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Department of the Army
Pamphlet 600–75

Personnel--General

Accommodating Religious Practices

Headquarters
Department of the Army
Washington, DC
22 September 1993

UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY of CHANGE

DA PAM 600-75
Accommodating Religious Practices

This pamphlet:

- Provides guidance for soldiers, commanders, and others in implementing the Army policy on accommodating religious practices.
- Gives instructions and examples for soldiers to request accommodation (chap 3).
- Lists factors for consideration and procedures for the commander to use in evaluating requests for accommodation (chap 4).

FOREWORD

Conflicts between a commander's responsibility for mission accomplishment and a soldier's religious practices have existed since the United States Army was formed. Colonial legislatures usually provided for religious needs, for example, providing chaplains and time for worship; some legislatures allowed exemption from military service because of conscientious objection. The U.S. Army has made a significant effort to meet the religious needs of its soldiers.

In the past, little guidance was given to the commander on how to handle religious needs. The commander was expected to understand the soldier's religious beliefs and to decide whether or not to grant permission to practice these beliefs. At times there was a conflict between a commander's military mission and the solider's religious requirement. When this conflict was not resolved through accommodation or administrative means, judicial or nonjudicial action became the primary way to resolve the issue.

In 1984, the Secretary of Defense formed a joint service study group to consider the conflict between military requirements and the soldier's religious practice requirements. In 1985, the Secretary of Defense approved a report submitted by the study group. As a result, in June 1985, a Department of Defense Directive 1300.17, *Accommodation of Religious Practices within the Military Services,* was issued, and reissued in February 1988. This directive required each Service to implement its own procedures. The Army implemented this policy in AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6.

Headquarters
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Pamphlet 600–75

Personnel--General

Accommodating Religious Practices

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

GORDON R. SULLIVAN
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

MILTON H. HAMILTON
Administrative Assistant to the
Secretary of the Army

History. This printing is a revision of this publication. Because the publication has been extensively revised, the changed portions have not been highlighted.

Summary. This pamphlet provides guidance and procedures for accommodating religious practices of soldiers in the U.S. Army.

Applicability. This pamphlet applies to the Active Army, the Army National Guard, and the U.S. Army Reserve. It also applies to the U.S. Military Academy and the Reserve Officer Training Corps and to applicants for entry into the U.S. Army. Procedures in this pamphlet are not modified during mobilization.

Proponent and exceptions. The proponent of this pamphlet is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER). The proponent has the authority to approve exceptions to this pamphlet that are consistent with controlling law and regulation. Proponents may delegate this approval authority, in writing, to a division chief under their supervision within the proponent agency who holds the rank of colonel or the civilian equivalent.

Interim changes. Interim changes to this pamphlet are not official unless they are authenticated by the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. Users will destroy interim changes on their expiration dates unless sooner superseded or rescinded.

Suggested improvements. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to Headquarters, Department of the Army (DAPE–HR–S), WASH DC 20310–0300.

Distribution. Distribution of this publication is made in accordance with the requirements on DA Form 12-09-E, block 2360, intended for command levels A,B,C,D for Active Army, Army National Guard, and U.S. Army Reserve.

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*This pamphlet supersedes DA PAM 600–75 dated 1 January 1986.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1–1. Purpose

This pamphlet explains guidance and procedures for accommodating religious practices of soldiers in the U.S. Army. It defines the roles of soldiers, commanders, the Committee for the Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices within the U.S. Army, and the commands that are tasked with processing enlisted, candidate, cadet, and warrant or commissioned officer applicants.

1–2. References

Required and related publications and referenced forms are listed in appendix A.

1–3. Explanation of abbreviations

Abbreviations used in this pamphlet are explained in the Glossary.

1–4. Scope

The Army places a high value on the rights of its members to observe the tenets of their respective religions. It is the Army's policy to approve requests for accommodation of religious practices that will not adversely impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety, or discipline or otherwise interfere with the performance of the soldier's military duties. Accommodation of a soldier's religious practices cannot be guaranteed at all times but must depend on military necessity. The Army policy in AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6, specifically addresses worship, dietary, medical, and wear and appearance areas of religious practices. DA PAM 165–13 and DA PAM 165–13–1 outline specific practices of various religious groups and provide thumbnail sketches of significant religious issues that relate to military service. The unit or installation chaplain and staff judge advocate can provide information and assistance.

