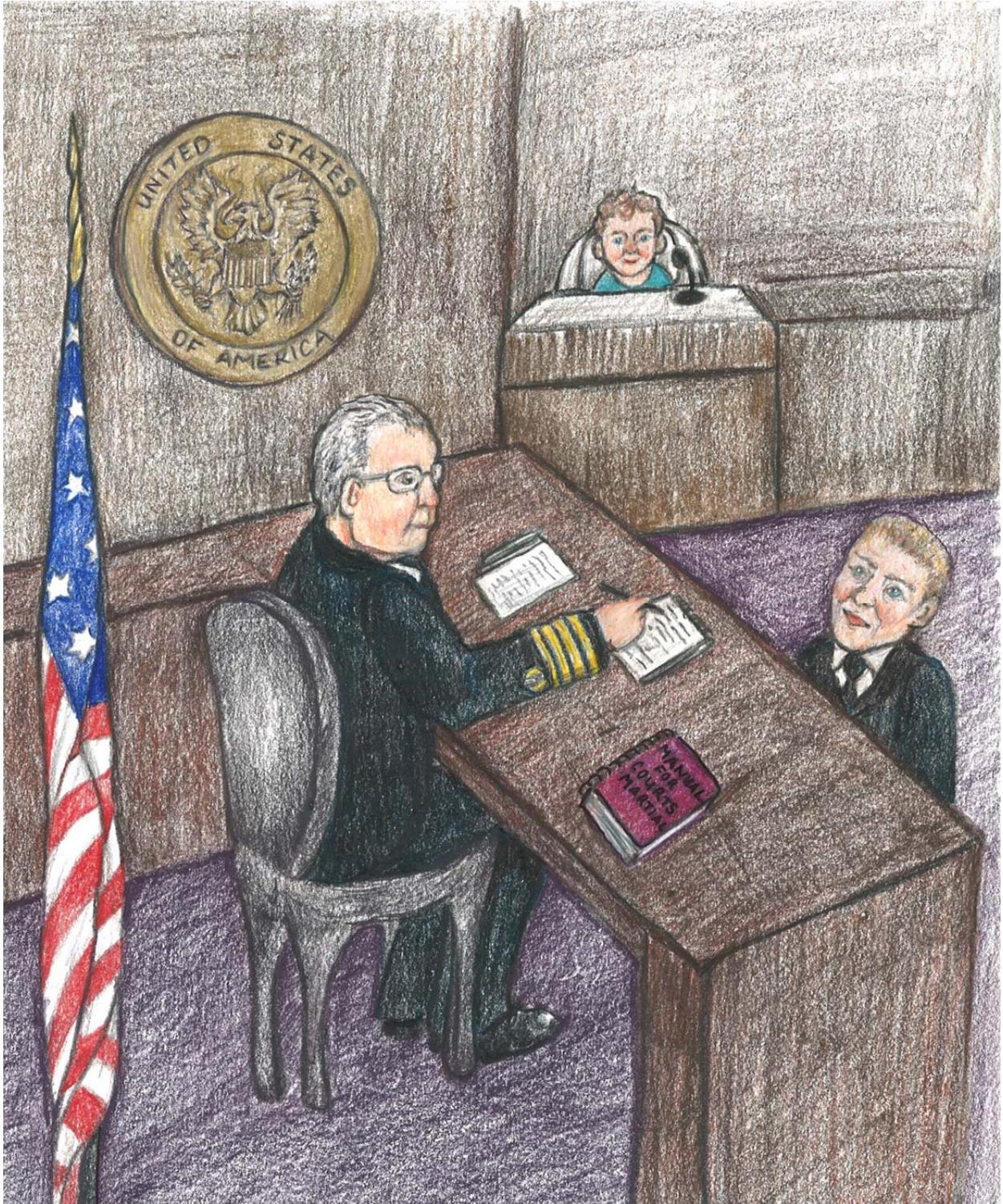


WHEN KIDS TESTIFY AT COURTS-MARTIAL

Helping Children Understand the Military Justice System



Based on “When Kids Testify in Court”
by Robyn B. Light,
Victim-Witness Manager/Senior Investigator (Retired) Yakima County Prosecuting
Attorney's Office Yakima, Washington

