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# AFJAGS Podcast: Episode 81 75 Years as ONE TEAM

**Host:** Major Laura Wheat

**Guests:** Various key JAG Corps personnel

Happy 75th Anniversary to the United States Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps! In this special 75th Anniversary edition episode, Major Laura Wheat interviews various key JAG Corps personnel to give brief overviews on some of the major events over the past 75 years.

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

## Introduction

### **Major Laura Wheat:**

Good morning, afternoon, and evening listeners. Welcome back to the Air Force Judge Advocate General's School Podcast. I'm Major Laura Wheat, and I'm your host for this podcast. Now, today's episode is a very special edition because we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United States Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps. So, for today, we have a lot of key JAG Corps personnel to give us brief overviews of some of the major events over the past 75 years, in chronological order. We'll start in the late 1940s with The current Judge Advocate General, or TJAG, Lieutenant General Charles Plummer, discussing the creation of the United States

Air Force and Office of The Judge Advocate General. We'll also get to hear a bit of his senior leader perspective. We'll then continue with Major General Mitch Neurock and Major General Chuck Walker, who are Air Force Reserve and Air Force National Guard Assistants to TJAG. They'll discuss the 1949 creation of The Judge Advocate General's Reserve Department, and continue on with some other notable events in the Air Reserve Component History.

Next, we'll move to the 1950s, with Brigadier General Gail Crawford, the director of Military Justice and Discipline, discussing the passing of the Uniform Code of Military Justice and creation of the Manual for Courts-Martial. After that, we'll hear from Chief Master Sergeant Laura Puza, the Senior Enlisted Advisor to TJAG, to discuss the

creation of the paralegal career field in the mid-1950s, as well as other notable events related to our paralegals. After that, we'll come back to Brigadier General Crawford with the Military Justice Act of 1968. Next, Colonel Brett Landry, the Chief of the Air Force's Trial Defense Division, will discuss the creation of an independent defense counsel program in the mid-1970s. We'll also hear an audio recording from a former TJAG, Major General William Moorman, discussing the program.

After that, we're moving to September 11, 2001, with Brigadier General Michael Tomatz, the Director of Operations and International Law, giving an overview of what happened on 9/11, as well as a discussion of what the JAG Corps' operational support looked like pre-, during, and post-9/11. Next up will be Retired Lieutenant General Rives, the 15th TJAG, to talk to us about JAG Corps 21 in 2006, followed by the 2008 promotion of the TJAG position from major general to lieutenant general. After that, we'll hear from Colonel Shelly Frank, the Director of Inspections and Standardization, to tell us about the 2011 creation of the Inspections and Standardization Directorate. We then get to hear from Colonel Lanourra Phillips, the Chief of the Victims' Counsel Division, regarding the 2013 creation of the Victims' Counsel program.

Next, we take it back to Brigadier General Tomatz to hear about the 2019 creation of the United States Space Force. After that, we'll hear from our current Deputy Judge Advocate General, Major General Rebecca Vernon, to tell us about the 2019 JAG Corps realignment. Then, Brigadier General Christopher Brown, the Lead Special Trial Counsel, will talk about the creation of the Office of Special Trial Counsel in the early 2020s. After that, the Chief of Military Justice, Law, and Policy, Colonel Andrea Hall, will tell us about some other significant changes to military justice as a result of the 2022 and 2023 National Defense Authorization Acts, or NDAA's. Our last subject matter expert will be Colonel Mark Hoover, the Director of the Legal Information Services Directorate, and he's going to talk to us about the transformation

of technology throughout JAG Corps' history, spanning from the early 1960s to the present day.

But we won't stop there. At the end of the episode, we'll get a little glimpse into our future generation. You'll hear from a handful of recent students here at the JAG School who are new to the JAG Corps career field, and they'll tell you about their inspiration to join the Air Force, and what they look forward to in their service of our Corps.

Now, as I'm sure you can guess based on the number of events to discuss, this episode is longer than our other episodes, but we really wanted to keep all this rich history in one place, as one episode.

So without further ado, I'm going to turn it over to *THE* Judge Advocate General, Lieutenant General Charles Plummer, to kick us off on our chronological journey of the Air Force JAG Corps.

## **The Office of the Judge Advocate General**

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### **Lieutenant General Charles Plummer:**

Hello, I'm Lieutenant General Charles Plummer. I'm the Nineteenth Judge Advocate General for the Air Force and the Second Judge Advocate General for the Space Force. 25 January 2024 marked the 75th anniversary of the United States Air Force Judge Advocate General Corps. Our Corps has come a long way in the past 75 years. Back in the 1940s, Colonel Desmond O'Keefe, who was the Air Force Judge Advocate of the Army, advocated for the creation of a separate Air Force and later for the creation of the Office of the Judge Advocate General.

On 18 September 1947, the National Security Act established the United States Air Force. The following year, in 1948, the Air Force Military Justice Act created the Office of the Judge Advocate General and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force designated the initial 205 Air Force judge advocates. On 8 September 1948, Major General Reginald Harmon became the first Judge Advocate General for the Air Force.

Finally, on 25 January 1949, Air Force Order Number Seven established The Judge Advocate General's Department. Today, you're going to hear about some major events, pivotal moments, and stories of the teamwork our JAG Corp displayed throughout its history. These events greatly contributed to where our JAG Corps stands today, accomplishing our mission as One Team. The development of our Corps has been guided in part by our JAG Corps guiding principles: Wisdom, Valor, and Justice.

Before we continue on the chronological journey of the JAG Corps, I'd like to take some time to talk about each of those. First, wisdom. Wisdom is not just about book smarts. It is the combination of intelligence and experience. It is the ability to deliver competent legal advice to better the larger mission. The ability to accurately identify issues, retrieve and analyze the facts, and properly communicate the necessary information in a timely manner.

Over the years, our Corps has continually strived to enhance the knowledge and experience of our judge advocates and paralegals. From the competitive selection process, to the ever-increasing number of courses offered in the JAG school and other educational institutions, including a wealth of virtual continuing legal education courses. Some of the most experience comes from the day-to-day boots on the ground, exposure to real world scenarios.

It's those new prosecutors or case paralegals who are learning from the senior litigators detailed to their cases. It's the Staff Judge Advocate who brings along the junior attorneys to give legal advice to the Wing Commander. It's also the junior members who bring experience related to today's generation and technology, to those of us who have been in the Corps longer. I challenge all JAG Corps members to continue to enhance and stretch the limits of your knowledge.

The second, valor. Valor requires us to be courageous, whether physically in our profession of arms capacity or ethically in the profession of law. It requires us to do the right thing when nobody is watching, and it requires us to do the right thing, yet difficult thing when everybody is watching. The Corps is tasked with holding individuals accountable and voicing concerns, when our client, the Air Force, is at risk of violating law.

We promote valor within the Corps by anticipating risks and using our wisdom to proactively mitigate legal issues. Sometimes a judge advocate needs the strength and moral fortitude to speak up to a more senior official with unpopular legal advice. Our goal is never to get to "no," but how we can achieve the mission in a lawful manner, exuding valor when our profession of law needs us to do so.

Lastly, justice. President George Washington stated, "the due administration of justice is the firmest pillar of good government." In the military, justice is crucial to maintaining good order and discipline, which in turn is imperative for operational success. As a JAG Corps, we are tasked with upholding what is right and what is fair.

Many changes throughout our 75-year history have related to military justice. Whether establishing a trial judiciary, enhancing the rights or procedures related to crime subjects and victims, or adapting to changes in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. But justice is not just about military justice. It's also about cultivating a just JAG Corps. People desire and respond to a just organization. We must continually strive to cultivate an inclusive Corps, focusing on pursuing fairness and justice at every decision point.

Before moving on, I want to thank the past, present, and future legal professionals of our JAG Corps. Our Corps would not be where it is today without those who came before us and those who are currently beside us, constantly doing the work to meet our clients' needs at the speed of relevance.

I thank our new and future JAG Corps personnel as the future of our Corps is in your hands. We must always keep an eye to the future, ever mindful that our sound legal advice guides commanders while they navigate changing missions, keeping pace with the global stage. We will continue to be the best law firm in the world serving the greatest client in the world, United States Department of the Air Force.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you so much to Lieutenant General Plummer for kicking off the 75th anniversary episode with the creation of our Corps and what it means to be One Team. Next, we are moving to 1949 with Major General Neurock and Major General Walker to provide some notable events related to our Air Reserve component. Gentlemen, over to you.

## The Air Reserve Component

**Major General Mitch Neurock:**

Hi, everyone. I'm Major General Mitch Neurock. I'm the 17th Mobilization Assistant to the Judge Advocate General. I'm the senior ranking judge advocate in the Air Force Reserve.

**Major General Chuck Walker:**

And I'm Major General Chuck Walker. I'm the 14th Air National Guard Assistant to the Judge Advocate General. And similar to General Neurock, I'm the ranking JAG in the Air National Guard.

**Maj Gen Neurock:**

You know, it was back in October of 1948 when President Truman issued an executive order directing the Secretary of Defense to proceed without delay, to organize all reserve component units and to train individuals vigorously and progressively to make sure that they were ready to provide support for the national military establishment.

And then it was only a few months later, in July of 1949, that the Chief of Staff of the Air Force founded the Judge Advocate General's Department Reserve. And our first

TJAG, our first Judge Advocate General, Major General Reginald Harmon, was tasked with organizing the Department Reserve, and he's been quoted as telling Colonel Tom King, who would later become the first Mobilization Assistant to TJAG, that "[he] wanted a program that is useful in wartime or [he] wanted no program." He said, "I don't want to have a training program in name only train them for the jobs they'll have to take on active duty. Idleness promotes idleness. I would rather have a useful program or no program."