1–5. Religious practices

a. General. Religious practices are not limited to mandatory tenets of a religious faith group. Individual conscience and personal piety may warrant the same degree of consideration for religious accommodation as the tenets of a recognized religious group.

b. Religious worship practices. Most religious groups have worship requirements. Some may conflict with the soldier's normal availability for duty.

(1) *Religious worship.* Sunday morning is not the only recognized or designated time for worship for military personnel. Some religious groups observe a 24-hour sabbath beginning at sundown on Friday and ending at sundown on Saturday, when they are required to refrain from certain activities. Other religious groups conduct worship services at various times during the week and weekend. Duration of worship services differs between religious groups. Commanders are encouraged to accommodate the unique religious worship requirements of their soldiers when mission requirements permit, by allowing them the time and opportunity to worship according to their custom and practice. Exceptions to normal duty hours may be necessary in some cases.

(2) *Religious events.* Certain religious holy days or other observances are established as times of obligation or significant events in the life of the religious group. Particular festivals, rituals, historic reenactments, or religious seasons may be as important or even more important than weekly worship. When possible, commanders should consider granting time off, exceptions to normal duty hours, passes, or ordinary leave for soldiers to be able to participate in religious events.

c. Religious dietary practices. Some religious groups have tenets that prohibit eating specific foods or prescribe the manner in which food is prepared. Other groups require times of fasting or abstinence from certain food or drink. These dietary restrictions normally prohibit certain foods at all or specific times rather than require eating only a few select foods. Some soldiers may need to request approval for separate rations on the basis of strict dietary requirements. Others may simply need to request arrangement for messing at dining facilities that operate at other than normal meal times or to request reimbursement for missed meals during required fast times. Commanders should be aware of what provisions can be made by the servicing dining facilities and what alternative provisions can be authorized for soldiers with requests for religious dietary accommodations.

d. Religious medical practices. Some religious groups require medical self-care, prohibit immunizations, blood transfusions, surgery, or autopsy. Other groups require certain religious ministrations or procedures to be accomplished at time of death or in relation to preparation of the body for burial. Some groups are strongly opposed to or prohibit cremation. Soldiers who observe such religious requirements or practices should be fully aware of the provisions of AR 600–20. They should ensure that their commanders are aware and submit appropriate requests for religious accommodation where applicable.

e. Religious wear and appearance practices.

(1) Some religious groups require the wearing of religious articles. Some of these articles are not visible as they are worn under normal outer clothing; others are highly visible, such as headgear, garments, and adornments (necklaces, bracelets, pins, and so forth). Soldiers will meet the requirements of the neat, conservative, discrete, subdued, and nonpermanent criteria listed in AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6. Articles must not substitute for, replace, or interfere with the normal wear or appearance of items of the Army uniform as outlined in AR 670–1.

(2) Some religious groups require individual piety and modesty in dress; for example, the covering of arms and legs or women not wearing male clothing. Commanders may accommodate such religious practices that do not pose health or safety hazards. Uniformity is an important military consideration. Uniformity should not be the overriding reason for denying all requests for exception to wear and appearance policy based on sincere religious practices.

(3) The practice of wearing uncut hair and beards and permanent jewelry (items not readily removable such as welded bracelets) is prohibited because of health and safety reasons, even if based on sincere religious convictions. Continuance of prior exceptions is governed by AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6.

1–6. The Committee for the Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices within the U.S. Army

This committee is mandated by AR 600–20 to act as an advisory group to commanders and soldiers and as a reviewing and recommending body to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

Chapter 2
Accessions

2–1. General

a. Guidance counselors at Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS) will—

(1) Obtain the signature of all applicants who enlist in the U.S. Army on an Accommodation of Religious Practices statement.

(2) Assist the applicant as needed.

b. Persons responsible for obtaining applicant signatures on officer accession forms will—

(1) Obtain signatures of applicants at time of entrance into the U.S. Army on the Accommodation of Religious Practices statement.

(2) Assist applicants as needed.

2–2. Procedures

a. All applicants, upon enlistment, reenlistment, or receipt of original appointment or commission, are required to—

(1) Sign a statement acknowledging a basic understanding of the Army policy concerning accommodating religious practices.