Used with Permission from the Author

Adapted and Illustrated by LCDR Ann Lundwall, JAGC, USN



THIS BOOK BELONGS TO: _____

GIVEN IN FRIENDSHIP BY: _____

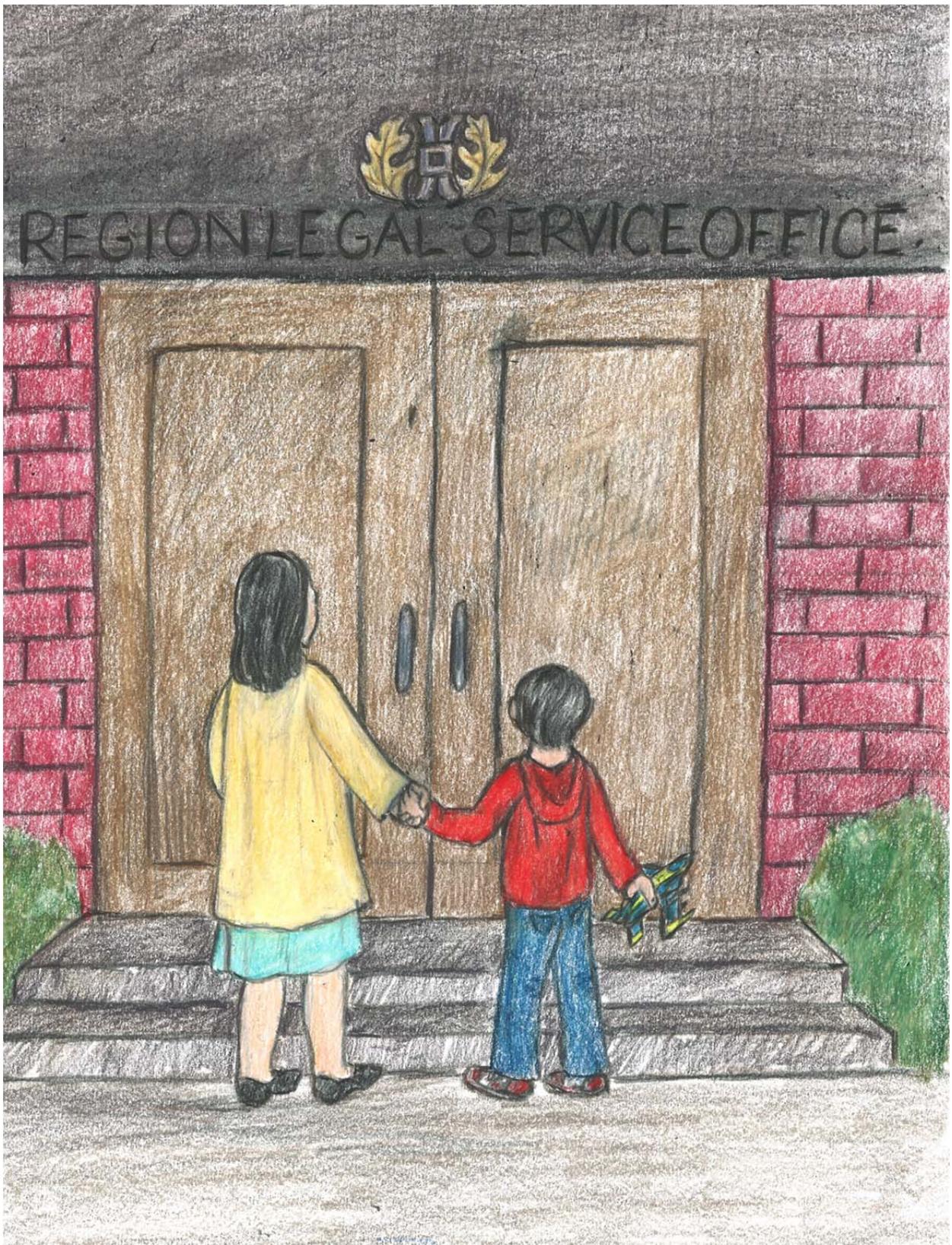
YOUR COURT FRIENDS ARE:

