

Fact Sheet: Senior Defense Counsel...Defending Those Who Defend America

By law, Airmen have the absolute right to the services of a military defense counsel free of charge if they are suspected of any Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) offense, including sexual assault—Airmen can never be punished for asking to speak with a lawyer. Leading the way for the Air Force's frontline Area Defense Counsel (ADCs) are highly trained and seasoned Senior Defense Counsel (SDCs). The facts about SDCs:

- **Currently comprised of 19 hand-selected, elite litigators stationed across the United States, Europe & Asia**

- ✓ Since 1974, the Air Force has selected its most capable and experienced litigators to serve as SDCs, every one of whom has first demonstrated excellence as a prosecutor and then as an ADC
- ✓ Not limited to sexual assault cases, SDCs defend all UCMJ offenses, including cyber crimes, espionage, homicides, aggravated assaults, fraud, and drug offenses

- **Robust, independent SDC program integrated into the fabric of Air Force military justice**

- ✓ The right to the effective assistance of counsel and the right to a fair trial are rooted in the Constitution, protected by Congress, and fiercely defended by all SDCs
- ✓ SDCs help ensure that only admissible evidence is put before the court and that evidence forms the basis for the decision on guilt or innocence

- **SDCs specifically trained in sexual assault defense**

- ✓ Each SDC attends advanced litigation skills-focused courses such as Defending Complex Crimes Course (Navy) and the Advanced Trial Advocacy Course (Air Force)
- ✓ Annually, each SDC attends an Air Force Trial Advocacy Course to stay on top of the latest Supreme Court and military cases as well as changes to the UCMJ so that we can better defend our Airmen
- ✓ SDCs also take specific sexual assault defense courses offered by other Services as well as the civilian defense bar