

The following is from an audio recording and in some cases, it may be incomplete, or inaccurate due to inaudible passages, or other transcription errors. Nothing from this show or any others would be construed as legal advice. Please consult an attorney for any legal issue. Nothing from this show is endorsed by the Federal Government, Air Force, or any of its components. All content and opinions are those of our guests and host. The inclusion of hyperlinks and references does not imply any endorsement by the author(s), by the Federal Government, Air Force, or any of its components. They are meant to provide an additional perspective or as a supplementary resource. The Department of the Air Force or any other department or agency of the United States Government does not exercise any responsibility or oversight of the content at the link destination.



AFJAGS Podcast: Episode 76

JAGs on the Job: Military Justice & Discipline

Host: Major Laura Quaco

Guests: Lieutenant Colonel Dane Horne and Major Allison Gish

In this episode, Major Laura Quaco talks with Lieutenant Colonel Dane Horne and Major Allison Gish about their experiences serving as judge advocates in the United States Air Force, and more specifically, working in military justice and discipline capacities.

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

Introductions

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 and I'm your host for this podcast. Today, we're going to have our first episode of what I'm going to call our JAGs on the Job series. They won't be consecutive, but we'll have this episode today and another couple of episodes sprinkled in over the next couple months with interviews of various judge advocates, a.k.a. attorneys in the Air Force.

Today's episode will be focused on military justice, which is what we military lawyers call criminal law. We've got a couple subject matter experts I'll introduce in just a moment. The two other episodes in the series will be focused on civil law and operations and international law. Our experts are individuals who have extensive experience in the subject matter area for the episodes at hand and are going to talk to us about some of the day-to-day jobs and frankly, the cool things that our JAG Corps is doing in their respective arenas. They'll also talk about some of the cases and issues they get to positively impact. And additionally, some of our folks have some really neat backgrounds related to their path to and in the JAG Corps that we may explore a bit, as well.

Now, I do want to give a little bit of a trigger warning here for this episode in particular on military justice and discipline for my listeners out there who might not like to hear about serious offenses. The subject matter experts will not be discussing anything in detail, but the types of serious offenses and maybe some of the cases they've worked might come up. That could include sexual offenses, domestic violence, offenses against children, that sort of thing. So just trigger warning there.

Now back to our experts for today. I am on the line right now with Lieutenant Colonel Dane Horne and Major Allison Gish. Lt Col Horne is currently the Staff Judge Advocate at the 51st Fighter Wing, Osan Air Base in the Republic of Korea. For my civilian listeners, a Staff Judge Advocate or SJA, is what we call the lead attorney in a legal office. Lt Col Horne has held a wide array of positions in the military justice realm, including prosecutor, defense counsel, the senior positions of those roles, and Director of Trial Operations. So welcome, Lt Col Horne, thanks for joining us today.

Lieutenant Colonel Dane Horne:

Yeah, thanks for having me, ma'am. Excited to be here.

Maj Quaco:

Alright. We also have Maj Allison Gish. She is currently moving to a new position as the Chief of Strategic Communications in The Judge Advocate General's Office. That is the office for our senior most attorney in the Air Force, our three-star general, currently Lieutenant General Charles Plummer. Related to military justice, Maj Gish has been a prosecutor, defense counsel, our senior version of prosecutor, appellate counsel, Director of Operations with the Office of Special Trial Counsel, OSTC. For those of you who that's ringing a bell for it's probably because our last episode on this podcast was about the standup of OSTC, so go back and listen to it if you haven't. Fun fact about Maj Gish is she's currently on maternity leave and yes, she voluntarily agreed to do this podcast episode while spending time with her sweet little babe. So first, congratulations, and second to our listeners, that's why you might even hear a little baby peep or coo in the background during this episode.

Maj Allison Gish:

Thank you so much, Maj Quaco. Really excited to be here.

Maj Quaco:

Great, before we get into some of y'all's experience, I was hoping that briefly, Lt Col Horne, could you just tell our listeners who aren't tracking, maybe our civilian listeners, what is encompassed within the military justice and discipline domain in the Air Force?

Lt Col Horne:

Yes, ma'am. I'm happy to do so. So the military justice and discipline domain encompasses pretty much anything you can get with the military justice realm. We have our prosecution and defense functions within the military justice domain. So, prosecuting folks, defending folks at courts martial. We have our appellate personnel, so government and defense side for appellate counsel. We have our victims counsel who help our victims walk through the court-martial process. Then we have our military justice law and policy section, as well as investigations, inquiries and reliefs, as well as disability counsel to help people going through disability boards.