**Maj Gen Walker:**

Then yes, the next great milestone for the Reserves came in 1951 with the Air Force Organizational Act. It specified the Air Force was to consist of the Regular Air Force, the Air Force Reserve, and the Air National Guard, both the federalized status and the non-federalized status while in service of the United States.

Also the Armed Force Reserve Act of 1952 was enacted as a response to some mobilization issues during the Korean War. The Act created three categories: ready, standby, and retired reserves.

**Maj Gen Neurock:**

And because TJAG didn't have the time to be able to oversee and organize all the training himself, positions were created, such as the Mobilization Assistant to the Judge Advocate General. That happened in 1960 with Brigadier General Thomas King.

**Maj Gen Walker:**

And several years later, the Air National Guard followed with the first Air National Guard Assistant to TJAG in 1977, who was Brigadier General James Hise.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you, gentlemen. And could you please explain some of the positive impacts of having the Air Reserve Component?

**Maj Gen Walker:**

Sure. The Air Reserve Component has become integral under the total force model. There have been numerous developments with the Air National Guard component over the last few decades, some of which include fully being integrated into the operational mission in a way that could only be imagined decades ago, beginning in 1990 with the first Gulf War, when the unprecedented mobilization of Guard and Reserve members created and continues to create mutual benefit to the Title 10 forces in whatever contingency operation we've been in since.

**Maj Gen Neurock:**

Historically, the Reserve had been viewed as what we now call a strategic reserve, where reservists, if they were needed, would be activated and they would come and take the place of their active duty counterparts who were then sent forward into a deployed environment. The model has changed so much in the decades since then because now the Air Force Reserve and the Air National Guard are themselves operational, being able to provide readily available expert reserve component legal support to legal officers and commanders utilizing our special civilian skills and strengths and talents for the maximum good of the Judge Advocate Generals Corps.

So it's not just an organization where we come in backfill like it used to be. Now we're so much more useful to the rest of the JAG Corps, and the service, we're finding is much more meaningful to the Corps as well as meaningful to our own people, as human beings.

**Maj Gen Walker:**

Well, you know, back to the point about what is the Guard and Reserve today, comparatively speaking to what it was at one point, the move from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve that truly the active duty missions today, because of the end strength limitations, the active duty can't do the steady state missions without the ARC. And that's a fundamental shift from what had historically happened in the United States. That Congress would

authorize the end strength to be what it was needed to support the steady state missions.

Whereas now, increasingly over the last 30 years, the Guard and Reserve have been tasked to be part of that steady state rotation. Most notably what we see in the Middle East, where we're providing, you know, 10, 15, 20, in some cases 30% of the forces to the combatant commander for what effectively is a steady state mission with no declared war on anyone. And then that's a fundamental shift which has allowed the ARC members to gain expertise and longevity of the Title 10 mission that we've never had before.

**Maj Gen Neurock:**

Another thing that's changed a lot is the concept of the Citizen Airman itself. In the older times, the expectation would be that if you were a member of the Reserve or the Guard that you would leave your civilian profession and come and take up military duty. So essentially, like in the in the old militia times, you would put down your pitchfork and you would pick up your musket and you would go and perform military service wherever it was needed. And it was true in the legal profession, as well. There were certain military skills that everyone needed to know how to do as judge advocates or as paralegals. And they would get the training that they needed to do in order to perform those tasks in uniform.

But they would largely leave behind the civilian skills and expertise that they had in favor of the military work that they needed to do. But it's different now. Now people are encouraged. So rather than ask people to leave that behind to come do military work, we're asking them to bring those civilian skills and talents and expertise with them, whether they're paralegals or JAGs, whether they're Reserve or Guard, and put those skills to work for the best interest of the Corps. And not only does better legal work get done in uniform when people do that, but it also helps them to teach the active duty and raise the active duty skill level also.

**Maj Gen Walker:**

Yeah, and I think that highlights exactly where we are in the 21st century. You know, you look at missions like cyber missions where I've seen JAGs bring their civilian expertise because they may work for a federal agency, that to do some of these complex cyber operations, we don't have the authority to actually undertake the mission, and you have to partner or engage with other agencies where we may have Reserve and Guard judge advocates and paralegals who work in those agencies, have the clearances and are doing that in their day job, so to speak. So that when they're activated with the active duty, they actually are able to have the relationships already formed and the ability to do things that we otherwise wouldn't be able to do on the active duty in some of these more emerging and exquisite missions that are out there due to cyber and the other threats that we're faced in the 21st century.

So, the point about leaving your pitchfork and picking up your musket, the skill sets we have are basically interchangeable in many respects to what we're doing in our civilian lives. So we truly are a force multiplier for active duty, in that we bring everything to the table and we're not leaving something behind.

**Maj Wheat:**

Incredible. Thank you, gentlemen, for providing some of the historical events related to the Air Reserve Component, as well as elaborating on the importance of the Air Reserve Component to the Total Force.

Next up, we have Brigadier General Crawford. She's going to be giving us a couple of our major events in military justice history, starting first with the 1951 creation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Ma'am, over to you.

## **The Uniform Code of Military Justice and the Manual for Courts-Martial**

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**Brigadier General Gail Crawford:**

Hi, I'm Brigadier General Gail E. Crawford, and I am the director of Military Justice and Discipline for the Department of the Air Force.

On 5 May 1950, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or UCMJ, was passed by Congress. On 8 February 1951, that next year, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 10214, which prescribed the Manual for Courts-Martial, or MCM, which was effective 31 May of 1951.

The Manual for Courts-Martial contained the Uniform Code of Military Justice, as well as other resources for the administration of courts-martial. Now, prior to the UCMJ, there were the Articles of War and the Articles for the Government of the Navy, which both had changed very little since they were enacted before the Revolutionary War. For many years, many experts advocated for the creation of a unified system of military justice for the armed forces.

World War II saw over 16 million Americans serve as members of the armed forces, and approximately 1.7 million courts-martial during the war. Afterwards, veterans and advocates demanded reform from the antiquated laws, and they were calling for a system that would guarantee basic principles of due process for our service members. With the creation of the Air Force in 1947, there was even a stronger impetus to move towards one system.

The adoption of a UCMJ and MCM was hugely significant because it allowed for consistent application of law and procedure to all armed services and service members. The changes even contained protections which were not yet available to defendants in civil courts at the time.

One example, service members being tried by general court-martial received the right to legally qualified counsel. This guarantee was provided 13 years *before* the Supreme Court's famous decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright*, which held that the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments guaranteed the right to legal counsel for anyone accused of a crime even if they weren't able to afford their own attorney.

Additionally, the UCMJ provided service members with Article 31 rights prohibiting compulsory self-incrimination, and that was 16 years *before* the Supreme Court provided similar rights in *Miranda v. Arizona*. The UCMJ has evolved over time, but generally includes articles on jurisdiction, courts-martial procedure, to include pre- and post-trial and all of the punitive articles or, in layman's terms, criminal offenses within the military.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you, Ma'am. Don't worry, you're going to hear from General Crawford again shortly. But right now we need a pause in the mid-1950s to discuss the creation of the legal specialist career field, which you'll learn later turned into our paralegal career field. And we've got Chief Master Sergeant Puza to tell us about that. She'll also talk about some of the other notable paralegal events. Chief, over to you.

## The Paralegal Career Field

**Chief Master Sergeant Laura Puza:**

Yes, thanks Major Wheat. I am Chief Master Sergeant Laura Puza, the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Judge Advocate General, and I am the 20th person to be in this position. As I was looking through some historical documentation and trying to determine where the paralegal career field came from, it looks like the paralegal career field was implemented in 1954, 1955, but our paralegals fell under a separate ladder within the administrative career field. And at that time, they weren't called paralegals. They were called legal Airmen or legal specialists.

So let me let me explain a little bit more about how we started. So Chief Master Sergeant Swigonski was the first Legal Assistant to the Judge Advocate General, which is the equivalent of my current position today of the Senior Enlisted Advisor. And he started out as an admin troop. He was a Corporal at the time and he was recruited by the Staff Judge Advocate and his First Sergeant at March Air Force Base to work in the legal office. And back then that's how folks were recruited to work in the legal office. And many times, if an SJA found out about a specific enlisted person coming to their base - they'd meet them at the bus station or the train station and basically snag them to go work in the commander's office or the SJA's office.

And so while these administrative troops were performing legal duties, it wasn't until 1954 when they started going to training to perform court reporting duties that they were actually able to justify the legal specialist career field. But even when that happened, the specialty still fell under the administrative career field. So, it was like a subset of the admin career field. And then finally in 1958, our career field transformed from a subspecialty of the administrative career field into our very own separate legal career field.

And then it wasn't until 1988 when we finally started calling ourselves paralegals. And since then we've come a long way and we continue to evolve. And ma'am, I will also note that in 1994 was when the paralegal badge that we wear today was established and approved by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

**Maj Wheat:**

Right. That's really funny that back in the day they could just snag somebody, say, "Hey, you're here to come work in this office."

**CMSgt Puza:**

Yeah.

**Maj Wheat:**

I wish we could do that today. [Laughter].

But what prompted the need for paralegals or legal specialists at the time?

**CMSgt Puza:**

Well, Ma'am, I think, you know, knowing how important paralegals are to the JAG Corps today, it was just they recognized the need. Right? Our paralegals are able to support attorneys not only with administrative work, but with substantive legal work. And so I think they recognized that, right? And so the fact that this Staff Judge Advocate took the time to train his paralegal, you know, that's how it was done back in the day, too. So they absolutely recognized that they needed something more. And those paralegals have just been such an important part of our JAG Corps history.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. And so on the note of training, can you talk to a little bit about how the training looks like these days?

**CMSgt Puza:**

Yes, Ma'am. So currently the paralegal corps is undergoing the biggest shift in training that we've seen basically since the Corps' inception. The Air Force as a whole has charged the enlisted force with approaching training from a different lens, focusing less on tasks and more on foundational competencies, right? So currently, even up until this point in time, we are very task based. We teach tasks to our paralegals and so we're trying to move over where we are teaching foundational competencies.

