

THE DUAL PROFESSION AND ONE TEAM CONCEPT

As noncommissioned officer and leaders in the Judge Advocate General (JAG) Corps, we are expected to uphold and enforce the standards. We have a responsibility, both as Soldiers and paralegals, to fight and win our nation's wars, and to ensure the fair and impartial administration of justice. This dual profession requires a level of responsibility that is much higher than what would be required of a civilian. We defend the freedom that we all enjoy as U.S. citizens, and ensure that justice and legal services are served in a professional and timely manner to the command teams and Soldiers. An Army professional is defined in Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1 (ADRP 1) as "a servant of the Nation, an Army expert, and a faithful steward of the people, other resources, and profession entrusted to our care." This definition of an Army professional applies twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. As a servant of the Nation, our country expects us to be an expert in our field and be ready to defend and even make the ultimate sacrifice to protect our freedoms. The world has threats that are constantly evolving and it is up to us as Noncommissioned Officers to be ready to meet those threats by staying tactically and technically proficient in our Soldier and paralegal tasks.

We have one central mission in the JAG Corps. As defined by the JAG Corps' mission statement, we are required to "provide principle counsel and primer legal services, as committed members and leaders in the legal and Army professions, in support of a ready, globally responsible, and regionally engaged Army." In order to meet this standard, we have to constantly be in a state of self-improvement by taking college classes, attending military schools, and seeking mentors that can show us the way. The Army and other nations look to the JAG Corps as the standard bearers in our profession, so we have to always maintain the highest level of discipline as we help enforce law and standards. As noncommissioned officers, it is our duty and responsibility to lead our Soldiers in the right way and train them on their Soldier and paralegal tasks.

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We must have a “lead from the front” attitude when we execute our mission that the Army has given to us. Commanders and Soldiers look to us to be the example and to make sure that they are not wrong when they are executing their mission. Therefore, we must always ensure we know what right looks like. Whether we are in a garrison environment assisting a Soldier at legal assistance who is requesting a power of attorney or deployed in a combat zone, we must be competent, steadfast, and capable warriors and paralegals in order to get the job done. It is an honor to serve in a Corps where so many strive to surpass the standard on a daily basis. It reflects positively on the noncommissioned officers of the JAG Corps, the JAG Corps itself, and the United States Army when we exceed the standard.

The first example I saw of what a dual profession meant was through my parents. Both my father and mother served in the Army and they were still able to both be a parent and a professional in the Army. I have since carried that mindset with me throughout my career. I know that in order to be the best noncommissioned officer that I can possibly be in the JAG Corps, I have to embrace every day, the dual profession, and the one team concept of the United States Army. Many people do not, and never will, have the privilege of calling themselves a Soldier, let alone be a part of the great profession of being a paralegal in the JAG Corps. I am honored and privilege to be able to count myself as one of the few who can.