance kind of things, or you may have a maintainer who now needs to understand how to provide security around the perimeter. Those are all the different things that we're looking at. How do you posture your forces across theater? What do you need

to have pre-positioned across the theater so that we can ensure that, in the face of a high intensity conflict, that we can still generate the airpower in this case that we need to support the air component commander and the joint force commander in a given operation, is what ACE is really about.

Doctrine—Take Time to Read It and Learn About It

Maj Quaco:

Well, it sounds very crucial to what we do as the military and the Air Force, sir. What else do you think our folks need to know? Anything else about Doctrine 101 that you think is important?

Col Major:

Take some time to read it and learn about it. You know, I talked earlier about how we're trying to shift the culture and the mindset of our Airmen starting from day one when they, you know, when they when they get commissioned or when they make it through basic training, we want to have doctrine be part of their portfolio, if you will, of things that they have a general understanding of, reference—start looking at and consuming at an early age in their Air Force career.

So what I would offer up is some things that we've already done, for example, is, you know, if you take a look at [AFDP 1](#), which is Air Force's foundational basic doctrine, that is a document that just a couple of years ago was over 200 pages in length when General Brown came into office as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He wanted to make a huge change and shift to that. He wanted something that our Airmen were going to actually pick up and read. And so we worked together with his staff and we developed AFDP 1, the new version of AFDP 1, and what that is now, instead of 200 pages, it is now drawn down to 16—16 pages of core information that we want our Airmen to know, all ranks across the board. So, something very easy that they can pick up and read in one sitting and have a good understanding of our business as Airmen, why we do it, what we're doing, and what their role is, and in supporting how we

do our business as a service. And so that's one thing I would offer up.

I would also offer up we just talked about [ACE](#), and you know, if Airmen want to have an eye towards what we're—where we're going in the future as a service, I would recommend they pick up a copy of and look at the agile combat employment doctrine note that's just been pushed out. This is a doctrine note that was originally signed and posted late last year, but we just provided an update to that doctrine note and published it about a month ago now. Again, the ACE doctrine note is another short read. I think it's around 20 pages, but it gives Airmen some insight and it helps them to understand where we're going as a service with regards to agile combat employment, talks about multi-capable Airmen, talks about mission command. It talks about the things that we need to do to fight and win in a contested environment against a near peer threat.

Maj Quaco:

Is there a way that they can get a printed version of that?

Col Major:

Yeah. So AFDP 1, we did just about a year ago, changed the format of it to condense it down to a easy to carry pocket book size. And so what we've done is, is if you go to the—to our doctrine website and you click on AFDP 1, you'll actually have the option on that screen to open up and download the pocket book version of AFDP 1.

Col Major:

And then at that point at your respective unit, you can download and have the document sent off to a printing company in your respective locations and have them mass produced. So this is this is a big win for our Airmen. A lot of Airmen out there already have a copy of this. We've had it in our university booth at AFA most recently, and it's just something that our Airmen can have on hand at all times. It's in the same size as our Air Force [Blue Book](#) or a [Little Brown Book](#) that we all are very familiar with. And it just puts that doctrine in their hands so that they can reference it and look at it whenever

they need to. So that's one way they can immediately have that access.

Another product that we've that the doctrine team has just recently put out, too, that I think is going to be a big success, and it's already starting to get some rave reviews, is we've put out an Air Force Doctrine [Smart Book](#). And what this is, is, you know, I mentioned the 30 or so publications we have for doctrine and some of those publications are pretty lengthy. So, we may have Airmen out there like, I don't have time to read 100 pages of doctrine, but what this doctrine smart book does is it takes our entire catalog of the 30 or so doctrine publications, and it gives a 1 to 2 page summary synopsis. Think of it as a Cliffs Notes version of what's in that doctrine publication. And so an Airman can look at that, see what they need to see, and then decide from there, okay, I want to dig deeper, and then they can actually go from there into the main doctrine publication itself to learn more about it.

Maj Quaco:

That sounds like a really great resource. Thank you, sir, for sharing that. Before we turn it over to the legal aspects of doctrine, is there anything else that you wanted to share?