Maj Quaco:

Great. Thank you, sir. And so today, obviously, we can't talk about all those things as much as I'd like to, but let's be real, that would probably be a five-hour podcast. So today we are going to hone in on the areas that you, Lt Col Horne and Maj Gish specifically have experience working. So with that, I want to turn it over to you all. Lt Col Horne, if you would just start, can you kind of give an overview of the types of jobs you've held and kind of what that's entailed?

Lt Col Horne:

Yes, ma'am, absolutely. So, like every JAG that comes through the JAG Corps, I started out as a base level trial counsel. The interesting thing about me, I think, is that I was not at a justice heavy base in either one of my first two assignments. One thing I did to sort of get acquainted with the military justice system and get some experience is seek opportunities to help in any way I could, even if I wasn't assigned as trial counsel

on the cases. So, I think that really gave me the tools necessary to move on into the Area Defense Counsel job. After the Area Defense Counsel job, I went into a what was then called a Senior Trial Counsel position. I did that for a couple of years, and basically what that entailed was traveling around the Air Force, prosecuting the most serious offenses, working with Trial Counsel from afar to build cases and then flying in, you know, a week or so before trial to build a case there on the ground, to get it refined for court, and then trying it there to verdict and sentence.

After that, I went to a Senior Defense Counsel role. So essentially, I was—I was that senior litigator, but I was on the defense side at that point. I supervised four Area Defense Counsel and four Defense Paralegals during that period. And then, much like the Senior Trial Counsel role, flew in to—to defend Airmen who were facing the most serious offenses.

After those roles, I have been a Deputy Staff Advocate, so overseeing base level Trial Counsel who were prosecuting cases, helping them work through the court-martial process and then serving as the Chief Circuit Trial Counsel and the Director of Trial Operations in the Central Circuit down in San Antonio. In that role, I had a team of up to six Circuit Trial Counsel at the time is what they were called, working for me and work covered 22 bases, essentially in their investigations and prosecutions of serious offenses, helping them perfect charges, helping my Circuit Trial Counsel prepare cases and then also flying in myself from time to time to try cases, as well.

Maj Quaco:

Great. Thank you so much for providing that background, Sir. Maj Gish, over to you if you want to provide us a little bit of background on your justice experience.

Maj Gish:

Thanks. Definitely. So I had a similar career path in that I started as a prosecutor, became a defense counsel, and then worked as a Circuit Trial Counsel, or a prosecutor, again. I started—my first two gigs were out at Kadena

Air Base in Okinawa, Japan, which is just a tropical paradise and the best place to live for a few years. And then when I was a senior prosecutor, I was out at Travis Air Force Base in California. And the mission out there was to litigate cases and teach junior counsel how to do that, which was a really fun and rewarding gig. And then from there, I came to D.C. to work as an Appellate Government Counsel. So essentially, Airmen with certain sentences get automatic right to appeal. So in my role, I was representing the government and saying why the appellate bench of judges should uphold the conviction and the sentence that happened down at the trial level. So that was rewarding, too. It gave me more time to really dig deep and research the law and write briefs to advocate to a bunch of judges, not only why they should uphold that specific sentence, but also how the law impacts Air Force and military justice writ large, and to essentially advocate for which direction the law should be moving towards.

And then my last gig, I was working for the Office of Special Trial Counsel, as you mentioned. So, Congress passed legislation essentially changing how some cases the military prosecutes will be brought to trial. So I worked on establishing that new office, and it was a really exciting venture. And then from there I had more excitement and went on maternity leave. And then I'll be stepping back into a role working on strategic communications when I return in August.

Military Justice Cases

Maj Quaco:

Thank you for providing that background. Maj Gish. I want to ask the both of you what types of cases have you worked in the military justice system? Lt Col Horne?

Lt Col Horne:

So the types of cases I've worked in the military justice system mostly have been sexual assault cases or what we call special victims cases. So, sexual assault, rape, domestic violence, murder, attempted murder. In addition to those cases, I've worked ROTC instructor and recruiter misconduct cases, as well as a number of child pornography cases.

Maj Quaco:

And Maj Gish, have those been similar cases that you have worked?