So, over the course of the last year, our paralegals have been hard at work laying the foundation for our functional competencies and aligning them with the Air Force's foundational competencies. This transition not only allows us to grow paralegals that can operate across any domain but grow Airmen that can align their skills to any mission set. As a Corps, we are the first career field to tackle this effort, and we're excited to see it roll out in 2024. And we are getting after that right now, Ma'am. It's a very exciting time in our career field.

**Maj Wheat:**

Wow. And so, of course, I'm an instructor here at the JAG School and I see what our paralegal instructors have to go through to even teach here. And it's kind of cool why. Can you tell us why they go through so much for the Paralegal Apprenticeship Course that we have?

**CMSgt Puza:**

Yes, Ma'am. So at our last utilization and training workshop, we actually doubled the amount of time that our paralegal spend in the paralegal apprenticeship course. And that was because when we looked at the data across the field, we had our three level paralegals out in the field doing a lot more than we thought they were capable of, but they were proving the fact that they could do these tasks that were above and beyond what we were training them in the schoolhouse.

So we took all of that into consideration and basically revamped the Paralegal Apprenticeship Course. So the goal is when we send our folks out to the bases, they are more prepared to do the duties of a paralegal. And with that, we teamed up with the American Bar Association, or the ABA, who approved the Community College of the Air Force Paralegal degree program in 2006.

And this ABA approval signifies the degree program meets the recognized standards of sound paralegal education programs. Once our graduates graduate from the paralegal apprenticeship course, they've completed the majority of the required legal specialty course. So, basically, they're getting a lot of legal training that they would get if they were going to an associate college or something like that, working on their legal degree. So after they graduate, the paralegal apprenticeship course, they just have to take a couple of general education requirements like English, math and ethics course, and then they can submit their paperwork and be awarded a paralegal associate degree that's been approved by the ABA.



**Maj Wheat:**

Wow. That's great. And so, Chief, when we first started talking about it, you know, they were doing court reporter duties. And then over the years, SJAs were giving them training. Now, obviously we have a lot of training, but what do our paralegals do? What is the significance of them working in the JAG Corps?

**CMSgt Puza:**

So our paralegals are an essential backbone to the legal system. They work closely with our judge advocate generals on every aspect of the mission. Although our paralegals are not advisors, right? They cannot give legal advice. They are talented and multifaceted. They can do everything from research and writing to conducting interviews, processing cases and discovery management. They assist on various types of investigations to include recording records of various hearings, contract law, military justice, and they are essential to ensuring good order and discipline of the Air Force.

They are the ones on the ground executing tasks and operations that are essential to the success of mission objectives. I mean, to be honest, our paralegals are critical to the Corps because of the perspective and leadership they provide to all our personnel.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you so much to Chief Puza. Now, listeners, we are back with Brigadier General Crawford, and she's going to talk to us now about the 1968 Military Justice Act.

## The Military Justice Act of 1968

**Brig Gen Crawford:**

On 24 October 1968, President Lyndon Baines Johnson signed the Military Justice Act of 1968, which was the first major Amendment to the UCMJ. It became effective just a few months later on 1 August of 1969, and primarily added new due process protections, such as right to counsel for service members being tried now by special court-martial and the ability for an accused to choose a trial by military members, or a jury, and to be tried by a military judge sitting alone.

On that note, the act also created the military trial judiciary bringing courts-martial more in line with criminal cases brought in the United States district courts. Judges replaced law officers in courts-martial and were given substantial judicial authority to preside over court-martial proceedings. The Act also changed the Boards of Review to become the Courts of Military Review, allowing them to function as true appellate courts.

Now that would not be the last major amendment to the UCMJ or the MCM. As our society evolved, more changes were needed, which I know will be discussed later in this episode. But that is how it all started.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. Thank you so much, General Crawford, for discussing some of those keystone events in military justice history. Another big event that will be talked about next by Colonel Landry is the creation of the independent Area Defense Counsel program in 1974. Over to you, Sir.

## The Area Defense Counsel Program

**Colonel Brett Landry:**

I'm Colonel Brett Landry, and I'm the Chief of the Air Force's Trial Defense Division. I'm here today to speak to you about the origins of the independent Trial Defense Division, which has its roots in 1968 with the passage of the Military Justice Act.

So picture this. Let's go to 1974, where six years after the passage of the Military Justice Act, which was designed and effectively modernized our military justice system to bring it more in line with the federal system that civilian attorneys and judges are more familiar with. As current practitioners today know, there's a lot of civilian interest and policymaker interest in our military justice system. That was no different in 1974 and one of the primary concerns from civilian policymakers and practitioners who looked at the military justice system was the lack of an independent trial defense counsel division.

As you'll hear about from some people who lived through it here shortly to include the 13th Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force, Major General William Moorman. At the time of the creation of the Trial Defense Division, defense counsel were assigned essentially on an *ad hoc* basis, and it was not unusual for defense counsel to be assigned from the same chain of command that supervised trial counsel. Commentators and observers, unsurprisingly, questioned the fairness, whether through actual concerns, but at the very least significant appearance concerns of that arrangement, and how could a defense counsel who is rated by the same individual who is advising commanders on the disposition of offenses, truly be considered independent?

So, in 1974, the Air Force, as is our want went first and moved out and pioneered an independent trial defense program. That pilot program established several independent defense billets and lasted for approximately one year, to great reviews. The reviews were so overwhelmingly positive that then-Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General David Jones on the 22nd of July 1975, approved the creation of an independent Trial Defense Division, which planted the seed for what you know now as Air Force JAJD or our Trial Defense Division. Today, we are manned by almost 200 dedicated Air Force active duty defense counsel, active duty paralegals, civilian defense counsel assistant program coordinator, and now, as of about a year and a half ago, eight defense investigators who assist our defense counsel in the representation of Airmen in the field, Airmen and Guardians.

Our mission statement, I'm proud to say, is largely unchanged from the original version that was adopted in the early eighties, which establishes that the mission of the trial defense division is "to further the Air Force and Space Force missions by providing America's Airmen and Guardians with independent world class representation in a zealous ethical and professional manner."

Stated even more clearly than that, I'd like to quote the words of then-TJAG Major General Thomas Bruton from 1983, while the independent trial defense program is still getting off the ground. He stated that "we must not lose sight of the fact that first and foremost, the defense counsel's primary duty is the representation of individual clients. To this end, the defense counsel owes each client the utmost in professional defense competence, tenacity, and loyalty limited only by the bounds of law, ethics, and good judgment. It is not the job of the defense counsel to assist or make it easy for the government to establish or present its case. To the contrary, the independent defense structure pioneered by the Air Force was in part established to enable defense counsel to freely make those many difficult and sometimes challenging tactical decisions without fear of command interference or reprisal."

I still use that quote today when I introduce our young area defense counsel, which is essentially our public defender equivalents in the Department of the Air Force and defense paralegal, into what it means to serve as a defense counsel and be a member of the Trial Defense Division.

I want you to hear now the words of Major General Moorman, which were preserved on audiotape to describe and compare and contrast how the detailing of defense counsel prior to the establishment of Trial Defense Division worked with the current process with how defense counsel are detailed. And I hope you'll come away with an understanding of one not only why an independent Trial Defense Division was necessary to preserve the actual fairness and appearance of fairness in our military justice system, but with an understanding of the importance of the work done by this Division. As I again instruct our new defense counsel during the defense orientation course, without the work that they do, all of the guarantees of rights laid out in our Constitution, laid out in statutory law, laid out in regulations are just words on paper.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. Thank you so much, Colonel Landry. Now, I'm going to go ahead and hit play on the applicable portions of the oral history we have with Major General Moorman.

**Retired Major General William A. Moorman:**

Pretty quickly after you became certified, you would wind up defending a case. Defense counsel and trial counsel both worked for the Staff Judge Advocate. We talked about it periodically among the captains. We talked about our concern as to whether or not we would ever work for an SJA who would pressure us as defense counsel in our defense role to roll over. Never saw it happen, thank goodness. And candidly, in those days, I think that one of the great advantages from a JAG perspective in the way the program was structured was that you would try a couple of cases as a trial counsel, and then the next thing you know, you had a defense case to work.

And then you'd go back and you'd try a case and then you'd have a defense case. And I think we became much more rapidly very skilled advocates because we understood the other perspective. We created—the Air Force, created the ADC program in response to a DoD study addressing military justice and military discipline, that surveyed the entire world and concluded that there was a perception among those who were subjected to discipline that they couldn't get a fair break because their defense counsel worked for the commander's judge advocate, the Staff Judge Advocate.

And so, all the services, well, in particular the Army and the Air Force, took a similar approach. The Army and the Air Force decided to set up an ADC program with independent defense services to address the perception. As I said, I never saw a situation where an SJA pressured somebody who was doing their defense counsel job to do anything other than give it their professional best. But, I think the decision to implement the ADC program was absolutely the right one, because in terms of the people who are engaged in the justice system and the people who were being tried by the justice system,

perception is their reality. And if they perceive that they couldn't get a fair break, then there was no way the military justice was going to work right until we fixed the perception.

**Maj Wheat:**

Big thank you to Colonel Landry, as well as Retired Major General Moorman. Okay, next on our timeline, we are going to a very specific date, September 11th, 2001. For those of us who were alive during that time and can remember it, we know that that was a hugely pivotal moment in history. So, we're going to have General Tomatz talk to us about 9/11, as well as what our operational capabilities in the JAG Corps has looked like before, during, and since that time. Sir, over to you.