Col Major:

I would just say again, take the time to visit the Air Force Doctrine website, [doctrine.af.mil](https://www.dctrine.af.mil). The cool thing about it is you will have the vast preponderance of not only our Air Force doctrine, but also our sister service and joint doctrine as all right there co-located on that website with links to those respective doctrine publications, as well, across our various military branches. And so it's not only a great resource for Air Force doctrine, but it can also get you to our sister service and joint doctrine, as well. So it's a great one stop shop to get access to all of that.

Maj Quaco:

Sir, thank you so much for the resources and your overview of doctrine. For now, we'll switch it over to

Maj Smith and Lt Col Rowe, but of course, if there's any point you want to chime in, feel free to do so.

Col Major:

Sure. Thank you.

Maj Smith:

Lt Col Rowe, thank you so much, sir, for hanging out with this, not only for Col Major's interview, but also just answering questions about how doctrine applies to us as JAGs.

Lt Col Rowe:

Thank you, Victoria.

[What is a Staff Judge Advocate?](#)

Maj Smith:

One of the things I wanted to start with, you mentioned during your introduction that you are the Staff Judge Advocate for the LeMay Center. Will you talk to the people who may not be familiar with the JAG Corps, what is a Staff Judge Advocate?

Lt Col Rowe:

It's the leader similar to a squadron commander for the rest of our Air Force. The Staff Judge Advocate is the leader, typically, of a legal office for an installation. That's the most common. But of course, we have a lot of other organizations and other structures that need legal advice, and I think the higher the rank of your organization, the more likely it is to have a Staff Judge Advocate. And so I am the Staff Judge Advocate, but it's just me at the LeMay Center. And there may be some history in how my position came to be. But right now I advise Major General Holt, who's the Commander of the LeMay Center, and he's also dual-hatted as the Vice Commander to Air University, headquartered here at Maxwell.

[LeMay Center](#)

Maj Smith:

So, Sir, with the LeMay Center being the Center for Doctrine Development in the Air Force, will you talk a little bit about why the LeMay Center needs a lawyer

and why it's important for the LeMay Center to have a Staff Judge Advocate?

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah, sure. So I do a lot of things that a lot of other JAGs do, including ethics and a little bit of advice on disciplinary actions. I sit—where I sit is kind of informative. The LeMay Center has a number of structures and buildings where LeMay Center people work, not just here at Maxwell, but I sit in the Doctrine Development Directorate, and that's because I have an opportunity to review doctrine publications as they come through.

Col Major mentioned there's a two-year review process to update. Most of our publications are on that two-year cycle. And I am able to attend meetings and see the progress on the various doctrine publications and provide input, particularly when it comes to joint and targeting publications, those are ones where a JAG has input. Now, all of our publications actually go through what's called a statutory regulatory review, and that is provided by HAF/JAO headed right now by Brigadier General Thomas. But that's a required review and I may be getting ahead of the discussion here, but all our publications get that review from JAO and then occasionally as JAO provides input, my doctrine personnel want to discuss that with an accessible down-the-hall JAG. So those are opportunities for me to engage, apart from the normal day-to-day typical responsibilities that a JAG has in advising a two-star in an organization.

I didn't mention this, but our organization is about 240ish, 250 personnel, a little over half of those being civilian, the rest military. It's got an intel heavy presence in those personnel. But those are some of the responsibilities that I have.

Deployed JAG

Maj Smith:

One of the things I'd like to follow up with you on, sir. So, you mentioned during your introduction that your last assignment you were a Staff Judge Advocate for a

deployed location. Will you talk a little bit about how that experience in a deployed location informed your responsibilities in your job now.

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah. Thank you. I served it Al Udeid for two years. It's really uncommon. And right now you can't—that position is not accompanied, so it wouldn't be two years, but it really did prepare me. At Al Udeid it is a large installation with lots of tenant units with various missions, including some that are over the horizon. It prepared me because it has the combined air operations center there and I had a front row seat to all the missions of the tenant units supporting all the missions really in CENTCOM.