VICTIMS' LEGAL COUNSEL _____

NCIS AGENT _____

TRIAL COUNSEL _____

MILITARY JUDGE _____



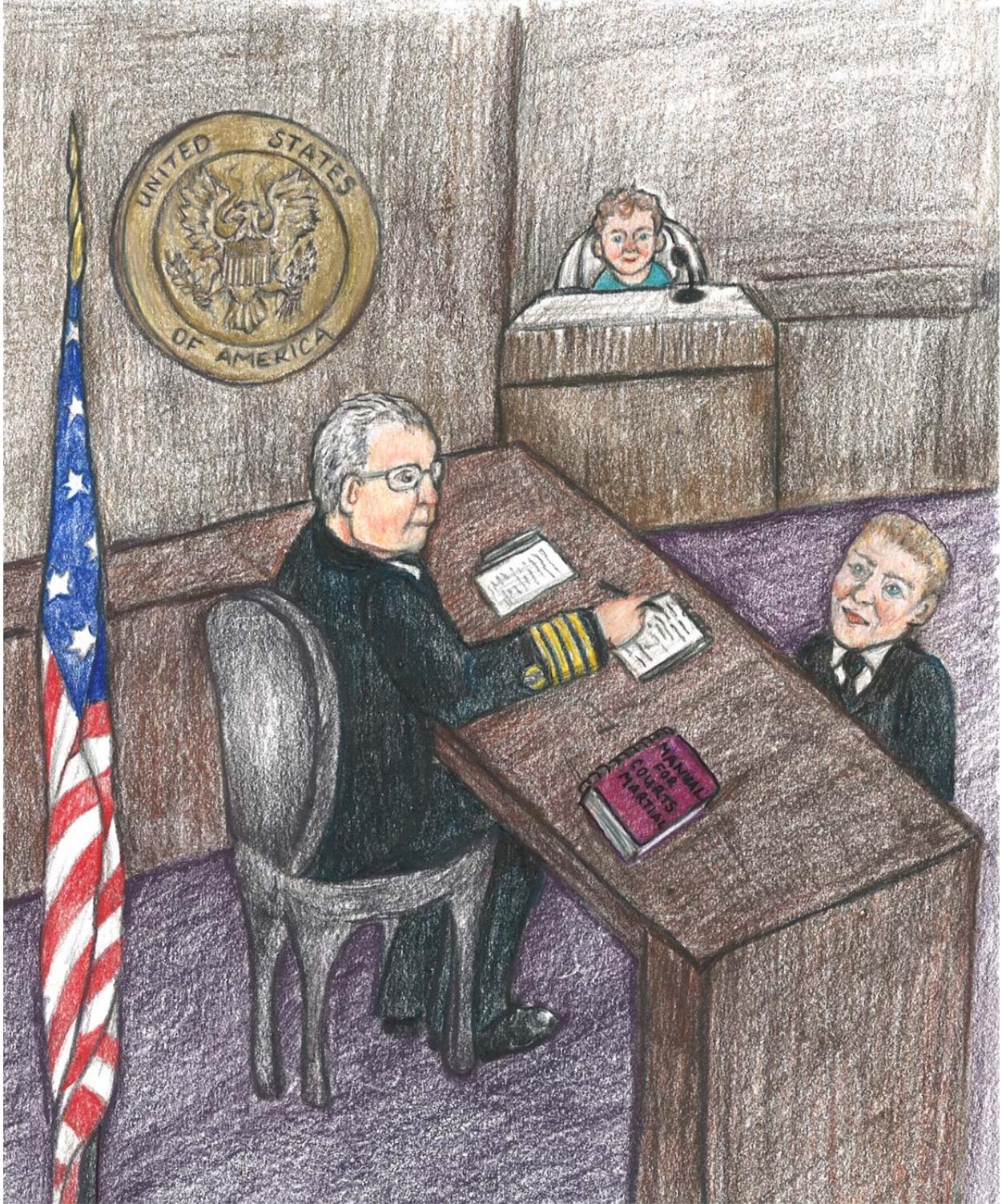
You have been asked to come to **Courts-Martial** to tell about something that happened to you, or to tell something that you saw happen to someone else. Courts-martial is a special kind of court that takes place on a military base. When something is new or unfamiliar, it can make us feel a little scared. Going to court can be a new experience but it doesn't have to be scary.