## **Introducing the JAG Corps life pre, during, and post 9/11 (2001)**

**Brigadier General Michael D. Tomatz:**

I'm saying good morning because it's morning here in Washington, D.C. I am addressing you from my office in the Pentagon, which is significant to what I'll be talking about. I am Brigadier General Mike Tomatz, the Director of Operations in International Law. My boss is The Judge Advocate General and I am one of the three directorate leaders here that helps to shape and advise in my particular portfolio. Just a brief outline, I have five different divisions that I supervise, and I'm going to be talking to you primarily about the operations and international law aspects following 9/11.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great, Sir. So if you could start by giving us a brief overview of what exactly happened on 9/11, for those of us who are maybe too young or maybe not even alive, and don't remember anything.

**Brig Gen Tomatz:**

Well, you know, it's almost funny to be asked the question in that way, because for me, this was certainly the singular transformative event that occurred in my military career. And I think for a lot of us that you put

in more of the “oldster” category, the thought that 9/11 doesn’t in some way shape everything about why you serve and why the military is what it is today, it’s almost hard to imagine that there are people and I certainly have children who have very limited memory of the events, and so I understand that. But just to give you a sense of perspective, it’s almost unimaginable because it’s such a significant event in my own lived experience as a judge advocate.

So just to give everyone a very brief overview. September 11th was a beautiful, clear morning on the East Coast of the United States, and there were four commercial airlines scheduled to fly from different airports on the East Coast to California that were hijacked. The entity known as Al Qaeda, which we have been battling both pre-9/11 and then obviously in the years since launched a coordinated attack with 19 terrorists who basically took control of these four different airlines. Two of them struck the Twin Towers—major skyscrapers in Manhattan. They were symbolically important because of their very visible role in our system of economics. And they really are essentially a large global business complex, very important in the international community trade, investors, etc. So very, very symbolically important buildings.

Some of your viewers will know that this was not the first time that the Twin Towers were attacked. There was actually a bombing in 1993 where a vehicle was driven underneath and exploded under the Twin Towers and caused considerable damage, but fortunately, the structures survived the explosion, but it was a close call even back then. And the two World Trade Centers initially were struck in the upper parts of the building, but both buildings ultimately succumbed to the fire and the sheer amount of devastation caused the buildings to collapse.

Additionally, one of the other airlines, Flight 77, struck the Pentagon in the building where I am addressing you from. 184 individuals, both on the plane and in the building, were killed. In total, 9/11 attacks killed 2,977

people. We were in some ways very fortunate. The fourth plane was actually also going to strike a target in the United States, but the passengers fought back and the plane ultimately crashed into a field in Somerset County in Pennsylvania, near the town of Shanksville.

On that day, and this is why it lives in our memory and in some ways is a date, as Franklin Roosevelt said of December 7th, the day that will live in infamy because the attacks killed 2,977 people. It was the single largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil. So that is why the day is significant. I remember it well and people will often say, where were you on 9/11? I was actually at the Army Judge Advocate General School in Charlottesville, Virginia, attending class. And I remember when they switched from the slides that we were going through on the training to put on the television on the big viewing screen in the main classroom there. And we all sat and watched the events in horror as they unfolded that morning.

I remember the uncertainty of the President’s movements that day were up in the air and ultimately the President addressed the nation. It was also interesting to me because, within a day, we had a couple of judge advocates pulled from the class that actually went off to attend to military duties associated with the United States’ response, which of course led us in large measure to respond. Within a month, we had forces operating in Afghanistan. And I think that the rest of that is history. And it really transformed so much of our approach to international relations. It changed the priorities for the government of the United States, and it became the singular, really the singular focus was to go after the terrorists who had launched this attack on us. So that is a very brief introduction to what happened on 9/11 and why it’s so, so significant.

**Maj Wheat:**

Sir, thank you so much for providing that overview. Before we launch into the changes we saw as far as legal support goes, can you briefly discuss what did legal support look like pre-9/11 in the JAG Corps?

**Brig Gen Tomatz:**

So, I think that if you talk to people who are in the JAG Corps, there are people who were actively involved in operations and international law. I think it's a myth to say that 9/11 sort of started us down an operations and international law path. There had been judge advocates who served during the first Gulf War. There have been judge advocates who've been involved in Just Cause in Panama. I remember pre-9/11, I deployed on a humanitarian operation to Grenada. It was a short duration. We've been involved in disaster preparedness around the world for years. We have people serving in international settings. Obviously, we all know there are assignments to Germany and England and to Japan and Korea and other far-flung places. And I think all of the people who we have out in those areas are in some ways engaged in the practice of operations/international law, whether it's through exercises, joint or combined training or simply working with host governments, those are all aspects of the practice.

What changed with 9/11 in some ways was the scope and scale, and also the risk that our personnel encountered. Because when you're in Germany or generally consider yourself in a pretty safe location. When you're at an austere forward operating base or location in Afghanistan, which is being mortared, there is a fundamental difference. There is a fundamental difference in the way that you have to train, not as a lawyer so much, but as a soldier or an airman or someone who's out in an operational setting.

The other thing that I think changed significantly is that the scope of operations was of sufficient breadth and time duration that we had a number of Air Force personnel in a lot of areas, including judge advocates and paralegals who ended up filling taskings from Army entities. So, we had a lot of people who were out doing combined and joint operations where they were literally working directly for an Army judge advocate or in some cases in a joint world, they might be working for a Navy judge advocate, or they might be supervising other service members. But they were involved, very much

in joint operations, and the taskings were pretty darn heavy, particularly after we went into Iraq a couple of years later, then the taskings were voluminous because we were covering locations in Afghanistan. We had judge advocates, for example, who were directly involved in the training of Afghan legal professionals, so interacting with representatives of the government of Afghanistan on a regular basis.

And we similarly had large numbers of people going into Iraq to fulfill a number of taskings, both at our own expeditionary air wings, as well as embedded with different elements from other services, Special Forces missions. I remember when I was the Staff Judge Advocate some years later at Hurlburt Field. We were routinely deploying people into some very remote locations. We had one judge advocate who actually went and trained with Navy SEALs out in California and ended up deploying out to Western Iraq to a very austere and in many ways challenging location. So, a wide variety of taskings. We still have people, many, many people out in Iraq. We have people now working in different places in the Middle East, and of course, we continue with, as we evolve more toward great power competition, we see judge advocates being called upon to fulfill a number of different taskings, that are out there in terms of training and exercise, preparation, and all the rest.

I'm very proud of the fact that this year we initiated our newly revamped operations law course. It's a full two-week course. That's a significant investment that our Judge Advocate General, Lieutenant General Plummer, made in training judge advocates in this very important area. It allows us to really invest a lot more time in specific legal training on everything from the law of armed conflict to domestic operations to a brief introduction on space. And so I think it's a great course, and I think it's reflective of the continuing need to develop our expertise in this area. And it's an indication that, as much as things evolve from back in the initial days of Afghanistan through Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, where we have huge numbers of people,

it's just that it's a demonstration of the continuing need and the continuing commitment to developing operations and international law professionals.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you so much, General Tomatz. And of course, we're going to hear from you again in a little bit with another topic. But for now, we are going to 2006. We've got Retired Lieutenant General Jack Rives to talk to us about something we call JAG Corps 21. And then he'll also roll into the 2008 promotion of the Judge Advocate General position from a two-star major general to a three-star lieutenant general position. Sir, over to you.

## JAG Corps 21

**Retired Lieutenant General Jack Rives:**

Thank you. I am Jack Rives. I was honored to serve as the 15th Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force. Late in 2005, I was aware of force reductions would be mandated for the Air Force because of financial constraints. We assembled a team at Headquarters Air Force, and literally hundreds from throughout the JAG Corps and beyond worked on ideas.

We took a clean sheet of paper approach to study and recommend how we would provide legal services for the Air Force in the 21st century. We decided on dozens of major initiatives to redefine and refine, really to transform the JAG Corps and to provide the best legal services in the future. In February 2006, the Deputy Judge Advocate General, General Charlie Dunlap, and I presented our proposals to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Moseley.

We spoke informally with no slides or handouts. General Moseley ultimately approved everything we requested. As an example of his support, General Moseley authorized an additional brigadier general position to serve as commander of the newly created Air Force Legal Operations Agency. This was at a time when the Air Force reduced the overall number of brigadier general positions by 30.

I briefed the Secretary of the Air Force on the Chief of Staff's decisions the next day, and Secretary Wynne provided total support. We knew many of the decisions would be controversial. To counter attempts to reverse the decisions, we created a document and named it Chief of Staff of the Air Force Decision Memorandum to effectuate the changes. General Moseley signed it on 2 March 2006 and the JAG Corps 21 decisions thereafter withstood all significant challenges.

I'll mention just a few of our initiatives. We created Air Force JA field support centers, which augment legal officers worldwide with on call, reach back support, perform tasks that are beyond the experience and expertise of installation legal officers, and provide crisis response resources. The creation of the Air Force Claims Service Center is an example of one of the new field support centers in action. Rather than the long time, manpower intensive practice of processing household good claims at Air Force bases around the world, individuals can now file their claims online at times of their choosing from anywhere in the world.

Over 200 manpower positions were saved. This shows how JAG Corps 21 resulted in better legal services while generating millions of dollars in cost savings. Another important change involved the JAG school, which was transferred organizationally from a major command to Headquarters JA. This resulted in a significant broadening of the JAG school mission, capitalizing on better funding and other resources. In two years, the JAG school staff increased from 33 to 64 and the operations and management budget tripled in three years.

Thanks to the efforts of literally hundreds in the JAG Corps, JAG Corps 21 transformed the Corps in the early years of the 21st century.

**Maj Wheat:**

Sir, thank you so much for providing that background on JAG Corps 21. Now, if we may move on to the promotion of TJAG to the lieutenant general position.

