It is an honor to be serving as chair to the Military & Veterans Law Section for this 2017-2018 Bar year. Having just completed our first year as the NCBA's newest section, we should all be immensely proud of the accomplishments that got us to where we are today. The conscious decision we made together to strive for inclusion of all participants in the military-veterans ecosystem has resulted in a vast network of knowledgeable lawyers, judges, accredited agents, paralegals, educators, and law students who may themselves be active servicemembers, veterans, or offering valuable legal services to one or both of those populations. Our Section Council members and Committee Chairs, reflected on our section's website, represent just how rich we are with individuals generous of their time and insight in our multi-faceted efforts. I look forward to continued success in the coming year and to seeing all members of the section benefitted.

We have a fantastic CLE program upcoming this month, Nov. 14-15 at the NCBA Bar Center, on Legal Assistance for Military Personnel in cooperation with the North Carolina State Bar Legal Assistance for Military Personnel Committee (LAMP). Please register if you have not already. Also note that our section's annual meeting will take place just after noon on Nov. 14.

Our section, together with the Elder & Special Needs Law Section, is currently planning a spring CLE to focus on VA accreditation training and changes to the VA appeals system. Once-in-a-generation legislation has been passed with regards to the VA appeals system and our section

Membership Spotlight:
Lt. Gen. Charles D. Luckey

By Charles R. Raphun

I met Lt. Gen. Charles D. Luckey on a warm day this past May at Fort Bragg in the headquarters for the U.S. Army Reserve Command (USARC) – the organization of 200,000-plus United States Army Reserve (USAR) Soldiers that he leads. As I spoke with him on the balcony overlooking buildings and training areas where generations of warriors hardened themselves for war and garnered the resources needed for countless deployments, it became apparent that Lt. Gen. Luckey – our colleague in the profession of law and, for many, also in the profession of arms – is a leader with a strong dedication to the nation, a diverse range of interests and a drive for professional achievement. Those qualities have served him well in America’s Army Reserve and represent the true spirit of the soldiers under his command.

His career has been both diverse and intensive, balancing military service and civilian private practice of law in ways that have given him a unique perspective on how to develop and train soldiers to face today’s challenges. Are cyberwarfare, artificial intelligence and the legal frameworks supporting them important to the Army? Lt. Gen. Luckey believes so, and he has engaged with tech firms in Silicon Valley to understand that new domain in warfare. He refers to that as his “journey of

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discovery.” Is conventional maneuver warfare still essential? The general would say so and he would know how to train troops for it. His experience as a mechanized infantry officer in Germany early in his career and his multiple wartime tours of duty would justify his view.

What about special operations? How can that specialty be effectively used and the relevant skills passed on to soldiers? Lt. Gen. Luckey would know—he also served as a Green Beret as a young officer and has maintained a close relationship with the special operations community through the years.

Raised in New England, Lt. Gen. Luckey has always been a patriot. While attending college at the University of Virginia, he considered joining the U.S. Marine Corps, but ultimately chose the Army as his route for service. Graduating in 1977 as a Distinguished Military Graduate from UVa’s ROTC program, he then embarked on active duty as an infantry officer for the next five years.

But Army life alone was only part of his ambitions—he left active duty in 1982 to attend law school at the University of Connecticut. After graduation, he returned to the Army and, at the same time, cut his teeth in the law as a Judge Advocate officer from 1985-1991 while at Fort Bragg, largely as a military prosecutor. In 1989, he deployed to Panama as part of Operation Just Cause and part of his duties there included investigating allegations of misconduct, whereby he helped ensure that American values and concepts of the rule of law were upheld even in the course of active combat operations. One of the defining events for him personally was seeing and hearing from Panamanian civilians who were profusely grateful to American troops for returning their country to lawful, civilian governance. As an attorney and a soldier, this vision continues to inspire Lt. Gen. Luckey to this day.