Maj Gish:

Yes, a lot of sexual assault cases. When I was in Japan, there was a lot of child pornography cases or to-catch-a-predator cases where investigators pose as an underage girl. I also had some financial fraud cases where Airmen were trying to get extra money by essentially filing false claims for how many incentives or benefits they should receive.

Maj Quaco:

Interesting. And were there any cases in particular that stood out to the two of you as either impactful or meaningful or anything along those lines? And before you answer, I'll just add another quick **trigger warning** here for our listeners, because I surmise this question may be where we get into some of the more serious types of offenses y'all have dealt with.

Lt Col Horne:

Yeah, you know, some of the cases that have impacted me the most are—are ones that I can actually still see, you know, in my mind, a victim that I work with. One that particularly stands out to me is—is the case I had with a young girl. This was actually the second time her stepfather had been court-martialed for sexually abusing her. The first time was for recording her in the bathroom. She was 12 years old at the time and—and using that for his own purposes. After that court-martial, the individual went to jail for about five years. And during the time he was in confinement, she essentially let out all the other sexual abuse he was doing to her and working with her and watching her work through the process a second time and seeing the weight that was lifted off her shoulders when the guilty verdict was announced the second time around. That she had finally been able to release that pain and that trauma that had been on her for so many years was something that I'll never forget. So—so that is one of the largest impacts in cases that I've had on me personally, especially on the prosecution side.

On the defense side, I think the case that I think about most on the defense side, and it may seem weird, it was it was just a random case, 4 to 5 specifications. It was not sexual assault or anything along those lines. This was an individual who was an OSI agent and had false official statements and dereliction of duty specifications preferred against him. Fairly quick acquittal, but several years later, he emailed me pictures from his retirement ceremony and a copy of his retirement order and thanked me for making his retirement possible for him after having defending him in the court-martial. So when I think back on my career and sort of the two cases that stand out to me the most as having impact, it would be those two.

Maj Quaco:

Wow. And for our civilian listeners, real quick, can you just tell us what OSI stands for?

Lt Col Horne:

Absolutely. OSI stands for Office of Special Investigations. They are the individuals who are ordinarily conducting the investigations that lead to the prosecuting of a court-martial or something along those lines. So, he was an agent with OSI and ended up facing court-martial himself.

Maj Quaco:

So I'm sure that was very impactful, especially for him in that line of work. And I have to say, I got chills as you were giving your—your story about the prosecution. That must have been really rewarding. Alright, Maj Gish, over to you. Any cases that were particularly rewarding or stood out to you as impactful?

Maj Gish:

Thanks. Yeah, I think going second, I had more time to think through rewarding or proud to serve and impactful. So I think I'd like—two general categories essentially. So, rewarding, it's hard to nail down just one case, but the defense counsel life in general, just the day-to-day grind was rewarding because I feel like every time someone walked through my door, it was a client who needed something and I could impact their

life. And one specific example was a trial that actually never went to trial, but even those stakes were high and stress was high. So, I had a senior officer client who took the flight from Tokyo to Australia, which is really long because we have a contingency of Air Force officers in Australia and they took too much sleeping medicine, and then on the way back from the bathroom, didn't button up all the way and there was a whole like school class of young Japanese children, so that did not go over well. And so this officer really felt like their life was in jeopardy and their liberty. I learned a lot. Ended up being that as soon as those cabin doors closed, it's the jurisdiction of the receiving country, so it was actually Australian jurisdiction. So, I ended up working with not only Japanese prosecutors but also working with Australian defense attorneys, where it ended up being essentially the same acquittal and as like a parking, because in Australia indecent exposure is not a serious offense, but the stakes were high and working through all of that and helping my client get through it was a really rewarding experience.

In addition, just when I think back to being a defense counsel, my lifestyle—it was just enjoyable. I would wake up and looking at the Pacific Ocean, run along the seawall, take a little moped ride to work, and then if we catch the sunrise on the way out, it was just a reward after putting in many hours to help out the Airmen. So, I've been talking for a while. I'll keep my proud to serve pretty quick. But it was just a really egregious case of a father committing many crimes against his wife with his kids present both sexual and just assault and battery that were pretty violent. And I actually litigated with another co-counsel who was in my same senior prosecutor position because it was that big of a case. So just working in sync with someone who felt like it was left brain, right brain, just working totally in step. At one point we even said the exact same thing as we were rising from our seats on the record and then looked at each other like how did the exact same words come out of our mouth, but just feeling like we made all of the right tactical decisions at trial and then getting the conviction and a very strong sentence that would

essentially keep the airman in confinement until his children were 18 years old, since he committed crimes against them, that was incredibly rewarding.

