

With great appreciation of the financial support provided by the Admiral McGrail Scholarship, Admiral Carey Foundation, Aurora Foundation and George Washington Law School, I have had the honor of working as an extern with the Judge Advocate General Corps this summer in Ft. Bliss, Texas. While stationed here, I have been assigned to assist the trial defense services team with their mission of providing legal support to soldiers facing both criminal and administrative punishments.

I have participated in various stages of the court-martial process, to include witness preparation for trial, witness assessments, as well as assisting in the research and writing of various pre-trial motions. Most significantly, as part of the trial defense team, I have had the opportunity to participate in the formulation of the trial strategy, allowing me to see how the academic study of the law intersects with a practicing attorney's daily caseload. To date, we have had a variety of court-martials and have secured not guilty verdicts in the two that were brought to trial. The cases have ranged in severity from absent without leave to desertion and the majority of our cases involve sexual and physical assaults.

Additionally, part of the TDS mission is to represent soldiers facing elimination or investigation, as well as to advise them in preparation for administrative punishment hearings, also known as Article 15's. As one of the busiest teams in the region, I have been able to observe and sit in on each lawyer in the office counseling and representing up to 30 soldiers a week. I have been able to take the lead in directly representing, with supervision, one soldier in her separation proceeding, securing her an upgraded discharge.

- Jason Fields