

American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division
The Affiliate

Honoring Our Legal Heroes: Outstanding Young Military Lawyer Awards

By Kara J. Johnson

The Outstanding Young Military Lawyer Awards recognize the dedication and excellence of young military attorneys in each of the five uniformed services. The awards were presented during the ABA YLD Assembly on August 6, 2010, during the 2010 ABA Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Congratulations to each recipient!

Army

Captain Stephanie Cooper was recognized for her excellent service as an Army Judge Advocate. Capt. Cooper provided legal services during her deployments to Iraq and her two deployments to Germany. While serving in Iraq, Capt. Cooper advised ten battalions on over 200 investigations, provided legal reviews on over eighty-five operational law investigations, and provided more than 3,500 soldiers and marines with rules of engagement training, traveling to forward operating bases and command outposts. Capt. Cooper personally participated in over twenty all female combat missions. For Capt. Cooper's security, recovery, and evacuation efforts after an improvised explosive device destroyed her vehicle, she received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

In July 2008, Capt. Cooper began working as a government appellate attorney. She has worked on a sensitive case involving the Abu Ghraib scandal, a case involving aiding the enemy, one involving dereliction of duty and conduct unbecoming an officer of an Operation Iraqi Freedom detention facility, and a murder case of a local national by a soldier in Iraq.

Navy

Lieutenant Christopher P. Toscano was recognized for his exceptional service in the Navy JAG Corps. He provided counsel on operational and international law matters involving the use of military force, law of the sea, and supporting civic operations and humanitarian efforts in Bangladesh, the Philippines, and other countries in the U.S. Pacific Command.

Lt. Toscano briefed officers on Geographic Combatant Command exercises in Iraq and the Middle East that involved major operational plans and military combat operations. His efforts led to increased cooperation, engagement, and training of foreign military forces in Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

Lt. Toscano also increased cooperation between the Department of Defense and U.S. intelligence and enforcement agencies through his work supporting counternarcotic operations in the Asia-Pacific region.

Air Force

Captain Naomi N. Porterfield was recognized for her outstanding service in the Air Force JAG Corps. Capt. Porterfield began her career in at the Grand Forks Air Force Base, North Dakota, where she worked as Chief of Civil Law, Military Justice, and Claims. She was then promoted to Area Defense Counsel and Circuit Defense Counsel.

While deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, Capt. Porterfield worked to help Iraqi prosecutors prosecute Iraqi criminals in Iraqi courts, applying Iraqi law. While deployed, Capt. Porterfield handled over 300 cases.

Capt. Porterfield is currently working as Appellate Government Counsel. She has become the Air Force's leading expert on Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which criminalizes sexual misconduct. Capt. Porterfield created an interactive, scenario-based training called "Trauma to Trial" on Article 120. It has been presented to over 700 legal professionals and Department of Defense senior leaders.

Coast Guard

Lieutenant Commander Marc Zlomek was recognized by the Coast Guard for his outstanding service. While a Deputy Staff Judge Advocate for the Coast Guard District 13 in the Pacific Northwest, Lt. Cdr. Zlomek provided the principal legal guidance for the Coast Guard's support of the 2010 Vancouver Olympics. As a Special Assistant United States Attorney, Lt. Cdr. Zlomek obtained a conviction and \$100,000 in fines against the China Navigation Company for a vessel's violation of the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships.

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While deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, Lt. Cdr. Zlomek was exceptional in his work as an Operational Law Attorney. As a result, Lt. Cdr. Zlomek was selected to provide support to the Departments of Justice and Defense investigating alleged criminal conduct by Blackwater contract employees.

Marines

Captain Korvin Kraics was recognized by the Marines for his exceptional service. When Capt. Kraics began his career, he took on an assignment as the Special Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Marine Corps Base Quantico, a role typically assigned to more experienced trial counsel. When Capt. Kraics was later stationed in the busiest Marine jurisdiction, he successfully handled the largest case load among his peers and achieved one of the fastest case processing averages.

Capt. Kraics volunteered to deploy to Iraq where he taught and disseminated rules of engagement and escalation of force. He also worked as the only American attorney in a battlespace that was approximately the size of Delaware. Capt. Kraics worked on developing and teaching Iraqi law to Iraqi police and judges.

Capt. Kraics also deployed to Afghanistan with a NATO International Security Assistance Force. As a result of the research that Capt. Kraics conducted while there, he developed standardized pre-deployment training products for an ISAF mission.

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