And then when I went to the appellate court, I got to work with that same co-counsel at the trial level to make sure that the appeal was upheld and our court upheld it again. So that just felt very rewarding and it made me proud to serve to make sure we got justice for the victims and their family.

Maj Quaco:

Wow. I bet you didn't think that when you were joining the Air Force that you would be dealing with prosecutorial functions from two countries, other than the United States, did you?

Maj Gish:

No, I did not expect that at all.

Defense Counsel

Maj Quaco:

So both of you have been defense counsel, and one thing I want to ask you about, I think something that a lot of us questioned or heard in law school or our non-lawyer friends can't wrap their heads around—Being a defense counsel, we get the question of, well, how can you possibly defend someone who committed crimes? What do you all say about that?

Lt Col Horne:

Yes, ma'am, That's a great question, and it's a question I asked myself before I became a defense counsel actually. I think the answer boils down to you're supporting the system at that point. While you're defending an airman, you're more so defending the system, our justice system, you know, the presumptions that the Constitution provides—the presumption of innocence, that presumption remaining until you're proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. One thing I always, always think to myself, especially when I defended the case, I defended Airmen like I would want someone defending one of my children if

they were facing crimes like the person was facing. Regardless of what those offenses were, I would still want my children defended to the utmost ability of the attorney within the ethical bounds, of course, and that's what I tried to do for my client simply to support the system. And I think that's how I got around to, you know, maybe knowing in some cases that my client actually committed what they were charged with. But you still defend the system to make the system work like it's supposed to, because that's the only way we can support it.

Maj Quaco:

Right. Right. Maj Gish, anything to add?

Maj Gish:

Thanks. Yeah, I agree wholeheartedly with Lt Col Horne about essentially supporting a system, holding the government to their burden. But I also think what's unique as a defense counsel in the military that you wouldn't get on the civilian side is when their client walks in your door and has charges against them, you already have a commonality with them. They're in uniform, like they have some kind of operational job that you can ask them questions about to kind of break the ice. And you can understand what hours they're putting in on the flight line or in maintenance or flying—like there's some commonality between you two that can really help jump start that relationship and essentially just humanizes them. Like you're not just defending a criminal or I always ask the question from family members, how do you defend someone if you know they're guilty? And it's holding the government to their burden, and essentially, sometimes that relationship you have with your client can help you because you can uncover nuggets that they might not have given to someone they didn't trust. And sometimes at the end of the day, I had cases where clients pled because the government's case was that strong and they would benefit from a plea deal. And I've had clients reach out after even a plea deal, specifically what I'm thinking about and they aren't in the military anymore, but wanted to tell me how well they're doing.

And so those are the kind of cases that make you feel like you're on the right side and working the law how it should be worked.

Impacts

Maj Quaco:

Right? So clearly big impacts there in the defense counsel role, you know, upholding the military justice system, making sure they've got their due process and all of that. What other impacts do you feel like your roles have had in the justice system?

Lt Col Horne:

So Maj Quaco, I think another impact that the positions I've been able to hold have had—it's just working with people. In the roles that Maj Gish has had, the roles that I have had, we have had numerous opportunities to work with—with junior JAGs, whether it be trying a case with them, working through an investigation with them, going to the JAG school to be an instructor at some of our litigation courses and those types of things. As I think back on my career, I've worked with hundreds of JAGs and paralegals, and each one of those opportunities I've tried to take as an opportunity to help someone grow, whether it's the slightest amount, at least to help them move their career forward a little bit. So that's been a tremendous opportunity, and, you know, having folks that I've worked with in the past still reach out to me for mentorship just to check on me, just to check on life shows that those opportunities did have an impact not only on them but also on me, as well.