I was able to see the structure of our Air Mobility Command aircrafts, of course, when they come in, and how our support agreements feed the structure that enables us to employ airpower. I think it is ideal on my view to come from there and then to be immersed in doctrine. Frankly, as a JAG Corps, we don't educate ourselves well on general on doctrine. Many JAGs perhaps listening to this, haven't read AFDP 1. As Colonel Major was mentioning, it's really valuable. Doctrine is about who we are to employ airpower. And in CENTCOM and especially at Al Udeid, you can see how the Air Force is employing airpower. Every day, there's sorties launched from Al Udeid loaded with munitions, and they come back sometimes without those munitions. So we are employing airpower. It's just kind of to use a cliché, tip of the spear, that experience kind of prepared me to appreciate the role that doctrine plays.

Other Doctrine Resources

Maj Smith:

If there's a JAG out there who's listening right now and maybe they're wanting to find out more about doctrine in addition to reading AFDP 1, is there any other publications doctrine that you recommend they kind of start with to kind of just figure out what is this and what's my role?

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah, thank you. AFDP 1 is the perfect start, and then there's some great videos, short videos on doctrine.af.mil that help us understand. The main publication for a JAG is called [Legal Support to Operations](#) and its 3-84. In fact is due for an update. The current one was published in 2020, and we're working on an update to it. But that publication focuses on Air Force support to operations. So, in the JAG Corps, a lot of times we say discipline is job one, justice is job one and it is. Discipline is kind of ancillary in 3-84, because discipline is important, but the legal support publication is about how JAGs support the operational environment. So over at Al Udeid, of course, we weren't doing courts-martial there. It's possible, but so, 3-84 is a great start for a JAG. And again it focuses on operational support.

Maj Smith:

And Col Major, did you have something you wanted to add?

Col Major:

Yeah. So, in addition to some of the things Lt Col Rowe has already touched on, another resource and I should have mentioned this earlier during my segment that we have on our website too, is this—there's another document on there that's called an [Air Force Doctrine Primer](#). And again, it's a short read, but it gives you that big picture overview of what Air Force doctrine is, why you should care about it, how you can use it as an Airman. So I would also recommend that in addition to a AFDP 1 and 3-84, like you just mentioned.

Maj Smith:

Thank you, sir. So, Lt Col Rowe, well, if AFDP 3-84, the *Legal Support to Operations*, if it's not really talking about courts, if it's not talking about discipline, what exactly does it cover?

Lt Col Rowe:

Thank you. It covers, among other things, the support that a JAG provides that is typical, mostly in an air operations center. So there is an AFI on air operations

center. But this doctrine publication focuses on the legal support to Air Force operations that are primarily done from an air operation center. So, it describes the structure, in part, of an air operation center and how a JAG will support, for example, the combat plans division, the strategy division, and the types of advice or the role that the JAG will have input, you know, advising on the international agreements that may limit, for example, the countries over which we're going to fly to launch an attack, or the munitions that we store, those things are limited by our country-to-country agreements, and that's a prime reason that our JAG is in the room at that time. So that's one—couple examples.

Role JAGs Play in Operations Planning**Maj Smith:**

Thank you, sir. So whenever people hear the word JAG, they tend to think courts, they tend to think Tom Cruise, a Few Good Men. I want to talk to you next, sir, about operations planning and what role, if any, JAGs play in it. I know you've talked about your experience working in an deployed location. You've talked about your time currently working as a staff judge advocate. Will you talk a little bit more about what role JAGs play in operations planning.

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah, thank you. So, I mentioned the combat plans division, that is a division within their operations center. That division plans operations, of course, based off the Air Operations Directive. And, as they plan their operations, you know, it eventually becomes an air tasking order after it goes through the ops law wheel of death that many are familiar with. So, the role that the JAG has is—to be aware of, to track—to sit in the conversations as that operation is planned to ensure compliance with the law of war, you know that there's targeting considerations. Of course, we have to only target lawful, valid military objectives. We—there's limitations imposed by the law of war that we need to insert ourselves into in the planning phase and the combat plans division is the primary source for that—for deliberate targets.