## Promotion of TJAG Position to Lieutenant General

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### Ret Lt Gen Rives:

I'll first provide a brief overview. The advancement in grade was championed for several years by Senator Lindsey Graham and backed by strong support from dozens of retired judge advocates and former senior commanders. Beginning in 2005, the United States Senate approved the TJAG grade increase for three consecutive years, but the legislation was opposed by the Department of Defense, and it was not supported in the House of Representatives until 2008.

The driving force behind the new legislation was to affirm and uphold the independence of judge advocates. The Chief of Staff, General Schwartz, officiated at my promotion ceremony. He observes, "the three-star is a big deal." He added, "The three-stars are the closers." And he said "it's important, because champions of the law should have that rank, that presence, and that stature." In a practical context, the rank of a judge advocate holds little relevance. JAGs of every rank are known for telling commanders and others what they need to know, even if it is not what they may think they want to hear.

That being said, the promotion had an immediate and tangible impact. Being a three-star meant participating in high level meetings, instead of not being invited because they were senior staff meetings. Too often, we had to learn of decisions after they were made, and the information was never as good as had we been in attendance. We sometimes had to work to change decisions that had been made without JAG input.

The three-star TJAG literally has a seat at the table. Being in the room enables the JAG to spot issues that others may not recognize as having legal importance. And it gives JAG awareness of issues. I'll close with an additional point that provides context. When I was promoted to lieutenant general, only 10 officers in the Air Force outranked me.

### Maj Wheat:

Great. Thank you so much, General Rives. All right, listeners. So, the next topic on our timeline will be the 2011 creation of the Inspections and Standardization Directorate in the JAG Corps, which you'll hear is referred to as JAI. Over to you, Colonel Frank.

## The Inspections and Standardization Directorate

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### Colonel Shelly Frank:

Great. Thank so much. Hello, everyone. I'm Shelly Frank, the Director of Inspections and Standardization. It is a privilege and honor on both to take a moment to reflect on JAI's evolution, but really to be serving at this momentous time in our JAG Corp history. JAI was created as a result of The Judge Advocate General's, TJAG that is, statutory obligation under 10 United States Code, or U.S.C., 806a which is to make frequent inspections in the field. This authority, coupled with yet another statute, 10 U.S.C. 9037, recognizes the importance of an independent system of oversight within the JAG Corps to ensure our military legal system remains above reproach.

This explains why our inspection system is independent from the Inspector General, otherwise known as the IG. Article 6 is the term we commonly used to refer to the inspection program in the Air Force JAG Corps. And the Article 6 inspection program exists to enhance the standardization of legal practices and improve the delivery of legal services at Air and Space Force legal offices around the world.

### Maj Wheat:

Great. Thank you, Ma'am. And so how has this inspection process evolved over the years?

### Col Frank:

Great question. Although the statutory obligation to conduct frequent inspections in the field has been in place for many years, *how* the JAG Corps has executed

this authority really has changed over the years. Prior to 2011, the inspection function was primarily executed at the Major Command or MAJCOM level, which really is just a higher level of organization within the Air Force.

And they did so under what we call organize, train, and equip, OTE functions. Consequently, this resulted in each MAJCOM having their own unique, and frankly, unstandardized inspection checklists, some of which had several hundred, yes, I said *several hundred* checklist items. But, in 2011, there was a significant shift to standardize the inspection function under TJAG directly, as opposed to under each individual MAJCOM.

In 2011, the Inspections and Standardizations Directorate was officially established. This new office consolidated the multiple different MAJCOM checklists into one fully coordinated product that is used across the Air Force JAG Corps even to this day. And it synchronized the Article 6 inspections with the inspector general or IG's inspection schedule. This then allowed TJAG to have direct insights into the health of legal officers across the globe, while also reducing the number of and footprint of inspectors on a wing or really in this case, in a wing legal office.

Also, in 2011, the Article 6 inspection process was separated into two parts. The Part One Inspection was a review of the legal office's compliance with the checklist, which was still several hundred items long. And that would then form the basis for a legal office's inspection score. Then about 6 to 8 months later, TJAG or DJAG, the Deputy Judge Advocate General, would conduct what we called a Part Two or a follow-on inspection that was more focused on the legal office's progression in improving its performance since there Part One Inspection.

And it's actually in this new process where we started to highlight and reward innovation as part of the grading process, which is something I'd like to touch on a little bit later. Eventually, we moved away from a formal Part One and Part Two inspection process, and today both JAI

and TJAG conduct article inspections in a coordinated manner, though less formally. JAI's inspection is primarily compliance-based, while TJAG's is primarily qualitative.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. Thank you for providing that background. Now, Ma'am, in this podcast, we've been discussing our history the last 75 years. How do you see the inspection function evolving into our future?

**Col Frank:**

So, I'm really glad you asked. I touched on innovation briefly a moment ago, but I want to expand on that here a bit more. 2023 was a really exciting year for JAI because this is when TJAG trusted us with the responsibility of standing up an innovation cell for the JAG Corps. So with the help of lots of volunteers across the JAG Corps, we started establishing the institutional foundation for innovation in our Corps.

And one of those things was the creation of the JAG Corps' first ever idea submission platform on the Guardian and Airmen Innovation Network, also known as GAIN. And since we launched our innovation campaign, 73 ideas from across the Corps have been submitted. Our legal professionals have found some truly innovative ways to cut waste and streamline processes, and this is just a fantastic way for them to share their ideas and for us to share their solutions across our law firm.

We've got some really exciting plans for the future, which include, we hope, some research and development efforts aimed at bringing new technology to our Corps. While none of us can really know for sure what the next 25 years holds, we look forward to shaping the evolution of both the inspection function and innovation initiatives to really help legal professionals continue delivering premiere legal services to the Air and Space Force in what is surely to be a highly dynamic legal environment.

**Maj Wheat:**

Well, we look forward to see what is to come with JAI and all this innovation. Thank you so much, Ma'am. Okay,



listeners. So next up on our timeline, you've already heard from Colonel Landry a little bit ago when we were back at 1974 on our timeline, when he told you about the creation of the Independent Area Defense Counsel program. Well now, we are fast forwarding to 2013 with Colonel Phillips to tell you about the creation of the Victims' Counsel Program. Ma'am, over to you.

## **The Victims' Counsel Program**

### **Colonel Phillips:**

Thank you for that introduction. Hello, everyone. I'm Colonel Lanourra Phillips, and I'm the current Chief of the Victims' Counsel Division for the Department of the Air Force. It's an honor for me to be here today as we celebrate and look back on 75 years of the Air Force JAG Corps. But as you heard, the Victims' Counsel Program is not that old. In fact, this month, the Victims' Counsel Program is only turning 11 years old. And given the rich history of the Corps, one could actually still call this program a relatively new program. And I think that's fair, because since the program's inception, it has been changing and expanding and then changing and expanding some more to finally what we have today, which I believe is a very robust program.

Now that's not to say it's not going to change and expand even more. But where we are today is a program the Air Force JAG Corps and the many Victims' Counsel before me should be very proud of. Alright, so what is the Victims' Counsel Program all about? Well, simply put, Victims' Counsel around the world empower victims of sexual related offenses, domestic violence offenses, and interpersonal violence offenses through the military legal system by allowing for a confidential attorney-client relationship between a Victims' Counsel and a qualified victim. At its core, this relationship gives victims a voice in the military justice process and provides victims with an attorney who will advocate on their behalf to protect their rights throughout the process. Now that sounds robust, but it wasn't always that way. In fact, the program had much more humble beginnings, which began after Congress took note of several widely publicized incidents of sexual assault in

the military and called for sweeping changes to the way the military handled sexual assaults. The first of those changes was in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012, where Congress directed the provision of legal assistance to victims of sexual assault.

Then, shortly after that, in 2013, Congress called for the establishment of special victims capability. Now, it was during this time the Air Force JAG Corps was trying to figure out how best to meet the intent of Congress, creating a pilot Special Victims' Counsel program, which initially had attorneys embedded within legal offices and representing clients as one of their many legal assistance duties. However, by June of 2013, the JAG Corps recognized the need for SVCs to be separate from the Wing chain of command, and therefore, the attorneys were moved to their own standalone offices and realigned into the Air Force Legal Operations Agency.

Then Congress passed the 2014 NDAA, codifying the establishment of the program by calling on the Service Secretaries to designate legal counsel to be known as Special Victims' Counsel for the purpose of providing legal assistance to a victim of an alleged sex-related offense.

Now, back in 2013, when the program first started, Air Force had only 24 Special Victims' Counsel and ten special Victims' Paralegals, and that was in 22 locations worldwide. Now, the program has grown to 57 Victims' Counsel, 51 Victims' Paralegals and a headquarter staff. There are five of us here actually to lead and manage the program and the personnel at 48 locations around the world, more than double the size. This expansion of the program was necessary to keep up with the expansion of services, and those services expanded both to whom the services were provided and the kinds of services. For instance, in addition to officially establishing the program in 2014, Congress also expanded representation to child victims. Then, in 2015 and 2016, Congress expanded services to Guard and Reserve members, DOD civilian employees, and charged military appellate courts with enforcement of victims' rights.

Later, in 2020, Victims' Counsel started representing victims of domestic violence, and more recently, in 2022, Victims' Counsel also started providing confidential legal advice and services to victims of interpersonal violence, including workplace violence and sexual harassment. This expansion effectively executes the Department of the Air Force's push for a no wrong door policy approach to comprehensive and holistic victims' legal services.

And that brings us to the present. Now, of course given this is just a brief overview, I couldn't hit on all of the important things that the Victims' Counsel has done over the years, but I do want to pause here at the end for a moment and celebrate the accomplishments of 2023 that may give us a glimpse into the future.

Although not a new right, the Victims' Counsel, more than any other year, gave victims a voice in the appellate courts, petitioning the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals in seven cases, and two cases were appealed to the highest military court, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. In fact, this year, the Victims' Counsel had the opportunity to present argument on victims' rights to privacy and due process in both courts.