When you are asked to come to court to answer questions, you are called a **witness**. A witness is a helping person. As a witness, you will be called to the **courtroom** to sit in the **witness stand**. The courtroom is where you will talk to the **Military Judge** and a group of people, called the **Members**, who will listen to what you have to say. The witness stand is where you sit in the courtroom when it is your turn to talk to the Judge and the Members.



You will be asked to give your **testimony**. To give your testimony means you answer questions about what you know. The **Trial Counsel** or the Military Judge will ask you to take an **oath**. An oath is when you promise to tell the truth. Telling the truth is a very important job.

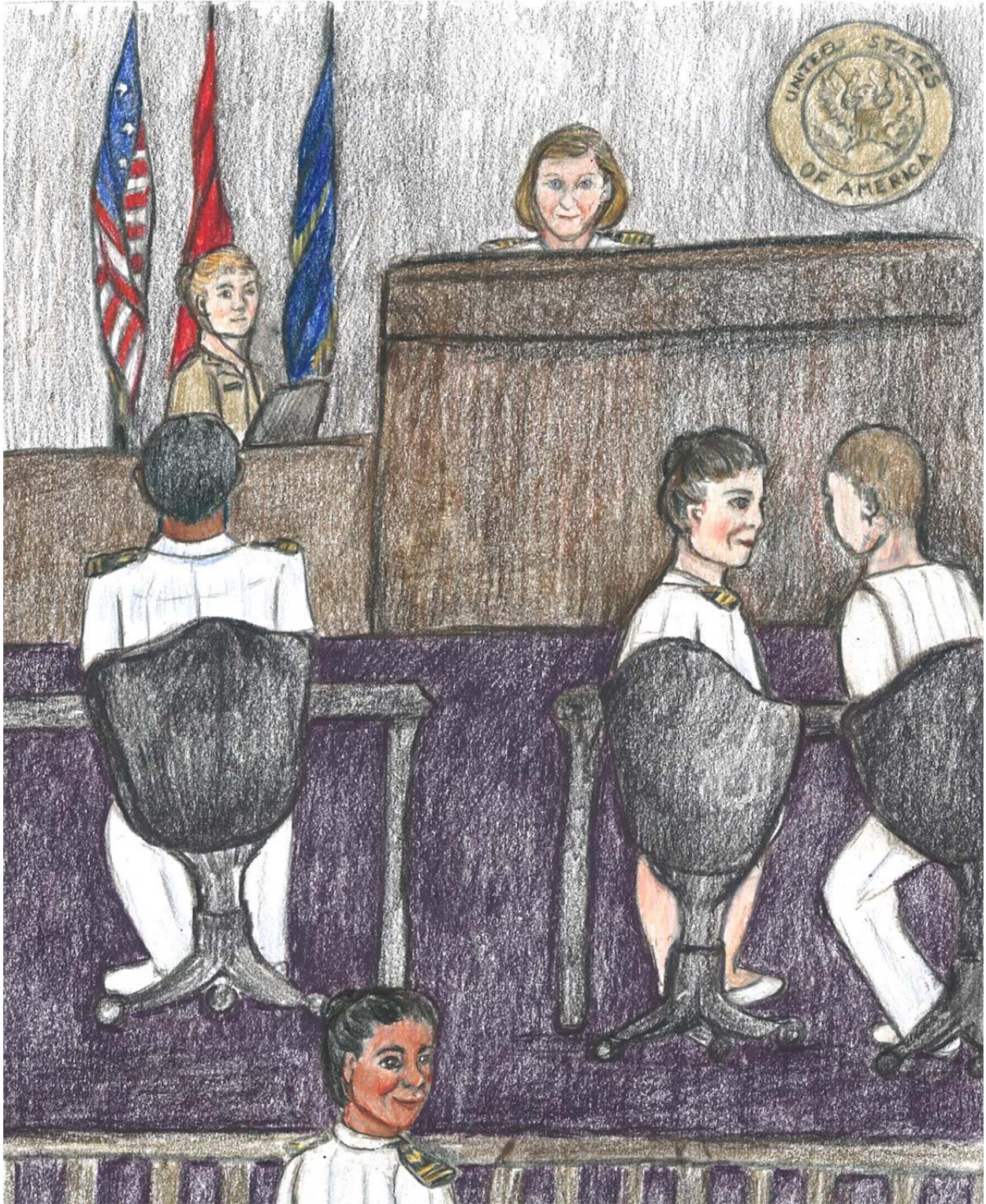
There will be lots of people at court who are there to help you. You will already know some of these helping people. You will also get to meet some new people who will be in court to make you feel more comfortable. Let's learn more about the courtroom and your courtroom helpers.



