

# Judge Advocates in Combat: Army Lawyers in Military Operations from Vietnam to Haiti

Frederic L. Borch



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This is a narrative history of Army lawyers in military operations from 1959-when the first judge advocate reported for duty in Vietnam-to 1996-when the last Army lawyers participating in United Nations operations in Haiti returned home to the United States. Its principal theme is the evolution of the role of judge advocates in military operations and how this development has enhanced commanders' ability to succeed. As this role changed dramatically during this period, Judge Advocates in Combat explores how soldier-lawyers have evolved from their Vietnam-era responsibility simply to provide traditional legal services- military justice, claims, legal assistance, administrative law-to today's practice of "operational law" in which Army lawyers provide a broad range of legal services that directly affect the conduct of an operation. This new judge advocate role, and the accompanying emergence of operational law- a process that came to full bloom in the 1990s- has increased commanders' ability to achieve mission success in a variety of environments, from conventional combat to operations other than war. The book explores this theme by examining what individuals did as judge advocates in Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, and selected other deployments. When people read about those who served at home and abroad as soldierlawyers, they want answers to at least three questions: Who was there? What did they do? How did that enhance the commanders' ability to accomplish the assigned mission? In answering the first two questions, Judge Advocates in Combat identifies the men and women who deployed in a particular military operation, and it looks at selected courts-martial, military personnel and foreign claims, legal assistance, administrative and contract law issues, and international and operational law matters handled by those judge advocates. Examining who was there and what they did is important, because it captures for posterity the contributions of judge advocates of an earlier era. Viewed from this perspective, Judge Advocates in Combat is a contemporary branch history. But, in light of the principal theme-the evolution of the Army lawyer's role from that of a special staff officer providing traditional legal support to the current role in which judge advocates are integrated into operations at all levels.

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