Now, we don't know the outcomes of these cases, but I think it shows how far this program has come. What started as a pilot program with attorneys working part time has now turned into a mature practice area where the depth and breadth of the practice is expanded to a regular presence at the appellate level. Further, the cadre of graduated Victims' Counsel is growing, and those that have left have spread the knowledge and passion for the practice within the Corps, helping to sew the practice into the fibers of the court and weave it into the Corps' culture, something that takes a lot of time and patience when you're dealing with an organization steeped tradition such as the military. So, yes, the JAG Corps should be very proud of how far the victims' program has come over the past 11 years. Just as proud as I am every day when I see how the current cadre of Victims' Counsel remain energized to

continue the incredibly important work of empowering and advocating for victims around the world.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. Thank you so much, Ma'am. And I have to add, as a former Victims' Counsel myself, I'm proud to have been part of that program. Now, I know this was a short overview, but for our listeners out there who may want more information on the stand up of the Victims' Counsel Program, you can tune into episodes 28 and 29 of this podcast in which former TJAG, Retired Lieutenant General Richard Harding provided interview.

Okay, next step in our timeline. We're bringing it back to Brigadier General Tomatz, and he's going to discuss the 2019 creation of the United States Space Force. Over to you, Sir.

## The United States Space Force

**Brig Gen Tomatz:**

Okay. So obviously, you don't create military services very often. When you think about the last creation, it was another service we're all very familiar with, and that's the United States Air Force in 1947. Just back on December 20th of 2019, we celebrated the fourth birthday of the United States Space Force, which is its own independent, statutorily created military service, falling under the authority and direct control of the Department of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Air Force.

But like the United States Air Force, the leader of the Space Force is a four-star service chief, our Chief of Space Operations right now, General Saltzman. And it is truly an independent military service with all of the parallel structures that you would expect at the highest levels. As it evolves it's, I think, important to point out that it's relative to the other services, it's very small. It's about 8,000 people scattered around at different operating locations. There are obviously bases that are now under the Space Force base, and there are locations, Air Force locations that have space elements on them. And all of these are serviced by judge advocates who provide advice.

In many instances, the underlying support functions—your personnel, your public affairs, your lawyers—those are Air Force people wearing an Air Force uniform, but they're certainly servicing the Space Force, which is really designed to be this more lean and efficient, operationally focused service that really focuses on the space mission itself. And of course, that mission is rapidly evolving. And we have had judge advocates embedded throughout. We've had lawyers who were intimately involved in reviewing the legislation that created the Space Force. And we have lawyers who are involved every time there's a change in organizational construct or there is a revision of the mission, we have lawyers that are reviewing all of that.

And so it's a significant enterprise in the United States Department of Defense and in our government in the way that we're getting after what we see as a rapidly evolving area. I don't think you have to look back very far in history to understand the significance of space to the military. When you think about the precision guided munitions that we as a military service depend on, those rely on the position, navigation, and timing, the GPS that are defended and protected and maintained by the U.S. Space Force.

When you think about working with commercial partners like what's happened in Ukraine, where we've seen systems provided by Space X, for example, providing a critical element. And there are a lot of complex legal issues embedded in how we go about forming those relationships and providing support in a wide range of areas. And space is just it's accelerating on a—it's not a linear scale—it's almost logarithmic in the number of objects that are in space now compared to in the past. And the dependence, the commercial dependence across all phases of life. And it's just—we are very much a space faring, space dependent society. I think a lot of us don't realize how dependent we are in space. And it's very significant.

I think you wanted me to talk a little bit about JAGs in relation to Space Force. I have a small division here,

JAOS. All of my attorneys are experts in the space area. Some have specialized in commercial space, others have specialized in international law related to space. We have one individual who actually published book on the topic of space. So a terrific cadre of experts. We make a huge investment in space. Not only do we have a weeklong space course at our Air Force JAG school, we also send people to LL.M. programs at various universities in the United States, as well as Canada.

We really are developing a cadre of space experts who we then embed at the various field commands that are out there, the large command elements as well as here at the headquarters, where there are a lot of the structural work in the way that we organize, train, and equip the Space Force. As we're settling on those priorities, we have experts here as well. We also have people who are able to attend internship programs. We have somebody involved in an internship program at NASA as an example.

So there's a lot of opportunity, I think, for our judge advocates in the space domain. And frankly, I think it's a growth industry for us because the dependence we have on space is not going to go away, it's only going to evolve. And if you wonder why the U.S. government decided to create an entire military service, it's because of the criticality of the domain, not because we're all up living in space. We don't live in the domain. It's our dependence here on planet Earth where everything relies on access to the capabilities that space provides. And of course, it's also very significant to us as a military because we use space capabilities in a variety of ways that I think many of them are well understood by all of us and certainly by the public.

**Maj Wheat:**

All right. Thank you so much, General Tomatz, again, for talking about the creation of the United States Space Force. Next, we're actually pretty similar on our timeline, in December of 2019, we have Major General Rebecca Vernon to talk to us about the strategic alignment in the JAG Corps. Ma'am, over to you.

## The JAG Corps Strategic Alignment

### **Major General Rebecca Vernon:**

Hello, everyone. I am Major General Rebecca Vernon and I am currently the Deputy Judge Advocate General of the United States Air Force and Space Force. I am also the Commander of the Air Force Legal Operations Agency. I'm here today to talk to you about the realignment of the JAG Corps that occurred in December of 2019. We'll have to go back in time just a little bit and know that the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy came out, as well as some new documents from the Air Force that set forth our strategic vision.

In response to that, in 2019, the JAG Corps redid its flight plan to make sure that we were set up in a way where we could provide the best legal services to the mission and to the people. And that was published in 2018. So as a result of that, we realized that it had been several years since we had done any structural changes within the JAG Corps, and yet many things had changed.

We had the stand up of the Space Force. We had new missions and capabilities that were added. And technology was changing at light speed. And we hadn't done anything to change to make sure that we were optimizing ourselves. Then-TJAG, Lieutenant General Jeffrey Rockwell, directed an analysis of our JAG Corps' roles, missions, capabilities and functions at both the headquarters and the Air Force Legal Operations, or AFLOA level, to make sure that we were as a JAG Corps structured in a manner where we could provide comprehensive and critical advice at the speed of relevance.

So as a result of that, in December of '19, after much study and in talking to people and looking at how we were restructured, which at the time we were structured in a way that we had eight directorates that were under the Headquarters Air Force, and we had six directorates that were under AFLOA. So as a result of the study, we took a look at it and decided that we really needed to realign the way the JAG Corps was structured.

And so in December of '19, TJAG announced the realignment. And under the realignment, it transformed those 14 directorates that I mentioned into four. And the reason that was done is that when you think about the way that we provide legal services, we do them in really four domains of operation. You have military justice, you have civil law, and you have operations and international law, and then you also have leadership.

So if you look at your basic legal office or Delta office, you see that that's the way legal offices are structured because that makes sense for the client. And so in looking at that from a headquarters level, it made us think about why don't we do that the same way when people come to us for legal advice, it usually falls into one of those areas.

And so at that point, it was, we aligned to the JAG Corps that we now had the three directorates, the four directorates really. Most folks hear about the three, but there is a fourth one out there for leadership. But that was when we stood up the Military Justice and Discipline Directorate, the Civil Law and Litigation Directorate, as well as the Operations and International Law Directorate. And then you also have the Leadership Directorate underneath it, which are things like the JAG School and JAI, which does our inspections. Those are all to support the leadership and professional development of the JAG Corps. So they had their separate directorate.

So all of that was done so that we could really optimize the expertise that we had and have a good synergy across the directorates, because when you had so many of them in the past and some were at the headquarters and some were at AFLOA, we lost a real opportunity to make sure that we had the right people together to work on issues. And we also wanted to make sure that we had the ability to, as we saw new issues arise in the field, that we could then have the same people that were helping answer questions to the field, also then take and turn that into perhaps policy changes at the headquarters level. So it created this OODA loop of sorts that—or if we saw something in the field that required

a change at the headquarters level or of something that was coming down from headquarters was going to impact folks in the field—you had that ability to kind of seamlessly do that.

And so, you know, as we look back now, it's been almost five years since we did the alignment. I have seen many times throughout my experience, both as the Director of Military Justice and Discipline and now in my current job, where we have been able to quickly work issues, because even though we have the three separate domains that are working legal issues, they do a great job of collaborating together, because sometimes you do get those issues that cross over all domains. A great example of that was COVID. That was certainly something that had civil law issues, military justice, as well as ops and international aspects to it. And so we were quickly able to get the teams together and collaborate on that issue. There's lots of other examples of that where that really benefited the Air Force, as well as us.

We have some incredible legal professionals out there and getting them together and harnessing the power of the team makes it a great result. And so as we look to the future, as we're facing great power competition, do I see that changing? Perhaps. You know, as our current Judge Advocate General, Lieutenant General Charles Plummer, always says that "our provision of legal services is derivative of command, and so what command needs, we're going to optimize and change ourselves to make sure we're meeting command." So, who knows what's in the future, but, you know, the JAG Corps is certainly at the forefront of leading change and I expect that to continue into the future.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. Thank you so much, Major General Vernon, for the overview on our Corps' strategic alignment. Up next, we have Brigadier General Brown to talk to us about the creation of the Office of Special Trial Counsel. Sir, over to you.

## The Office of the Special Trial Counsel

**Brigadier General Christopher Brown:**

Hello, everyone. I'm Brigadier General Chris Brown, the Lead Special Trial Counsel for the Department of the Air Force. It is my responsibility to lead the Office of Special Trial Counsel for the Department.

**Maj Wheat:**

Sir, thank you so much for being here today. Could you tell our listeners briefly what is the Office of Special Trial Counsel, or OSTC, as we might refer to it as.