Maj Gish:

I agree with Lt Col Horne and that essentially the impacts we have are the people that we work with a lot. And when I was starting out, I just really admired the senior litigators that I watched in trial, their knowledge of the rules, the law, how they handled everything, these extremely serious felony courts-martial and traveling the world, litigating them. And I just watched as much trial as I could. To me, it was really exciting. It was like Law and Order, but in person, in real life. And I wanted to do that too. And so hopefully I did teach and litigate well when

I was a senior prosecutor and I guess I think I did, because trial really bonds the co-counsel together if you do it right, in a similar way to being on a really competitive sports team. Essentially practice hard work, adrenaline, you're getting to game day, but more serious for trial because you're impacting people's lives and trying to make victims essentially feel whole again as much as you can. So those bonds with my co-counsel, even if I was the one who's supposed to be teaching and mentoring them, I think those bonds are still strong. And I still hear from some I heard from someone this week who said she just thinks of me when she's in trial. And so then I responded with "well, how'd trial go?" And she said, "I'm still in it." So that's when you know to say "okay, good luck and stop texting me." So I really just think that I hope that I made at least a small positive impact on people I worked with because I know that my mentors have made a huge impact on me.

What Inspired You (Lt Col Horne) to Serve?

Maj Quaco:

Well, it sounds like now you are that person you looked up to. You know, those senior litigators you said you admired and let you down your path. But now I want to shift gears and ask the both of you, you know, what was your initial inspiration to serve and what has propelled you forward on that path?

Lt Col Horne:

So, I actually started out in high school. My stepbrother, he was a few years older than me, joined the Army National Guard shortly after he graduated, and I looked into joining the Army while I was in high school and ultimately decided I wasn't quite ready for that at the time. I went to college for a couple of years and decided I was wasting a lot of time and money because I didn't quite know what I wanted to do at that point in time with my life. So, I ended up enlisting in the North Carolina Air National Guard. I was a C-130 crew chief actually for seven years and deployed three times with my unit there in Charlotte and just—just made some really great friends and developed some really great relationships

with the folks there. And my last year in the Guard was my first year in law school, so I was traveling basically from Tuscaloosa to Charlotte once a month for drill weekend, and my wife and I would leave Tuscaloosa 5:00 Central Time and drive to Charlotte, getting there about 2 a.m. I'd wake up at 7:00 to go to drill that Saturday, and then we turn around Sunday after drill was over, drive back. And I remember my last day at the guard base there as my wife and I were driving away from Charlotte, I was—I was getting a little emotional about it, and she asked me, you know, "what's wrong? You know, this has been sort of a time burden on our lives for the last year, driving up here and everything." And I said to her—I said, "imagine going somewhere with the same people for six month stints at a time and those are the only people you interact with and think about the bonds that you create with them." And as I got to thinking about my legal career and what I wanted to do after law school, I thought back on those relationships I'd developed in the Air National Guard and thought, what better way to continue that and to continue serving than to try to join the JAG Corps. And so I applied and here I am.

Prior Enlistment Path and Deployments

Maj Quaco:

And here you are. We're lucky to have you in the JAG Corps, but that's a really fascinating path that you took, starting with that prior enlistment as a C-130 crew chief in the Guard with all those deployments. So I'd actually like to circle back briefly and ask you, what was that experience like?

Lt Col Horne:

The experience was fantastic. I mean, obviously, you know, I recognize the fact that my enlisted experience in the Guard is vastly different than the enlisted experience on active duty. But it was a tremendous opportunity, I think a tremendous opportunity for me as a JAG to understand a little bit at least of what enlisted Airmen go through, of what they experience. You know, when we hear folks talking about their hours working the line and that sort of thing, having done that, I can put myself in those shoes, right? So I think it does give me a far

different perspective on enlisted clients that we may have walk in, as, you know, an Area Defense Counsel or something along those lines, but it also gives me, I think, a perspective on the paths that our paralegals take, especially paralegals who cross-train from different career fields. And it's been something that I've tried to pay respect to throughout my career when I'm working with enlisted to validate that experience that they've gone through.

Maj Quaco:

Great. And you had other deployment experience on the legal side, too, right?

Lt Col Horne:

I have, I have, yeah. I had one deployment on the JAG side. I was a deployed Staff Judge Advocate in Southwest Asia for an air base there.

Maj Quaco:

And what was that like?

Lt Col Horne:

That was more amazing than the enlisted deployments, to be quite honest with you. I was involved in some pretty cool things at a location that was that was involved in the Syrian retrograde when President Trump said, pull everybody out of Syria. So, I got a great opportunity to work with the Department of State, the U.S. Embassy there, and the host nation to—to basically expand the amount of land the U.S. was able to use. So something completely out of my wheelhouse, right, as a military justice practitioner. It gave me an interesting view into how those negotiations go when working with the host nation on—on what the US can do in a country, for instance. But it was completely worthwhile and completely rewarding.

