

IN HONOR OF CHARLES J. STRONG

TECHNICAL EDITOR, *THE ARMY LAWYER* AND THE *MILITARY LAW REVIEW*, 1995 TO 2015

“Joining the Army was the best decision that I made” – Charles Strong

After more than 41 years of service to this nation, Charles J. Strong, Technical Editor of *The Army Lawyer* and the *Military Law Review*, retires from government service at the end of January 2015. A devoted Soldier and Civilian employee, Chuck has faithfully served the people of the United States with dedication, commitment, and honor. In recognition of that service, this issue of *The Army Lawyer* – the five-hundredth issue – is dedicated to Chuck and his tireless efforts to do his duty with diligence and devotion.

Born the fifth of seven children, Chuck grew up in Havre de Grace, MD, graduating from high school in June 1970. After attending a year of community college on a scholarship, Chuck decided that he “wanted more and was not getting it” at school and, without telling his parents, enlisted in the United States Army.

In August 1971, Chuck left for basic training at Ft. Dix, NJ. Although he enlisted to become a translator, Chuck was told that there were no spots available at the language school and was given an opportunity to leave the Army. But Chuck chose to stay. He completed advanced individual training at Ft. Gordon, GA, and in February 1972, Chuck reported for duty as a 72B (Teletype Operator) at the Turkish/United States Logistics Detachment in Turkey. There, although a junior enlisted Soldier himself, he supervised an office of three Soldiers who processed the detachment’s communications.



Private Charles J. Strong, U.S. Army
October 1971

In February 1973, Chuck completed his tour in Turkey and was assigned to Ft. Meade, MD, and, after on-the-job training, served as a chaplain’s assistant. In August 1974, Chuck again returned overseas, the first of three assignments to Germany, where he served as a company

clerk. It was in this assignment that Chuck began the tradition that has become nearly a legend: brewing coffee for his team.

In August 1974, Chuck completed his term of enlistment and was honorably discharged from the Army. He enrolled at the College of Santa Fe in New Mexico, to study Education and Spanish. Earning the accolades of his professors – one of whom said of Chuck: “it is not often that one finds a young man of his caliber” – Chuck graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with his bachelor’s degree in May 1978 and was recruited to work for a local law firm, beginning his legal career.

After two years in New Mexico, Chuck wanted to return home. And in May 1980, Chuck began substitute teaching at two local high schools, including his alma mater. But the call of service remained strong. And in February 1981, Chuck returned to active duty, this time as a 71D – legal clerk.

First assigned to the 8th Infantry Division in Germany, Chuck served in almost every division within that office: legal assistance, Trial Defense Service, and military justice. While serving with the 8th Infantry, in April 1982, Chuck was promoted to the grade of Specialist Five (E-5).

In 1984, Chuck was re-assigned to the U.S. Army Southeastern Task Force in Vicenza, Italy, where he served as the non-commissioned officer in charge of the criminal-law division. Later that year, Chuck was re-assigned to Camp Darby, Italy, to serve as the non-commissioned officer in charge of that legal office, working the gamut of legal actions.

In June 1985, Chuck returned to the United States and was assigned to the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland as a battalion and brigade paralegal. That same year, Chuck received his lateral promotion to Sergeant. And later, now-Sergeant Strong volunteered to return to Trial Defense Service. Chuck told the author that he enjoyed his time as a defense paralegal because he was “trying to help as many people as [he] possibly could” – something that he could do best in TDS.

On 1 June 1987, Chuck was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant. In December 1988, now-Staff Sergeant Strong returned to Germany, where he served as a Corps’ criminal-law division’s non-commissioned officer in charge – a position above his pay grade. In December 1991, Chuck was re-assigned to Ft. Benjamin Harrison, where he became an instructor and developer of the paralegal Soldier Training Publications and Self-

Development Tests. In essence, Chuck's team developed the curriculum that trained, tested, and certified the Army's paralegal team. Earning the grade of Sergeant First Class on 1 May 1993, Chuck later moved to Charlottesville when his position was brought to The Judge Advocate General's School. On 30 June 1995, Chuck concluded his active-duty career.



Staff Sergeant Strong, U.S. Army
July 1988

But Chuck did not leave public service, continuing to serve in the U.S Army Reserve and, significantly, becoming a member of the publications team at the school. Hired in December 1995 as an Editorial Assistant, Chuck has been a part of the evolution of the regiment's flagship publications for more than 19 years. Indeed during his long tenure, Chuck has edited 72 issues of the *Military Law Review* and 225 issues of *The Army Lawyer*. More importantly, though, Chuck has worked with more than 21 graduate courses and, by his own count, more than 38 officer editors.