**Brig Gen Brown:**

Of course. At the direction of Congress and the Department of Defense, the Office of Special Trial Counsel or OSTC, what we do is we provide expert, specialized, and independent ethical representation of the United States in the investigation and prosecution of covered offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. What that means is we help investigate and prosecute certain offenses. So, we use the term "covered offense," and we use that term because that's how the statute, or the NDAA, distinguishes our authority versus command authority.

So covered offenses currently include 13 categories of victim-based offenses under the UCMJ, or the Uniform Code of Military Justice. This would include things like murder and manslaughter, rape and sexual assault, and domestic violence. It will also include certain types of sexual harassment after January of 2025. So we've been partnering with the JAG Corps to build this organization for about two years, and I'm pleased to announce that we reached full operational capability on 27 December of 2023. We're one of several reforms that Congress put in that aim to strengthen accountability and increase trust in the fairness and integrity of our military justice system.

**Maj Wheat:**

Yes, Sir. Thank you for that. And could you elaborate more on the significance of this program?

**Brig Gen Brown:**

Well, with the implementation of OSTC, prosecutorial discretion over covered offenses, as I mentioned above, so the decision whether or not to prosecute a case has shifted from command and it's given to the Office of Special Trial Counsel. So we, OSTC and our Special Trial Counsel, will be making disposition decisions over those 13 victim-based offenses I mentioned briefly before. What is important to know is that we report directly to the Secretary of the Air Force without intervening authority.

So that means that the decisions that we will make are independent of the chain of command for both the victim and the accused. But that said, commanders are still entitled to provide non-binding input on what they believe might be the appropriate disposition in each covered offense case. And the commanders will still be advised by their attorneys, or their Staff Judge Advocates, which are at every level, at installation level, and every level in between, and the Staff Judge Advocates' staffs. They will still continue to advise commanders.

**Maj Wheat:**

And as the Lead Special Trial Counsel, what are your goals for this program going forward, Sir?

**Brig Gen Brown:**

Our goals are really laid out in our OSTC vision statement. And that vision statement is "integrate, litigate and seek justice." We aim to integrate with installation legal, law enforcement, and command teams in the investigation and prosecution of those covered offenses. We will partner with installation-level legal professionals from the outset of investigation. Senior litigators will inform the investigation in conjunction with local legal personnel. And we hope that this will improve both the investigation and lead to speedier case outcomes and disposition decisions.

We will also train, will integrate for training, where we will attempt to grow the next generation of STC by training and mentoring our junior counsel, both in the

investigation of these offenses and also in the litigation of these offenses.

We will also provide lead counsel in court-martial litigation of covered offenses. So that is our litigate portion of our vision. Local counsel from the installation level will help us in that, in that they will be sitting second chair on these cases.

And finally, we look to seek justice. We will make every effort to seek fair and impartial justice throughout the administration of military justice, from when an offense is first reported to its final disposition. Our goal is to be transparent in our decision-making processes, and work very closely with the JAG Corps and our law enforcement partners to continue to improve our military justice system going forward.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you so much, Brigadier General Brown, for that information on the Office of Special Trial Counsel. Again, since we only had limited time for an overview, for those of you who want more information, you can actually go back to episode 75 of this podcast, in which the prior Director of Operations of OSTC, Lieutenant Colonel Matt Neil, gives a more in-depth discussion of the historical background and development of OSTC.

Next up we have Colonel Hall, who is going to provide some other noteworthy changes in the 2022 and 2023 National Defense Authorization Acts. Over to you, Ma'am.

## **2022 and 2023 National Defense Authorization Acts**

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**Colonel Andrea Hal:**

Hello, I'm Colonel Andrea Hall, and I am the Chief of Military Justice, Law, and Policy for the United States Air Force. The military justice system has gone through many significant changes since it was created in 1775. The Department of the Air Force and other military services are currently navigating another era of changes to our military justice system. These changes have come through statutory changes from Congress in the

National Defense Authorization Acts for both 2022 and 2023, as well as through changes made via executive order signed by President Biden in 2023.

We have also implemented additional requirements through new regulations known as Air Force Instructions. The changes are vast and impact many aspects of our system, so I will not be able to cover all changes. But I will highlight a few significant areas of change.

First, except for capital cases, the military justice system is moving to sentencing by a military judge rather than by a panel of members. This move is intended to align our system with the sentencing system used in United States federal courts. We also expect that the change will create more consistency in sentencing decisions for similar offenses in our courts-martial.

Next, in line with the Independent Review Commission's recommendation 1.2. Our system now has a criminal offense of sexual harassment and is implementing procedures to ensure all formal complaints of sexual harassment are investigated by independent and trained investigators.

The Department of the Air Force has also established a victim appellate notification program, which will provide enhanced notification to victims while a case is working through the military appellate courts or when an offender participates in a parole hearing while incarcerated.

Last, our system has sought to also increase the rights of accused members. The Department of Air Force has implemented a system to allow independent funding of defense expert witnesses and consultants, and has expanded appeal rights for all members who are found guilty of an offense at either a special or general court-martial to the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals.

**Maj Wheat:**

Great. Thank you so much, Colonel Hall. Next thing on our timeline, well, it's not really one point on our

timeline because it truly spans almost the entire timeline we've talked through today. Over the past half a century or so, we've had many technological changes or transformation, if you will. And to talk to us about that today is Colonel Mark Hoover. Over to you, Sir.

## **Introducing the Transformation of Technology**

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**Colonel Mark Hoover:**

Hey, thanks, Laura. This is Colonel Mark Hoover. I'm the director at Air Force JAS, which is actually the Legal Information Services Directorate here at Maxwell Air Force Base. One of the big things we do at JAS, when folks ask me, what do I do, in simple terms, I say, "hey, we are the IT department for the JAG Corps." But it's much more than that. One of our goals, and one of our mission sets at JAS, is to provide innovative, modern, and secure legal focused IT, or information technology, solutions, both for the Department of the Air Force and various legal communities throughout the DoD. One other thing that we do at JAS is we are helping perform SECAF's DoD executive agent responsibilities, through what folks have always heard of as FLITE. It's the Federal Legal Information Through Electronics System under one of the DoD directives. We currently have developed and maintain over 50 different IT applications utilized across the JAG Corps. And that's done both here at Maxwell and by our folks up at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base up in Ohio.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you for that overview of JAS. Now, Sir, would you like to walk us through some of the big things that have happened over the years?

**Col Hoover:**

No, I'd love to. So the JAS history goes back to approximately 1961. Folks may have heard of Colonel Calvin Vos. He essentially—we affectionately know him as the Godfather of JAS. He was a brainchild for bringing things together. At the time he was the SJA or the Staff Judge Advocate at the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center in Denver. And he started realizing that the JAG

Corps needed to develop and test a system for legal document retrieval and research. And again, keep in mind that in 1961, the lay of the land with computers was a lot different than what we experience today.

So moving forward in 1963, the Air Force actually officially approved what was known as LITE. So there's no "F" there. It was just L. It was the Legal Information Through Electronic System. It was initiated as a legal database and ultimately the Air Force a few years later would become the DoD's executive agent for that system. Jumping forward to 1969, we were able to put man on the moon. But more importantly for us, the JAG Corps took responsibility for LITE at that particular time.

Most folks throughout the JAG Corps are probably familiar with AMJAMS, which is the Automated Military Justice Analysis and Management System. Pretty much anybody who has served in uniform in the Air Force JAG Corps has touched or been touched by AMJAMS in one way or another. AMJAMS was actually created in 1972. That's when it was authorized. And then ultimately in 1974, two years later became a functioning system for the JAG Corps. That same year LITE became FLITE and the rest, many would say, is just history as we move forward.

Jumping forward a decade to 1984, that's when the folks at JAS would say, you know, some significant change has happened. At that time, if you think about it, FLITE was one of the world's largest automated legal research systems. And at the time, FLITE was a Directorate under Headquarters Air Force and had 63 different personnel just for FLITE. It might seem strange to folks nowadays, but inquiries were actually called in to the FLITE attorneys who did all the searches. So, for those folks who weren't practicing back then, it may seem strange that you had to pick up the phone and call in and say, "Hey, what can you tell me about this?" We're just so used to nowadays, just getting on our computer and doing all the research ourselves.

But, a mere 40 years ago, it was always some attorney on the end of the line that was doing the research and

using the FLITE system. Ultimately, these responsibilities for FLITE were transferred to JAS based off of the 1982 blue ribbon panel that TJAG authorized.

And then jumping forward to 1988, FLITE was deployed on an online computer as a research system. That same year, JAS actually created a JAG mail system. Those old timers may remember it. It was the sort of first email system that the JAG Corps was using Corps-wide. In 1991, FLITE was actually offered to other federal agencies on a fee for service basis, which further entrenched the Air Force JAG Corps' responsibility to help out our sister service JAG Corps. In 1992, probably one of the biggest things for us here at Maxwell that's important to think about is, in 1992, JAS moved from what was then-Lowry Air Force Base in Denver here to Maxwell Air Force Base. And only one year later, in 1993, JAS actually adopted AMJAMS.

Jumping forward to 1996, FLITE became the first computer assisted legal research system accessible via the internet. And that following year, in 1997, things took off with the release of multiple JAG Corps application systems. The first being AFCIMS, which is the Air Force Claims Information Management System. Followed soon after in 2002, by WebLIONS for Legal Assistance, WebPDI for those JAGs out there who want to do their dream sheet, WebMAG, which is for magistrate court, the suspense system, and WASP, which was a system used to track admin discharges in 2004. WebDocs in 2005 and then for the attorneys in 2008, the Attorney Bar Licensing Reimbursement System.

Jumping back to 2003, JAS actually also began hosting the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces Electronic Filing system and also hosting public sites for the Court of Appeals for Armed Forces and also the Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals. So, JAS was touching a lot of areas just outside of what typical JAG Corps legal practice was.