The **Military Judge** is an important helping person. The Military Judge wears a uniform and sits at a high desk. It is the Military Judge's job to make sure that the **law** is followed. Laws are rules that everyone must follow. The Military Judge explains the law to the members and answers questions about the law for the attorneys. The Military Judge wants you to feel safe in the courtroom so you will feel comfortable answering questions. The Military Judge wants you to tell the truth about what you know.



The **Victims' Legal Counsel** is your special helping person. The Victims' Legal Counsel is your attorney who helps you in court. Your Victims' Legal Counsel will explain to you how court works. Your Victims' Legal Counsel can talk to the judge for you and explain to the Judge how you feel.



The **Trial Counsel** is a helping person. The Trial Counsel must prove to the court that the **Accused** broke the law. The Accused is the person accused of breaking the law. The Trial Counsel and the Defense Counsel will sit at a table in front of the Military Judge. The Victims' Legal Counsel usually sits behind the Trial Counsel and sometimes has a separate table.

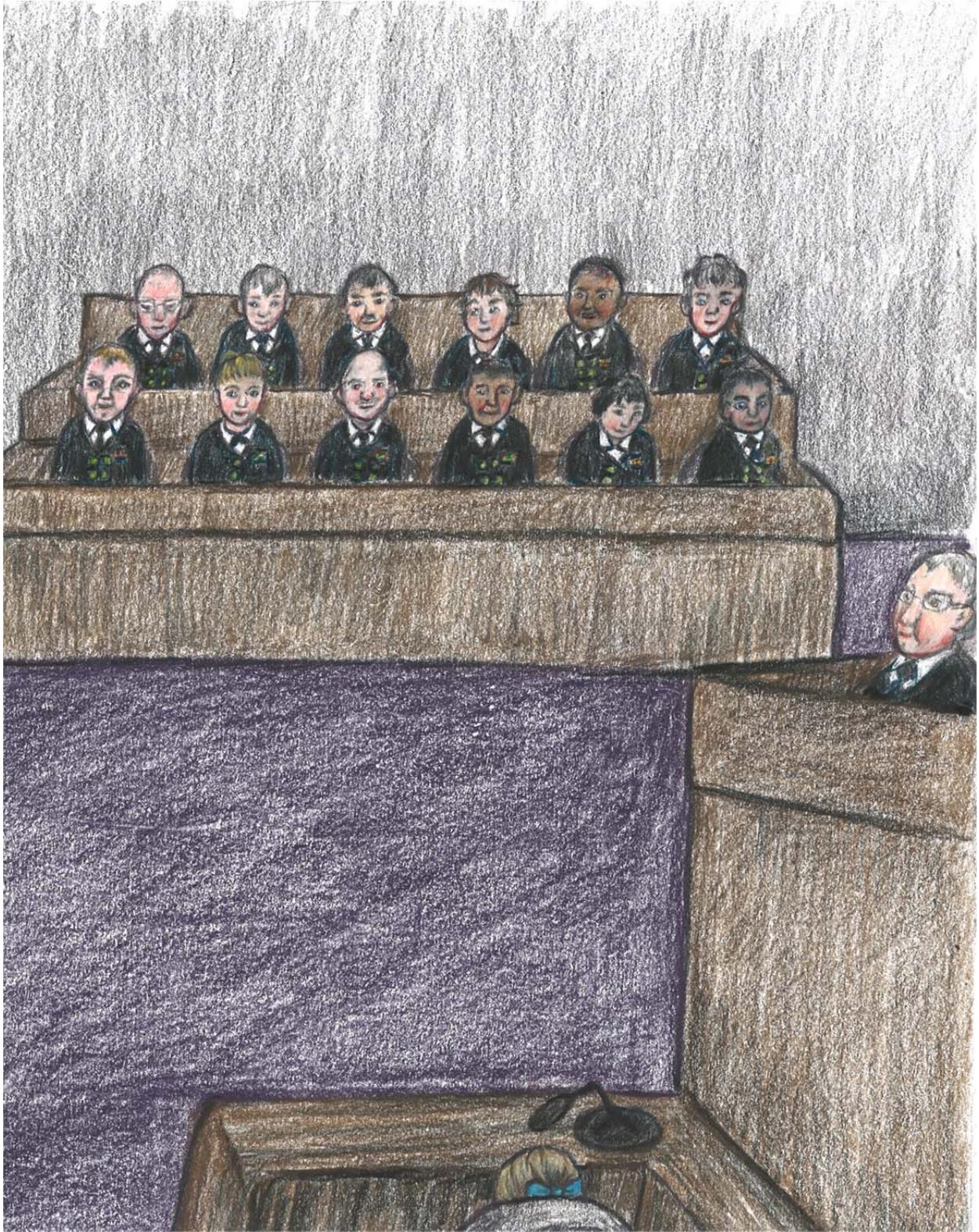
The **Defense Counsel** is a helping person who helps the accused in court. The Accused will sit next to the Defense Counsel at the table in front of the Judge.

