

INFORMATION PAPER

JALS-TCA

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Subject: Army Special Victim Prosecutor (SVP) Program

1. **Purpose.** To provide information about the Army's Special Victim Prosecutor Program.
2. **Background.** To ensure the Army adopted the best practices in the field of sexual assault prosecution, the Secretary of the Army, in December 2008, authorized the creation of 15 Special Victim Prosecutor (SVP) positions within the Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAGC). In 2011, The Judge Advocate General increased the number of SVPs to 23. Presently, there are 24 SVPs dispersed across the Army's 21 largest installations.
3. **Mission.** The goal of the SVP program is to provide greater expertise to the investigation and disposition of allegations of sexual assault and family violence. The SVPs' two-part mission is to develop and litigate special victim cases within their geographic areas of responsibility, and to train and develop other junior prosecutors. Special Victim Prosecutors respond to every allegation of sexual assault that arises in their geographic areas. They are also responsible for intimate-partner violence and child abuses cases. They work with local Staff Judge Advocates to ensure the best advice is given to investigators and commanders, and to ensure the appropriate disposition in each case. In addition, SVPs develop sexual assault and family violence training programs for investigators and trial counsel in their area of responsibility, using local, state, and federal resources.
4. **Selection.** Special Victim Prosecutors are individually selected from the Army's most experienced and talented trial lawyers. They are assigned to the Trial Counsel Assistance Program at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, but distributed across the Army to serve not only the installation at which they are located, but also their geographic area of responsibility. SVP assignments are three-year assignments, and exceptions must be approved by The Judge Advocate General.
5. **Training.** In addition to the criminal law training that all judge advocates receive at The Judge Advocate General's School, SVPs undergo specialized training at military and civilian courses. Specifically, all SVPs attend the National District Attorneys Association's *Career Prosecutor Course*. During this two-week course, the SVPs receive the same training as their civilian career prosecutor counterparts. Additionally, all SVPs are required to complete two weeks of on-the-job training at a civilian District Attorney's Office observing how civilian Special Victim Prosecutors/Sexual Assault Units function. Special Victim Prosecutors also receive specialized training on care and interviewing techniques for special victims.
6. The POC for this information paper is the Chief, Trial Counsel Assistance Program, LTC Bret Batdorff, Gregory.b.batdorff.mil@mail.mil or 703-693-0787.