In 2007, JAS actually established a JAG Corps-wide VTC, or video teleconference capability, which folks to this day have been using. And then in 2010, AMJAMS or



the military justice system was converted from a client-based desktop application to a web version. So for those folks who were practicing military justice before 2010, you may not know this, but you actually had to go off your desktop, check a case out, do the work, and then check it back in.

And it was always infuriating for folks when they realized that someone else had checked out a case. Nowadays, it's all web-based. And so folks, anybody who wants to go in and work on the case can work on the case. In 2016, JAS focused a lot on Knowledge Management and Campus. So anybody in the JAG Corps nowadays probably has touched FLITE KM or used Campus for various training opportunities.

The current big initiative that JAS has been working on since well probably since about 2012, but really in 2018, we started the migration to the cloud. And then in 2021, another big step for JAS, along with the JAG school, is when the annex was built. JAS moved from a building out by the front gate here at Maxwell, to be co-located with the JAG school. And then more recently in 2023, JAS was proud to announce in September the initial release of the AMJAMS successor, which is the Disciplinary Case Management System or just DCMS. Followed quickly in January 2024, by the release of the OSTC, or the Office of Special Trial Counsel Module for DCMS- that came into effect shortly after OSTC's authority took effect on December 28th of 2023.

I personally would be surprised if there's any duty day that goes by in the JAG Corps that folks don't utilize JAS applications, at least one, probably multiple applications each day, and they don't even realize it sometimes. Our ultimate goal at JAS is to be responsive to the field, but unlike days of old where JAS personnel would do the legal research for you, we now build and maintain the tools that make legal practitioners more efficient and effective as they continue to represent the Department of the Air Force and individual Airmen and Guardians each day.

**Maj Wheat:**

Wow. Sir, thank you for sharing that timeline. In addition to the programs that JAS has created, we've also had other technological advancements in the types of programs that we're using in the JAG Corps.

**Col Hoover:**

Yeah, I'll put a little plug in here right now for one of the previous podcasts that was done by the former director Colonel Sheri Jones, and our current Deputy Director, Mr. Dan O'Connor. If you look at podcast episode 37, they talk a little bit about digital transformation. Which for all intents and purposes was modernization overall. But included in that would be utilizing a lot of tools that, again, JAS doesn't oversee as far as the development, but we have integrated into our systems.

For instance, a lot of folks are used to, based off of the COVID years of having to do remote work, of using Microsoft Teams and using other tools like Zoom to be able to communicate with folks. One big project that JAS is currently in the process of working through is a VTC, or the video teleconference, replacement project. In line with a lot of the DoD and Department of the Air Force requirements to utilize these enterprise-wide IT solutions, folks will now be able to utilize systems such as Teams and Zoom instead of the VTCs. This ultimately will give greater flexibility for meetings, interviews, court and board hearings than having to rely upon the VTC bridge through Maxwell Air Force Base alone.

One other thing I did want to talk about was our big migration to the cloud. A lot of folks don't have a good grasp on what the cloud really is. All that really means for folks who are not technophiles, instead of having a centrally located server like we currently do have right outside your door here down the hall at the JAG school where all 50 plus applications are hosted and then shot out throughout the world through the one pipeline that leaves Maxwell Air Force Base, think of the cloud as being multiple servers situated around the world that offer redundancy and extra security. So that when one server goes down, another server picks it up.

This is something, again, that the Department of Defense and the Department of the Air Force, has mandated that folks move away from on premises servers, but more importantly, it offers more consistency for users out in the field.

So besides DCMS and CLCMS or the disciplinary case management system in a civil law case management system having to migrate to the cloud, we are actually migrating all our other 50 plus applications to the cloud as well.

This includes Roster, which is much more than just the big JAG Corps wide rolodex that people use it for. Roster is what we rely upon to grant access and authority to the various JAS applications and is directly linked to whatever someone's status is in Roster.

**Maj Wheat:**

Thank you so much Colonel Hoover. I know I personally can't imagine how I would do half if not more of my job that I currently do without all of the technological advancements. Okay listeners, so we've reached the end of our timeline, but before we close out today, I wanted to leave us with some of our future. So, I got the opportunity to chat with some recent graduates from our attorney and paralegal courses and I want to turn it over to them so we can get an insight into the future generation of our JAG Corps and what they hope to see for the future.

## The Future Generation

**First Lieutenant Jordan Anderson:**

I'm First Lieutenant Jordan Anderson and I joined the Air Force out of a lifelong interest in airplanes and air power. Which began after my uncle, who was in the Army, took me to visit the Air Force Academy as an eight-year old boy. I originally enlisted in the Air Force Medical Corps, but followed my passion for the law by commissioning to become a JAG.

What I hope to see in my future service in the JAG Corps is the continued emergence of opportunities

to practice in developing areas of operation, such as space and cyberspace. I'm most eager to see where new battlefields take military operations and the legal implications brought with them.

**Airman First Class Mason Walch:**

Hi. I am Airman First Class Mason Walch. And I joined the Air Force to get my life on track and provide a stable future for my family. I love and I am grateful for the opportunities I have received so far in the JAG Corps. And I've been especially inspired by Brigadier General Crawford's example of perseverance and determination. I got to hear her talk about this when I heard her speak at her induction ceremony onto the enlisted Heritage Hall of Fame's Wall of Achievers.

I've also enjoyed getting to work so closely with commanders, first sergeants, senior enlisted leaders and other top leadership professionals, as I feel it brings us into the fight to help conquer the tribulations our fellow Airmen face and do what's right for the Air Force as a whole. I am so excited to see the continued development of our legal assistance and victim and witness capabilities. But most of all, I'm proud to be a part of the world's greatest Air Force.

**First Lieutenant Terri Adams:**

I'm First Lieutenant Terri Adams and I joined the Air Force because I was primarily raised by my father. My father was big on character, structure, and discipline, which reminded me of the Core Values of the Air Force, so I gravitated to what was familiar to me. What I hope to see in the future service in the Air Force is the development of new technologies and artificial intelligence from a legal standpoint. And also just look forward to serving and assisting our warfighters in our future needs.

**Airman First Class Pita Qiolevu:**

My name is Airman First Class Pita Qiolevu. Being part of the military has always been inevitable for me, as I come from a family with a rich history of service. I joined the Republic of Fiji military forces as a cadet, and while in training we served as military police, which is

equivalent to Security Forces. I applied for a green card in the lottery visa program, and that's how I got to the Air Force. Being open general and then assigned to the JAG Corps, I consider myself lucky, as it challenges me as an individual because we are tasked with serious responsibilities, such as the administration of justice in the Air Force. I'm grateful for the JAG Corps and the amazing people I get to work with.

Moving forward in the JAG Corps, I hope I get the opportunity to work in a joint environment and see the camaraderie extend across the branches. I also look forward to seeing where else the U.S. military puts its footprint in the Indo-Pacific.

**First Lieutenant King Tsang:**

So, I am Lieutenant King Tsang. I joined the U.S. Air Force because I was born and raised in a place where I perceive to have lack of social justice. I always thought that getting a law license would be something to address that. I've seen and heard people who suffered and longed for their humanitarian intervention and have some relief from the U.S. military, and it made me hope to become the person who can provide such relief and justice to them. And it made me hoping to join the U.S. military become part of that.

As for what I hope to see in my future service in the U.S. Air Force JAG Corps is that I would like to focus on the practice of international law. And I can also contribute in trauma resiliency program with my current study in mental health counseling. I hope to serve the people within the U.S. Air Force and also outside.

## **Closing Remarks**

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**Maj Wheat:**

All right, listeners, thank you so much for joining us on this special edition episode celebrating the Air Force JAG Corps' 75th Anniversary as one team. With that, this podcast is in recess.

Are you interested in joining the Air Force JAG Corps? You can learn more information at [airforce.com/jag](https://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](mailto: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

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- **ABA:** American Bar Association
- **ADC:** Area Defense Counsel
- **AFCIMS:** Air Force Claims Information Management System
- **AFLOA:** Air Force Legal Operations Agency
- **AMJAMS:** Automated Military Justice Analysis and Management System
- **ARC:** Air Reserve Component
- **CLCMS:** Civil Law Disciplinary Case Management System
- **CMS:** Case Management System
- **DCMS:** Disciplinary Case Management System
- **DJAG:** Deputy Judge Advocate General
- **DoD:** Department of Defense
- **FLITE:** Federal Legal Information Through Electronics System
- **GAIN:** Guardian and Airmen Innovation Network
- **GPS:** Global Positioning System
- **IG:** Inspector General
- **IT:** Information Technology
- **JA:** Judge Advocate
- **JAG:** Judge Advocate General
- **JAI:** Inspections and Standardization Directorate
- **JAJD:** Military Justice and Discipline Directorate, Trial Defense Division
- **JAOS:** Operations and International Law Directorate, Space Law Division
- **JAS:** Legal Information Services Directorate
- **KM:** Knowledge Management
- **LITE:** Legal Information Through Electronic System
- **LL.M:** Master of Laws
- **MAJCOM:** Major Command
- **MCM:** Manual for Courts-Martial
- **NDAA:** National Defense Authorization Act
- **OODA:** Observe, Orient, Decide, Act
- **OSTC:** Office of the Special Trial Counsel
- **OTE:** Organize, Train, and Equip
- **SECAF:** Secretary of the Air Force
- **SJA:** Staff Judge Advocate
- **STC:** Special Trial Counsel
- **SVC:** Special Victims' Counsel
- **TJAG:** The Judge Advocate General
- **UCMJ:** Uniform Code of Military Justice
- **U.S.:** United States
- **USC:** United States Code
- **VTC:** Video Teleconference
- **WebPDI:** Web Professional Development Information
- **WASP:** Web-Based Administrative Separation Program

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