The Trial Counsel and the Defense Counsel will take turns asking you questions. The Trial Counsel asks you questions first, and then the Defense Counsel asks you some questions. You get to ask your Victims' Legal Counsel questions outside of the courtroom.



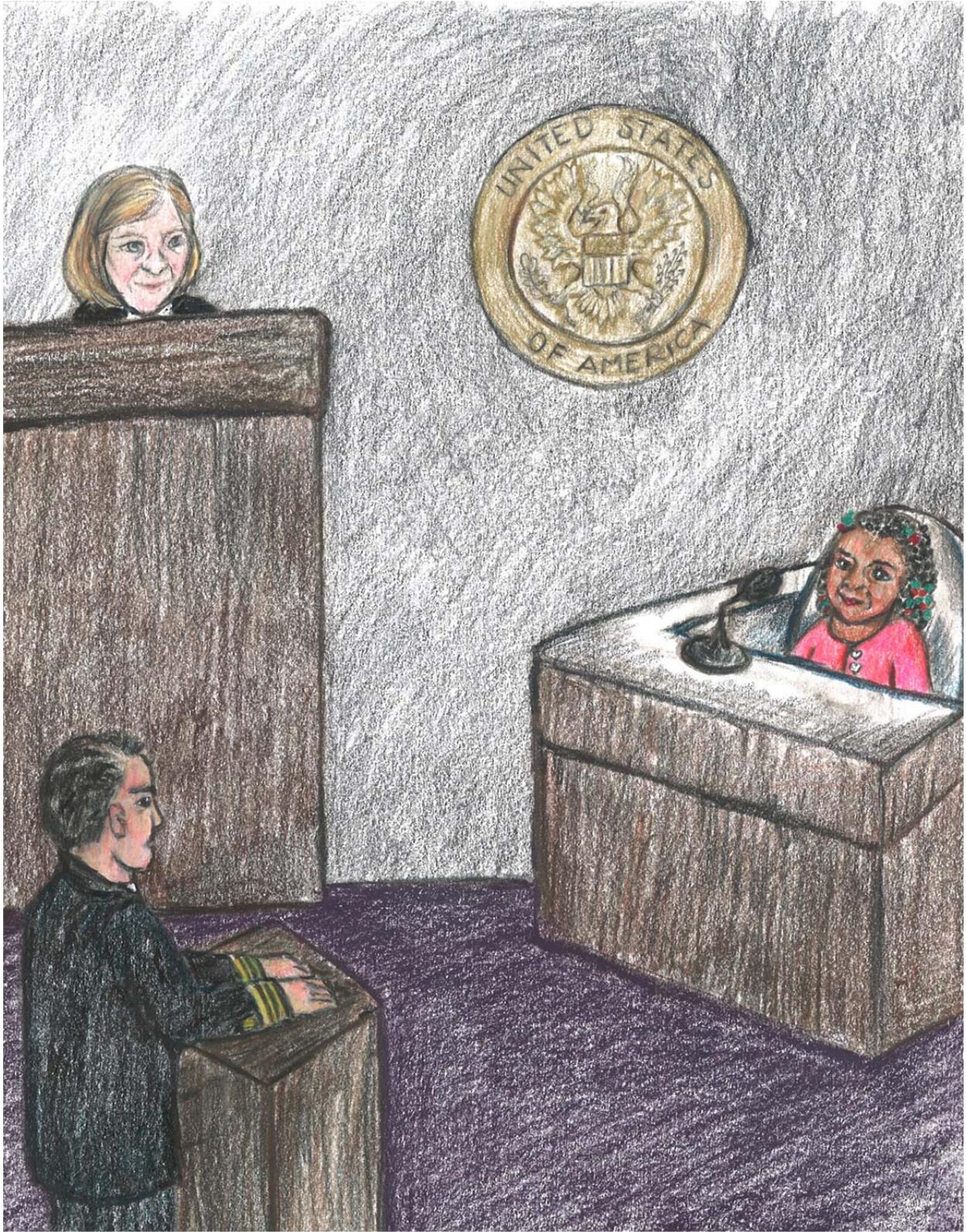
The **Court Reporter** is a helping person. The Court Reporter is there to help the Military Judge. The Court Reporter helps record all the testimony and keeps track of all the court papers and other information and other information that is called evidence. The evidence is brought into court by the attorneys to help explain their side of the case.