Lt. Gen. Luckey is a North Carolina attorney, who in his civilian career is a litigation partner in the Winston-Salem firm of Blanco Tackabery & Matamoros P.A. where he has practiced in state and federal courts in areas ranging from criminal defense to family law, and even environmental law matters. As a practicing attorney, he has a clear grasp of the practical issues of balancing the expectation of one’s employer and the demands of a part-time military career. As a Reserve officer, he continued to maintain his military career and has progressed through a variety of notable leadership positions, commanding units at the battalion, brigade and group levels. In the past decade, as a general officer, he has served on a series of key active duty assignments, beginning in 2008 as the Chief, Office of Security Cooperation in Baghdad, Iraq. Later he also served as the Chief of Staff, North American Aerospace Defense Command and as Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for Reserve Matters.

Yet, it is as the Commanding General of USARC and also in his dual role as Chief of the Army Reserve (CAR) where he has had the greatest influence on our force. In these positions, Lt. Gen. Luckey is unique among the Army’s senior leaders. Not only is he responsible for the administration, leadership, and training of the bulk of the Army Reserve troops as the head of USARC, but as the CAR he is also engaged in communicating and explaining the legal, structural and resource needs of the Army Reserve to Congress, the various industry groups (many, employers of Reserve Soldiers) and within the Department of Defense as well. He is the voice of the USAR to those stakeholders, and that is where his skills and experience as an attorney serve him well; the same ability to succeed in the courtroom has enabled him to negotiate, argue, and tactfully engage with senior officials and business leaders on behalf of the Army. One of the general’s important tasks is to influence, concurrently, the Department of Defense, Congress, and a host of employers throughout the country to adopt practices and approaches to support America’s Army Reserve Soldiers in ways that do not overly burden the employers or the servicemembers. If that can be accomplished, it will enhance retention and keep good soldiers in the Army Reserve.

A significant part of Lt. Gen. Luckey’s focus is what he sees as a realignment of the Army Reserve from a strategic to operational force. While in years past the Army Reserve anticipated a lengthy ramp-up period (months and years) before units would be deployed to foreign lands, now the force – or at least elements of it – must be ready to go to war or a humanitarian mission in a matter of a few weeks or even days of notice. This increase in operational tempo means that more care must be given to the selection, retention, and actual utilization of Reserve Soldiers than in the past. The bulk of the Army’s civil affairs units, for example, are in the Army Reserve. The soldiers in those units are specialists and their training programs require careful, thoughtful (and cooperative) planning. The Army needs to balance the need to fully prepare them for their wartime missions, yet not burn them out in the process. If their families or employers object to lengthy time away, or, on the flip side, if the soldiers are bored while on duty, it will be hard to retain those soldiers over the long term. Lt. Gen. Luckey refers to that paradigm as having soldiers be “trained but employable.” Being able to strike that balance is part of the challenges that he faces every day. He refers to “Ready Force X” as his model for preparing for rapid deployment of a portion of his force – approximately 30,000 soldiers, while minimizing the time requirements for others.

His experience as a lawyer has been instrumental in his success. As one example, in promoting novel approaches to recruiting he cites the Army’s success at bringing lawyers into the force – both active and reserve - despite the inordinate personal difficulties that practicing attorneys have in making such a transition. The same is true of medical professionals and other specialists that are needed in the Army Reserve, and the ongoing efforts to recruit and retain soldiers has been successful. Part of the general’s outreach has included speaking engagements at various law schools in North Carolina; not merely for recruiting purposes, but also to expose students to the active processes of the military in the state and to encourage their involvement with pro bono work to assist service personnel, veterans and their families.

North Carolina is fortunate to have one of America’s Army Reserve Soldiers among its bar membership, and certainly Lt. Gen. Luckey exemplifies their spirit of commitment and service to the nation. As the Military and Veterans Law Section, we are grateful to Lt. Gen. Luckey for his service as a soldier and a North Carolina attorney and for the professional integrity that he has demonstrated through the years.

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