Maj Smith:

Col Major, sir, do you have something to add?

Col Major:

Yeah, and I'll add on, too, from my background doing targeting, you know, everything Lt Col Rowe is saying is absolutely right with regards to how the—how that legal support is there within the air operations center. Another piece, too, he mentioned no strike targets or restricted targets that the combat plans division may be working in conjunction with their intel, surveillance, and reconnaissance division. Another piece of that, too, is looking at collateral damage estimates. You know, we may very well be able to strike certain targets, but we may be restricted by the types of weapons we can use on those targets. It could be a specific size restriction to try to minimize the blast or fragmentation pattern when striking that target to minimize any collateral damage, whether it's to civilian structures or to personnel that are that are nonmilitary. So, all of those things are part of the discussion, and having that legal support there in their operation center is really critical to ensure that we're doing things the appropriate way with regards to the laws of war.

Maj Smith:

Col Major, I want to ask you a follow up question based on something you just said. You mentioned that JAGs are critical in that air operations center. So, my follow up to you is this: how can JAGs be more of a value added or something else that we can do to be more helpful in those situations or in those scenarios?

Col Major:

Sure, I think a big part of it is becoming familiar with the ins and outs of what happens in an air operations center, becoming familiar with what the different divisions do within that air operation center to ultimately create an air tasking order and generate airpower. I know that one of the things that you all provide here at The JAG School is one of the—one of your ops courses in particular, I've actually come here on a couple of occasions in the past and talked with the students on Air Force weapons

and on collateral damage estimation and the collateral damage process to help get them smart and educate them on some of those pieces that will be good for them to have in their toolkit when they are supporting operations downrange.

Rules of Engagement

Maj Smith:

Thank you, sir. Lt Col Rowe, my next question for you. It relates specifically to rules of engagement. That's a term that we sometimes hear whenever there's discussions about military operations, combat, missions. Can you talk a little bit about just what rules of engagement even are?

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah, thank you. They are limitations on how we employ airpower. Col Major, a moment ago talked about targeting and collateral damage estimates and the methodology we use to limit the effects of our airpower. Rules of engagement are just that. They are how we within the broader—and I'm making a concentric circle here with my hands—within the broader law of war rules of engagement fit within the law of war and again restrict our use. So, we have policy considerations or maybe a lot of things that go into our rules of engagement. We start with standing rules of engagement, and then there are specific rules of engagement for each operation we are in that further restrict our employment of the use of force.

Maj Smith:

You can probably predict my next question based on my prior line of questioning, but my follow up to you is this: how do JAGs fit into that?

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah. Thank you. So we have requirements to brief rules of engagement, pre-deployment. Many JAGs are familiar with those pre-deployment processing lines. That's kind of a core responsibility for JAGs. Moving to the operational environment, typically overseas, forward operating bases have a similar requirement.

An operation is planned and a JAG is part of the team to advise, for this operation, what our rules of engagement are. A big part of that—what you always hear in an air operations center is we maintain the right, the inherent right of self-defense. It's important that our operators don't get confused because it's all about restricting the use of combat power. That's what rules of engagement do. They provide those limitations so that conflicts don't escalate beyond the commander's intent. But we are careful to continue to emphasize that we can—we can defend ourselves from imminent threats of attack. So that's a bit.

Doctrine in the Operational Environment

Maj Smith:

One of the things that you mentioned was the operational environment. Will you talk a little bit about how doctrine is applied, how is it actually used in the operational environment?

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah, in my experience, it's primarily done through the air operations center and that's where our strategy division tend to be the most familiar with, the most experienced with our doctrine. As Col Major mentioned earlier, in conducting an operation, doctrine is a guide, and it's the 80 to 90% solution for how we're going to organize and employ our forces. Most of the time, that is planned in an air operation center. So that's—so, the strategy division, and an air operation center, those are the environments where operation—or doctrine is really applied, in my experience.

Maj Smith:

Do you have any advice for new, maybe experienced JAGs like Laura and myself, who are wanting to find out more about doctrine?