Among his many accomplishments, Chuck was at the forefront of the significant technological change in how these publications are produced. One of his first editors, now-Colonel Albert Veldhuyzen, U.S. Army Reserve, who is now the incoming Staff Judge Advocate of Army Reserve Medical Command in Tampa, Florida, wrote:

I had the opportunity to work with Chuck Strong at a time of great change Our challenge was to modernize and stay relevant in the fast-changing world of print communications Without Chuck's skill, dedication, and enthusiasm, our transformation would not have been possible.

[In particular, given the significant advances in software technology, Chuck and I believed we could improve the publications process. We experimented with Adobe Framemaker We wrote up a proposal and convinced the . . . leadership to allow us to proceed We pushed through this big change while, at the same time, rolling out our publications the traditional way—this was quite a feat made possible by Chuck's work ethic, involving many late nights and weekends.

Because of these desktop-publishing skills, for two years, Chuck published the school's annual bulletin, which is an important part of its American Bar Association accreditation. And later, Chuck became responsible for the electronic distribution of both publications to the regiment's website and the Library of Congress – bettering the website by working with information-technology experts to ensure that the publications were electronically searchable.

But Chuck's technical skills are only part of his immense contribution to the school. Chuck has been a mentor to all, editors and students alike. As just one example of many, the members of the 59th Graduate Course honored Chuck with a commemorative book for his gracious assistance to their class. And more particularly, Major Takashi Kawaga, one of Chuck's editors, writes of Chuck's mentorship:

Chuck Strong is the ultimate encourager and trainer of all editors and grad-course students. His passion is to help anyone in need, always looking for an opportunity to serve and impart his wisdom. I always appreciated his incredible attention to detail and his sincere encouragements that makes you feel that you can do no wrong. . . . Though I appreciated his technical expertise I appreciated more his enthusiasm to help the Soldier next to him. He will be dearly missed at the school, especially by the editors and the grad-course students of the future.

Chuck's mentorship and encouragement led him to take on a special responsibility, that of actively assisting the international students. Of that duty, Chuck told the author that he "always wanted to be an ambassador for my country." And an ambassador Chuck has been: reaching out to those students to ensure that they were set up for success in their studies.

Finally Chuck's personal commitment to producing the best possible publication is legendary. As he told the author, the "most important [requirement] is that we put out the most accurate information in the most timely manner that we can." Chuck's commitment to excellence is exemplified in The Judge Advocate General's personal commendation for his tireless effort to research and coordinate the 50th Anniversary issue of the *Military Law Review*. Indeed Chuck is simply unwilling to accept anything less than his best – and the best effort of his team. In his straight-forward style, Chuck expressed to the author that he "just could not do" anything less.

Chuck's love of the U.S. Army and its Soldiers is legendary, both because of his commitment to this organization but also his sincerity. Chuck has always been particularly concerned for those Soldiers who are serving in harm's way. In that light, he has organized efforts to provide care packages for many of those deployed Soldiers, something that is dearly appreciated by all.

Indeed of Chuck's compassion, care, and concern, his last Chair of Administrative and Civil Law, Lieutenant Colonel Bill Mullee, writes it best:

Chuck Strong has been an integral figure in the Administrative and Civil Law Department [ADA] for many years. He has routinely impressed me during our two and a half years together with the genuine care and concern he demonstrates for any visitor who steps into ADA. Chuck immediately jumps up from his desk to greet the visitor and makes him or her feel welcome by offering a cup of his famous coffee. More than that, whenever a new faculty member has joined the department, Chuck has gone out of his way to help get that officer established. He exudes a positive attitude that is infectious and sets a great example for all of us in how to deal with others. Simply stated, he makes all of us feel like we are part of his family.

Chuck is a true patriot who loves our Nation and who loves to discuss issues affecting it. I have always enjoyed our early morning chats about those issues, and been impressed with his keen intellect as we discuss them. I will miss those discussions and having him on this amazing team, but know that his decision to retire is the best possible decision for him. I sincerely appreciate all that he has done for ADA, the LCS, the Army, and our Nation.

Chuck told the author that "joining the Army was the best decision [he] made" and that he simply has "no regrets." As anyone who has worked with Chuck would know, he loves his country, and he loved being a part of this team. And over the past 19 years, Chuck has become "the lifeblood" of the Administrative and Civil Law Department, and is simply an institution at The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School. Major Keirsten Kennedy sums up Chuck's legacy perfectly stating, "[t]he Army JAG Corps has lost a masterful technical editor with Mr. Strong's retirement, but all of us who have worked with Mr. Chuck Strong have gained a lifelong friend." As he heads to his well-deserved retirement, we honor his contributions to this school; and we thank him for his service. He will be missed.