Reasons You Continue to Serve

Maj Quaco:

Right. Right. And so you talked about kind of your initial inspirations to serve. What were the reasons that you continue to serve? Is that one of them I imagine? Those great experiences.

Lt Col Horne:

Yeah, absolutely. The great experiences and the breadth of experience, I think. So while I've sort of focused on military justice throughout my career, it's still been a wide array of things, right? The JAG Corps has still pulled me out from time to time to go back to a legal office and now where I am now to go back and lead a legal office. So I'm still touching a wide array of subject matter to keep things interesting, right? To keep things new. The other things that sort of—sort of lead me to continue serving are sort of the camaraderie like I talked about earlier when talking about leaving the guard. The relationships that I've developed in the JAG Corps, I can't put words on them. You know, like—like Maj Gish was saying earlier, when you go into trial with someone, when you're working, you know, 20 hours a day together for days and days on end, you're exhausted, you're tired, you're hungry, but you're still in there together and you're still doing battle. Right? That does form a bond. I think that's not easily broken, especially for some of those folks you tried multiple cases with. So the camaraderie and the people have also kept me serving. And then finally, I think just—just serving something bigger than myself, which I think was one of the things why I originally enlisted in the Air Guard anyway, but continuing to serve the Air Force and the United States, which is going to, you know, carry on far after I'm gone, I think is the third thing that keeps me serving.

What Inspired You (Maj Gish) to Serve?

Maj Quaco:

Right. The camaraderie is something that hits me hard as well. And it's funny because I think outside prosecutors and defense attorneys, call me and correct me if I'm wrong, but I think they might hear about us going out to dinner after a trial is all said and done and breaking bread together, some of them might think that's kind of strange, I would think, but correct me if I'm wrong, call me.

Maj Gish over to you. What—what inspired you to serve?

Maj Gish:

Thanks Maj Quaco, and I echo that sentiment about getting together with your opposing counsel afterwards is that it almost helps you duke it out harder in trial because you know that they won't take it personal and you already have that established relationship and officership amongst yourselves that you can push the envelope and file that motion and argue for that case. But with regards to serving, initially, I joined because I saw the benefits that my older sister had from service. She did Army ROTC and was traveling the world and deploying, and I saw the camaraderie she had with her fellow soldiers and officers, and I wanted something like that. I chickened out from ROTC initially and then enlisted in the Army National Guard during my undergrad. So, I did boot camp one summer and then another summer, I did what's called advanced individual training where I learned my job. And during that time I studied for the LSAT, which probably in hindsight wasn't the best idea. I probably could have studied better if I took more time off. But I really didn't want to move my four year graduation date at all. I was kind of making the military fit into my lifestyle rather than it being my lifestyle. And then once I got to law school, I knew I wanted to be a JAG. I knew I wanted military life to be my lifestyle. I really admired the JAG that I saw and interned for and decided on the Air Force. So that's kind of why I joined initially.

But there's probably a few reasons why I continue to serve. One is the mission, and it's not just that I'm putting in billable hours and working for a law firm or for profit. There's actually a bigger mission that I'm helping to support very indirectly by helping commanders keep a ready unit and keep the people they need in ready to go versus kicking out the people who commit crimes. But I still feel part of that. I felt like that in Kadena when we would meet with commanders on the flight line. And I even feel that kind of more from the DoD writ large just because I my husband's a Marine Corps pilot, so I hear about all the things happening on the Marine Corps side as well. So just knowing that I'm supporting a bigger mission keeps me in, and that's kind of the first reason. And that would have been my reason a few

months ago, but now my reason has kind of two answers in that I—I want my daughter to grow up seeing me put on boots, too. I don't want her just to have that be something in my past that there was a photo of me in a really nasty maternity shirt that I did not rock well. Some people rock it really well, but I just looked like a boat. But I don't want her to know that I was pregnant and served, and then I got out. I want her to kind of see what I'm doing every day when we get back to the dinner table and hear stories not only about her dad, but her mom being in, and—and essentially her—her aunts, so to speak, is what we call them. All my best friends who are in who are pilots, intelligence officers in the Space Force and everything, medical aero evacuation, just pulling these crazy, awesome missions. I want her to see these powerful women in her life and know that she can do that or do anything.

