

# Lawyers volunteer to help military families cope

By Brandon J. Vogel

As it has after every military action since the Gulf War, the Association's Lawyer Referral and Information Service is deploying to help military families untangle the legal maze that can be their personal affairs, upon the return stateside of their soldiers.

*"The JAG [Judge Advocate General] Corps do an excellent job, but cannot always handle the workload, and our members are once again eager and ready to help."*

*-- David J. Pajak*

With so many members of the military either deploying to or returning from Iraq, service men and women and their families often find themselves with more legal questions than answers. More than a dozen Association members are volunteering their legal services for this program.

LRIS, as it is known, provides legal referrals to the public in 41 Upstate counties without local bar-sponsored referral services. Volunteer lawyers are providing consultations free of charge for members of the military and their families.

## New war, new concerns

"In 2004, we received many inquiries from armed forces personnel who were suddenly deployed and had questions regarding their legal affairs. At that time, we were able to provide answers free of charge and we are pleased to be able to provide this service once again," said David J. Pajak of Corfu (Pajak Personal Injury), chair of the Committee on Lawyer Referral Service. "The JAG [Judge Advocate General] Corps do an excellent job, but cannot always handle the workload, and our members are once again eager and ready to help."

Service men and women need assistance learning what their rights are before, during and after deployment. "Upon returning from deployment, our service men and women can find that they did not have sufficient life insurance; their families did not know how to pay their bills; or their job is no longer available. This program can help ease the veterans' transition to everyday life when they return home and makes it easier on the family while they are away," said Major Matthew Tully of Niskayuna (Tully, Rinckey and Associates, P.L.L.C.).

Tully's wife, Kimberly, has learned how to cope with the business side of family life during the years of her hus-



**Attorney at War**—Major Matthew Tully of the U.S. National Guard, pictured in a casual moment at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq in November 2005. His service as a soldier has given him first-hand knowledge of the legal challenges his non-attorney comrades-in-arms face upon returning stateside.

band's many military tours.

"Deployment is an overwhelming experience for all involved, and families need to be prepared. Make sure you have a trustworthy Power of Attorney; have your legal documents and wills updated; and that you know how to handle your finances," said Mrs. Tully.

Matthew Tully, an Association member and former LRIS panel member, became a lawyer after his first deployment to Korea in 1998. Upon his return, Tully was demoted from his position as a federal enforcement officer. That

experience prompted him to enter law school. Today, he specializes in military employment law. His firm has maintained his personal commitment to help other veterans in need by providing them with free consultations.

He has been deployed overseas twice since 2005, having completed tours in both Iraq and Egypt.

Members interested in volunteering for LRIS and/or its military program should call 800/342-3661 or e-mail [iris@nysba.org](mailto:iris@nysba.org). ♦

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