

AFSC 51J4, Staff
AFSC 51J3, Qualified
AFSC 51J1, Entry

JUDGE ADVOCATE

1. Specialty Summary. Manages and provides legal services to preserve prerogatives of the United States Air Force and its commanders. Performs duties prescribed by Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) pursuant to Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, 1995 (MCM), and prepares and provides legal opinions and decisions necessary for efficient and effective discharge of mission of the United States Air Force. Specialty encompasses administration of military justice, including counsel on disciplinary matters, pretrial advice, preparation for trial, trials by courts-martial, post-trial actions, and appellate review. Renders legal advice to commanders on all phases of Air Force operations, including international law, operations law, procurement, claims, environmental law, military and civilian personnel issues, patents, litigation, military affairs, legal assistance and preventive law, taxes, and allied legal matters. Related DoD Occupational Group: 250600.

2. Duties and Responsibilities:

2.1. Formulates legal policies. Plans and studies methods and procedures used to process military justice and civil law actions. Advises and develops plans for operation and implementation of federal statutes, executive orders, and DoD and Air Force directives. Manages legal information systems. Manages acquisition, designation, certification, and assignment of judge advocate personnel according to Article 6, UCMJ.

2.2. Monitors, coordinates, and directs legal activities. Inspects administration and function of military justice at subordinate echelons to ensure uniformity in administration of laws, directives, and instructions. Administers claims program. Maintains liaison with agencies of DoD, Department of Justice, and other federal, state, and local jurisdictions to ensure accurate and correct administration of Air Force policies and operations. Maintains liaison with local, state, and national bar associations to keep informed of current legal trends.

2.3. Prepares and renders legal advice and opinions. Advises commanders and senior staff. Prepares and renders legal advice and opinions on matters relating to interpreting laws, directives, status, rights, liabilities, and duties of personnel. Prepares and renders legal advice on disciplinary matters, including admonitions, reprimands, non-judicial punishment, and statutory pretrial advice in prospective court-martial cases. Prepares statutory post-trial advice and actions of convening authority. Prepares and renders legal advice on issues of international and operations law, environmental law, fiscal law, and military and civilian personnel law. Renders legal assistance to military personnel and dependents on personal civil matters such as wills and estates, powers of attorney, consumer affairs, taxes, domestic relations, insurance, and execution of legal documents. Reviews and renders legal opinions on claims and incidents which may result in claims in favor of, or against the United States. Renders legal opinions regarding drafting, negotiating, and administering government contracts. Reviews and renders opinions on courts-martial records of trial and board proceedings. Conducts inspections relating to administration and function of military justice and recommends improvements.

2.4. Represents United States in civil proceedings. Represents United States before judicial and administrative tribunals. Assists Department of Justice in preparation and litigation of cases in which the Air Force has an interest.

2.5. Acts as trial counsel on general and special courts-martial and counsel for United States on appeal. Upon certification by Judge Advocate General as trial and defense counsel, prepares and presents case for United States. Directs preparation of record of trial and forwards to convening authority. Prepares and presents briefs and oral arguments on behalf of United States before Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals, United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces and United States Supreme Court.

2.6. Acts as defense counsel. Upon certification by Judge Advocate General as trial and defense counsel, acts as counsel for accused in special and general courts-martial. Upon designation by Judge Advocate General, serves as area defense counsel with responsibility for provision of defense services. Prepares and presents briefs and oral arguments on behalf of accused before Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals, United States Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, and United States Supreme Court.

2.7. Acts as military judge. Upon certification by Judge Advocate General, performs primary duty as military judge on general and special courts-martial or appellate judge of Air Force Court of Criminal Appeals.

2.8. Conducts legal courses. Instructs personnel in military justice procedures and legal issues. Directs and conducts legal training at United States Air Force Academy and Air University.

3. Specialty Qualifications:

3.1. Knowledge. Knowledge is mandatory of military and civilian law.

3.2. Education. For entry into this specialty, a Bachelor of Laws or Juris Doctor degree in law issued by an accredited law school is mandatory.

3.3. Training. For award of AFSC 51J3, completion of Judge Advocate Staff Officer Course or equivalent as prescribed by The Judge Advocate General is mandatory.

3.4. Experience. For award of AFSC 51J3, a minimum of 3 months experience in legal assignments, after designation as a judge advocate by Judge Advocate General, is mandatory. Experience must include serving as trial or defense counsel in courts-martial; preparing legal briefs or rendering advice relating to interpreting laws, regulations, directives, status, rights, liabilities, and duties of military personnel and dependents.

3.5. Other. The following are mandatory for entry, award, and retention of these AFSCs:

3.5.1. Current admission to the bar of a Federal Court or the highest court of a state.

3.5.2. Designation by The Judge Advocate General as a judge advocate.