Being Dual Military

Maj Quaco:

You know, it's funny that you mention that you make some of your best friends in the military to the point where your own kids will even refer to them as aunt and uncle. And as we're speaking right now, because it's after duty hours, after daycare hours, I've got a fellow JAG who's watching my two kids who I'll sometimes referred to as one of their aunties. So, totally feel that on those close relationships even to our own children. I also want to ask, because you said that your husband is a marine, so I wanted to see if you could talk a bit to our listeners about what that's like being dual military.

Maj Gish:

It's trying at times to be completely honest. I mean, your dual military, too, so you know that the mission comes first and so there's going to be times that you're not together as much as you want to be. But to be completely honest, I think it makes you cherish the times that you do have together. I mean, there's times that he's been deployed and I'll connect with the other military spouses and we just kind of crave that normalcy of going to the grocery store or just having two people to help do things around the house. But then when they

are home, it just makes you realize that these are the times that you wanted. So even when they're bothering you or you're fighting over who cut the grass next and passing off chores, you're remembering, oh yeah, this is what I wanted. I wanted this person around more. And I think it just makes you grateful for the times that you do have together.

Final Thoughts

Maj Quaco:

Wow. Some of what you're saying about having a military spouse is definitely ringing true for me, as well. I want to ask, though, before we close out for today, what kind of advice do you have for maybe our current JAGs or even listeners out there who are considering going to law school or even just joining the military? What advice do you have for them?

Maj Gish:

I would say talk to as many people who are in the role where you think you want to be as possible. I just did a lot of research, a lot of talking to people to find out is that a lifestyle I want? And I interned for the Air Force and the Army and really talking to people and seeing what their day-to-day was is what convinced me to switch from the Army to the Air Force. I liked the camaraderie. It was stronger. I liked what I perceived to be the ability to specialize more. If you really like litigating, then you can make that known and be a rockstar in the courtroom and to be able to keep that position and stay there. I interned in the Air Force at the appellate office where I was just last working, and they were doing pushups like every 2 hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and just challenging each other and motivating each other, and it's not the same that I felt anecdotally in my own internship in Army. So, I think the best advice is to just find people who are doing what you might want to do and find out what that lifestyle is about and talk to them.

Maj Quaco:

Great. Thanks for sharing. Lt Col Horne, I want to give you a chance to jump in and chime in with any words of wisdom you may have.

Lt Col Horne:

Yeah, I would echo what Maj Gish said there. One thing I would add to that is, is especially for the folks who may already be in the JAG Corps, is to never close the door to something. I came into the JAG Corps having no desire whatsoever to be a litigator. I never took trial ad or anything along those lines in law school. And here I am only because I got the advice to—to be open to anything. So I would say when opportunities present themselves to take advantage of them, to give it 100% and then see where that may lead you. But much like Maj Gish said, as well, talking to the folks who are holding those roles or have held those—those roles that you're going to move into seeing what life is like, seeing what it's going to take, learning from that and growing from it, but always being open to those opportunities.

Maj Quaco:

That is really surprising to hear, sir, that you didn't envision yourself being a litigator because here you are now. And honestly, I had cases where you were the named Circuit Trial Counsel, and I was reviewing and everyone knows Lt Col Horne, and he's this rock star litigator. So that's really interesting to hear that you weren't envisioning yourself down that path originally, and here you are.

Lt Col Horne:

Mysterious ways.

Closing

Maj Quaco:

Well, thank you to both of you for coming on The AFJAGS Podcast and sharing some of your experiences with us. I know I appreciated it and I'm sure our listeners did as well.

Maj Gish:

Thank you so much.

Lt Col Horne:

Thanks for having me.

Maj Quaco:

All right, listeners, that's all I've got for you today. I hope you enjoyed that conversation With Lt Col Horne and Maj Gish. Please feel free to review, rate, and subscribe to this podcast. And for now, this podcast is in recess.

[Gavel banging twice]

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-USAF. That's 1-800-524-8723 or you may email us at af.jag.recruiting@us.af.mil. That's M-I-L.

Disclaimer:

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

- **AFJAGS:** Air Force Judge Advocate General's School
- **DoD:** Department of Defense
- **JAG:** judge advocate general
- **LSAT:** Law School Admission Test
- **OSI:** Office of Special Investigations
- **OSTC:** Office of Special Trial Counsel
- **ROTC:** Reserve Officers' Training Corps
- **SJA:** Staff Judge Advocate

Transcript edited by Major Laura Quaco

Layout by Thomasa Huffstutler