Lt Col Rowe:

Yeah. First, start with reading AFDP 1, and I know that's been mentioned by Chief Brown a number of times, but start with a doctrine.af.mil and then I think

it's it's helpful to get kind of a foundation that way but also raise your hand to deploy where we have a closer experience with operational support. So, I also recommend reading *Legal Support to Operations*, 3-84, and then coming to The JAG School perhaps for the Ops Law course. Again, as I mentioned earlier, doctrine is really about operational support. That's where it's the most helpful. So those are ways, and speak with your SJA and tell them you're interested in operations law. People that are in our JAG Corps are exposed and have the opportunity to work in an air operation center or doing operational law, they try to keep doing it because they like it. So that's just my two cents there.

Closing Thoughts

Maj Smith:

Yes, sir. Final question that I have for you, sir. Anything else that you'd want to share about the relationship between JAGs and doctrine?

Lt Col Rowe:

Just that in my career I didn't appreciate the role that doctrine plays, and I know I could have been more helpful to the commanders that I've advised if I was.

Maj Smith:

How long did it take you to learn that lesson?

Lt Col Rowe:

My first assignment to an air operations center at Global Strike at Barksdale. When I started to understand what an air operations center does, that's when I realized what I was missing in terms of a doctrinal foundation for how we employ our Air Forces. And I deployed before that, so that's a—that lesson's a long time coming in which we should, I think, be a little more exposed as JAGs when we're first lieutenants or captains, staff sergeants, rather than 12, 14 years into our careers.

Maj Smith:

Thank you, sir. Thank you so much for your time and thank you for participating in this podcast.

Lt Col Rowe:

Sure.

Maj Smith:

Once again, we would like to thank Col Richard Major and Lt Col Derek Rowe for taking time out of your busy schedules to sit down and interview with Major Quaco and myself.

Major Quaco, anything else you want to share with the listeners before we leave?

Maj Quaco:

Yes. So, at the beginning of the episode, we talked about General Brown's perspective on doctrine. And I wanted to close this out with another quote that he has towards the end of the perspective that really hit home for me. And what he said was "Airmen should read, understand, contemplate, and prepare for the full spectrum of operations, from competition to armed conflict." And I love this part. He says "Never forget General LeMay's words: 'At the very heart of warfare lies doctrine.'"

Maj Smith:

Wow. Major Quaco, thank you so much for sharing that quote. And it really goes back to those points that Col Major and Lt Col Rowe were sharing with us during that interview about the importance of doctrine for all Airmen, regardless of your career field.

Listeners, thank you so much for joining us today. Please like, review, subscribe wherever you get your podcast. And if you have specific feedback or suggestions, please reach out to us on the website, [jagreporter.af.mil](https://www.jagreporter.af.mil) through the "contact us" function.

That's all for today. This podcast is in recess.

Maj Quaco:

Until next time.

Are you interested in joining the Air Force JAG Corps? You can learn more information at airforce.com/jag, that's J A G. You may also call us at 1-800-JAG-USA. That's 1-800 524-8723. Or you may email us at airforcejagrecruiting@gmail.com.

Maj Smith:

Nothing from this show should be construed as legal advice. Please consult an attorney for any legal issues. Nothing in this show is endorsed by the federal government, the Air Force or, any of its components. All content and opinions are those of its guests and host.

Glossary

- **ACE:** Agile Combat Employment
- **AFA:** Air Force Association
- **AFDP:** Air Force Doctrine Publication
- **AFI:** Air Force Instruction
- **AFJAG:** Air Force Judge Advocate General
- **AOC:** Air Operations Center
- **CENTCOMM:** Central Command
- **COMM:** communications
- **HAF:** Headquarters Air Force
- **JAG:** judge advocate general
- **JAO:** Operations and International Law Domain
- **MAJCOM:** major command
- **NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- **NCO:** noncommissioned officer
- **OIR:** Operation INHERENT RESOLVE
- **SJA:** Staff Judge Advocate
- **STANAG:** standardization agreement

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