

INTERESTED IN RETRAINING?

Are you interested in a career change? Consider this challenge--how about retraining into the legal career field? After reading this article, you may discover that you are eligible to retrain to become an Air Force Paralegal.

The Air Force enlisted legal career field has been in existence since 1 May 1955, and continues to play a very prominent role in The Judge Advocate General Corp (TJAGC). TJAGC's primary mission is to provide legal counsel to commanders, first sergeants, and other key personnel on a broad spectrum of legal and quasi-legal matters. The Legal NCO's (today called paralegal) role is to assist the attorney in achieving that mission. Consequently, the paralegal apprentice/journeyman/craftsman supports virtually all areas of the legal office, including military justice, claims, civil law, legal assistance, contracts and environmental law. Within these divisions, paralegals conduct legal research, interview victims and witnesses, and draft opinions and documents. They also support investigations of serious incidents, such as aircraft, missile or rocket accidents.

Our senior paralegals (superintendents and managers) utilize their management abilities to ensure these missions are accomplished. This key element of TJAGC also performs the same type of tasks expected of any Senior Noncommissioned Officer in the USAF: management duties such as, budget, manpower, training and retraining paralegals into the career field; establishment of training programs and staff assistance visits, just to name a few.

To ensure paralegals are qualified to support these many legal areas, TJAGC provides the necessary training, both on-the-job and in the classroom. To become a Paralegal, all nominees selected must first attend the Paralegal Apprentice Course (six weeks) taught at the Judge Advocate General School, Maxwell AFB, AL.

Before paralegals are awarded their 7-skill level, they must return to the Judge Advocate General School and attend the Paralegal Craftsman Course (six weeks). As you can see TJAGC emphasizes training. Once we become Paralegal Craftsmen, we then have the opportunity to attend attorney-level specialized courses like operational, environmental and contract law, as well as the annual federal income tax course. We also attend some paralegal and attorney-level courses hosted by our sister services in the Army and Navy.

You now may be interested enough to ask, "Am I eligible to retrain?"

To be eligible to retrain into the paralegal career field, you must type a minimum of 25 words per minute; have a minimum general AQE score of 51; have no derogatory information in your records; and you must complete a personal interview. If you are eligible and wish to retrain, you must submit a retraining application.

The paralegal career field is extremely interesting and very challenging. It is rewarding for individuals looking for a job that gives them independence in their work, personal growth, and most importantly, a sense of accomplishment at the end of each day. If this is what you seek, then becoming a paralegal may be right for you.

For more information about the paralegal career field, please contact the Law Office Superintendent, DSN 472-0559 or commercial (478) 222-0559.