



# LAWYER CHOOSES AIR FORCE PATH TO PRACTICE LAW

BY DALE ECKROTH—HQ Air Force Recruiting Service

Like most Americans on 9/11, **JEREMY DE ROXAS** was filled with horror and anger as he watched planes fly into the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He was just three weeks into his first year of law school at American University when the attacks occurred.

The events of that day caused the West Istep, N.Y., native to put his plans of private legal practice on hold after graduating law school and instead, pursue a calling to serve his country as an Air Force judge advocate.

During his third year of law school de Roxas applied to the Air Force Judge Advocate General's Corps and was selected through the Direct Appointment Program. His commissioning was contingent on meeting various requirements, including successfully graduating and passing a bar exam. He satisfied all the requirements and was commissioned as a first lieutenant in 2004.

Lieutenant de Roxas attended Commissioned Officer Training and the Judge Advocate Staff Officer Course at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. The new judge advocate was ready to begin practicing law as an Airman.

He spent the first four years at Tinker AFB, Okla., and Beale AFB, Calif., gaining experience in a broad range of legal practices and also deployed for six months to Iraq.

"Judge advocates enjoy a work-life balance that's second to none. Although we're sometimes called to work long hours to complete the mission, we also receive 30 days of vacation with pay per year. More importantly, we're encouraged to take it," said now Major de Roxas.

Finishing his four-year service obligation, the Major considered separating to pursue civilian opportunities. But an offer to serve as the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) was too good to pass up. AFOSR manages the Air Force's basic research investment.

After AFOSR, Major de Roxas took advantage of continuing education opportunities and earned an Air Force funded master of laws (LL.M.) degree in government procurement. The one-year program allowed him to attend class full time at George Washington University.

"The many responsibilities the Air Force has entrusted me with, including the opportunity to develop into a procurement



law expert, represent marketable assets to many outside organizations, including other federal agencies, law firms and government contractors," he said.

With additional assignments at the Air Force Contract Law Field Support Center, a six month deployment to Afghanistan and now as the Judge Advocate General's Corps Chief of Accessions, Major de Roxas is proud of his service.

"My career highlights include all my contributions to the Air Force's acquisition mission, securing a conviction against an Airman who viewed child pornography and directly supporting the coalition force efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan," said Major de Roxas.

The Major has peace of mind knowing the Air Force will take care of his family. "The medical coverage and non-taxable housing and living allowances have been the best benefits for my family," he said. "I also transferred my Post-9/11 GI Bill educational benefits to my daughter. That may end up being the best benefit when my daughter attends college in the future."

Other financial benefits available to judge advocates include the up to \$65,000 of Student Loan Repayment Program, up to \$60,000 of Judge Advocate Continuation Pay and qualifying for the 10-year Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

"I can't imagine what my life would be like if I hadn't joined the Air Force. I wouldn't have all the amazing professional experiences or the great friends I've met during the last 10 years," he explained. "Most importantly, if it wasn't for my first assignment to Tinker AFB, I wouldn't have my wife, daughter and puppy who are all waiting for me when I get home tonight."

