

Additionally, most junior enlisted Soldiers normally end their duty day around 1700 hours. Depending on the section to which they are assigned, military paralegals often work much longer hours. If there is an upcoming court-martial or board proceeding involving overseas witnesses or complex evidence, paralegals must often stay late into the evening to coordinate with individuals or agencies in the United States and ensure there are no unforeseen issues that could negatively impact our legal proceedings.

Due to the nature of our job, Army paralegals are expected to not only meet the above-noted expectations, but to exceed them. We are often viewed by our peers and superiors alike as the enforcers of the law and are seen as the standard bearers in all that we do. We are expected to lead from the front and always place the mission first. Other Soldiers look up to us because it is our job to know what right looks like. With this in mind, we as Army paralegals must ensure that we exercise good judgment at all times.

While the life of an Army paralegal can be very stressful at times, it is also very rewarding. It is a privilege and an honor to work in an environment that challenges the intellect on a daily basis. I am proud to serve our great country as an Army paralegal.

## ***Identity Theft — How to Protect Yourself...***

by Mark Christensen

The Legal Assistance Office at the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center continues to see clients who are victims of identity theft, and who find themselves looking for ways to reduce the impact of the crime, as well as prevent future access to their personal identification information.

Because that's what identity theft is all about: use of personal information without authority. This might mean someone wants to use your personal information to obtain goods or services for which they do not intend to pay. Or it might mean someone wants to use your personal information in order to cover an undocumented status. You might receive credit card or utility bills in your name from a place where you never lived, or a notice from the IRS that you failed to claim income on your tax return from an employer for whom you never worked. Most types of identity theft result in considerable time and expense clearing up or eliminating the charges or false information. One goal is to avoid identity theft in the first place.

Safeguard all your personal information. Shred unnecessary documents. Protect your SSN. Be careful about releasing your information over the telephone or Internet. Don't click on unsolicited e-mail links. Use strong protected passwords. Keep your personal documents in a safe place.

Look through your purse or wallet and get rid of extra credit and identification cards. Don't leave receipts at ATMs, banks, or gas pumps. Memorize your SSN and important passwords. Never loan a credit card to someone. Beware of solicitations disguised as promotions offering instant prizes and awards.

Be alert to mail or bills that do not arrive as expected, or arrive unexpectedly. Be suspicious of denials of credit or calls from creditors for mysterious reasons. Watch bank and credit balances and statements.

You can use [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com) to see your consumer reports. Stagger them so you get one from Equifax, Transunion, and Experian every four months. Carefully scrutinize all information listed in those reports.

If you are an ID Theft victim, place a fraud alert on your credit reports. Review all your accounts for unexplainable activity. Close compromised or fraudulent accounts, and file reports with the police and Federal Trade Commission at [www.consumer.gov/idtheft](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft). Keep track of all efforts, telephone calls, and communications as you document your case and resolve unauthorized use of your personal information. Legal assistance providers can help you organize your activities and address ID Theft issues, and provide more information about what you can do to protect your information and respond to fraud.

***For more information on identity theft, or to make an appointment to see a Legal Assistance Attorney, contact the Kaiserslautern Legal Services Center Legal Assistance Office at DSN 483-8848 or Civilian 0631-411-8848.***