The **Bailiff** is a helping person and wears a uniform. The Bailiff helps the Military Judge and keeps order in the courtroom. When the Military Judge comes into the courtroom, the Bailiff says “all arise” and everybody stands up.



The **Members** are helping people. **Members** are people who work in the military and wear uniforms. They do not usually work at a courthouse. Instead, they are asked to come to court and listen to a court case. For example, a Member could be a pilot, a nurse, a mechanic, or a cook. The Members must listen very carefully to everything that is said in court. They also look at all the evidence that is brought into court. It is the Members' job to decide if an **Accused** is **guilty** or **not guilty**.

If an Accused is found guilty, it means that the Members decided that the Accused broke the law. If an Accused is found not guilty, it means that the Members decided that there was not enough information or evidence to prove that the Accused had broken the law.



Now you have learned about going to court. You have learned that there are many helping people in the courtroom. You have learned that as a witness you are a helping person. Telling the truth about what happened to you, or what you saw happen to someone else is a very important job.

All your court helpers want to thank you for coming to court and telling the truth about what you know. We think you are a really **TERRIFIC KID!!!**

LET'S REVIEW THE WORDS YOU HAVE LEARNED

1. **Courts-Martial:** Courts-martial is a special kind of court that takes place on a military base.
2. **Witness:** The person who is called to the witness stand to answer questions and tell the truth about what they know.
3. **Courtroom:** The room where you will go to talk to the judge and where the jury will listen to what you have to say.
4. **Testimony:** A statement given under oath by a witness in court.
5. **Oath:** When you promise in court to tell the truth.
6. **Military Judge:** The person in charge of the court who makes sure that the law is followed.
7. **Law:** The law is made up of many rules that everyone must follow.
8. **Victims' Legal Counsel:** My lawyer who helps me in court and who will explain to me all about how the court works.
9. **Trial Counsel:** The lawyer who must prove in court how the accused broke the law.
10. **Defense Counsel:** The lawyer that helps the accused in court.

11. **Accused:** The person accused of breaking the law.
12. **Court Reporter:** The person who helps the judge by recording all the testimony and keeps track of all the paperwork and evidence.
13. **Evidence:** Items that are brought into court to help attorneys explain their side of the case.
14. **Witness Stand:** Where you will sit in the courtroom when it is your turn to talk to the judge or the members.
15. **Bailiff:** The person who helps the judge keep order in the court and says “all arise.”
16. **Members:** The people who decide, after reviewing all the facts and evidence, if the accused broke the law.

LET'S DRAW A PICTURE ABOUT GOING TO COURT

LET'S SEE WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED ABOUT GOING TO COURT

HERE ARE THREE GOOD THINGS I LEARNED ABOUT GOING TO COURT

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I LIKE MY "GOING TO COURT" BOOK BECAUSE

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHEN I GO TO COURT AND TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT I KNOW, I

AM A HELPING PERSON