(2) Indicate an understanding that failure to sign the statement may result in nonacceptance of the applicant for Army service.

b. Recruiters, guidance counselors, and others involved in acquisition of persons may request an advisory opinion from the committee concerning the accommodation of religious practices. This opinion will in no way be construed as automatic approval or as binding on unit commanders.

Chapter 3
Soldiers

3–1. General

When religious faith and practices place them in conflict with military requirements, soldiers should submit a written request to their commander for an accommodation of religious practices per AR 600–20. In many cases, the unit commander can easily grant the accommodation. In other situations, the commander may be unable to grant full accommodation due to the nature of the request, the mission of the unit, or other extenuating circumstances. Military readiness, unit cohesion, health, safety, and discipline are the commander's greatest concern. If the commander approves the request, the soldier must understand that the accommodation is only valid for that unit and that commander. If either change, the soldier must submit a new request. If the commander disapproves the request, the soldier must comply with the commander's decision. However, the soldier may request that the commander forward the accommodation request packet (with all chain of command endorsements and decisions) to the Committee for an advisory opinion, and that the commander reconsider the decision based on the recommendation of the committee.

3–2. Procedures

a. A soldier who submits a request for accommodation of religious practice will provide information to assist the unit commander in evaluating the request using factors in paragraph 4–2*a*. (See fig 3–1 for the procedure to follow.) The request must state that the requesting soldier consents to maintaining this information in Government records. Figures 3–2 through 3–5 are samples of requests to assist the soldier. Statements from the following sources attached to the request would assist the commander:

(1) The religious group with which the soldier is affiliated.

(2) Members of that religious group.

(3) Persons who are acquainted with the soldier and with the soldier's religious practices. Statements by chaplains or staff judge advocates might be included.

b. Approval or disapproval of the request for accommodation will be given to the soldier in writing.

c. If the unit commander determines that the religious practice cannot be accommodated, the soldier may—

(1) Request on a DA Form 4187 (Personnel Action) through command channels, that the committee review the commander's decision and provide an advisory opinion as to whether the decision was within the intent of AR 600–20. Regardless of the advisory opinion provided, the unit commander will make the final decision within the limits of policy and regulatory direction. Soldiers who feel that their requests have not been given a fair hearing even after referral to the committee, may seek redress under article 138, Uniform Code of Military Justice. They may also petition the Army Board for the Correction of Military Records for correction of appropriate records.

(2) Request reassignment, reclassification, or separation, if a conflict between the military requirement and the soldier's religious practice still exists. The soldier should be referred to the unit commander, first sergeant, chaplain, or a legal assistance attorney for assistance in this matter. The Army intends no conflict between soldiers' adherence to strict religious practices and compliance with Army policy, directives, or orders. However, it must be understood that not all religious practices can be accommodated by every commander. Some religious practices cannot be accommodated by any commander. What may be easily accommodated in one unit or location may be impossible in another unit or location. This may be due to different unit missions, areas of operation, health or safety requirements, or other critical considerations.

d. Requests for accommodation of difficult or unusual religious practices may be sent through command channels to the Committee for the Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices in the U.S. Army. Send to HQDA, ATTN: DAPE–HR–S, WASH DC 20310–0300. If the religious practice is a type that can be accommodated, it will be added to AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6, or to the regulation governing the area of accommodation or to this pamphlet. The commander will notify the soldier in writing through command channels of the final decision regarding the soldier's request.

e. Approved wear and appearance practices are listed in AR 670–1 as an exception to policy. A soldier may request that the unit commander accommodate these religious practices. If the religious practice is listed as an exception to wear and appearance standards in AR 670–1, the unit commander will approve the accommodation when the soldier validates sincere religious belief in that practice as essential to his or her religious faith. An exception will not be granted if the commander's unit has been authorized an exemption from the Committee for Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices. Temporary suspensions of the exemptions noted in AR 670–1 may be made due to health, safety, or military necessity by the soldier's commander. Soldiers may send requests for consideration of other wear and appearance issues through command channels to the Committee for the Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices. Send to HQDA, ATTN: DAPE–HR–S, WASH DC 20310–0300.

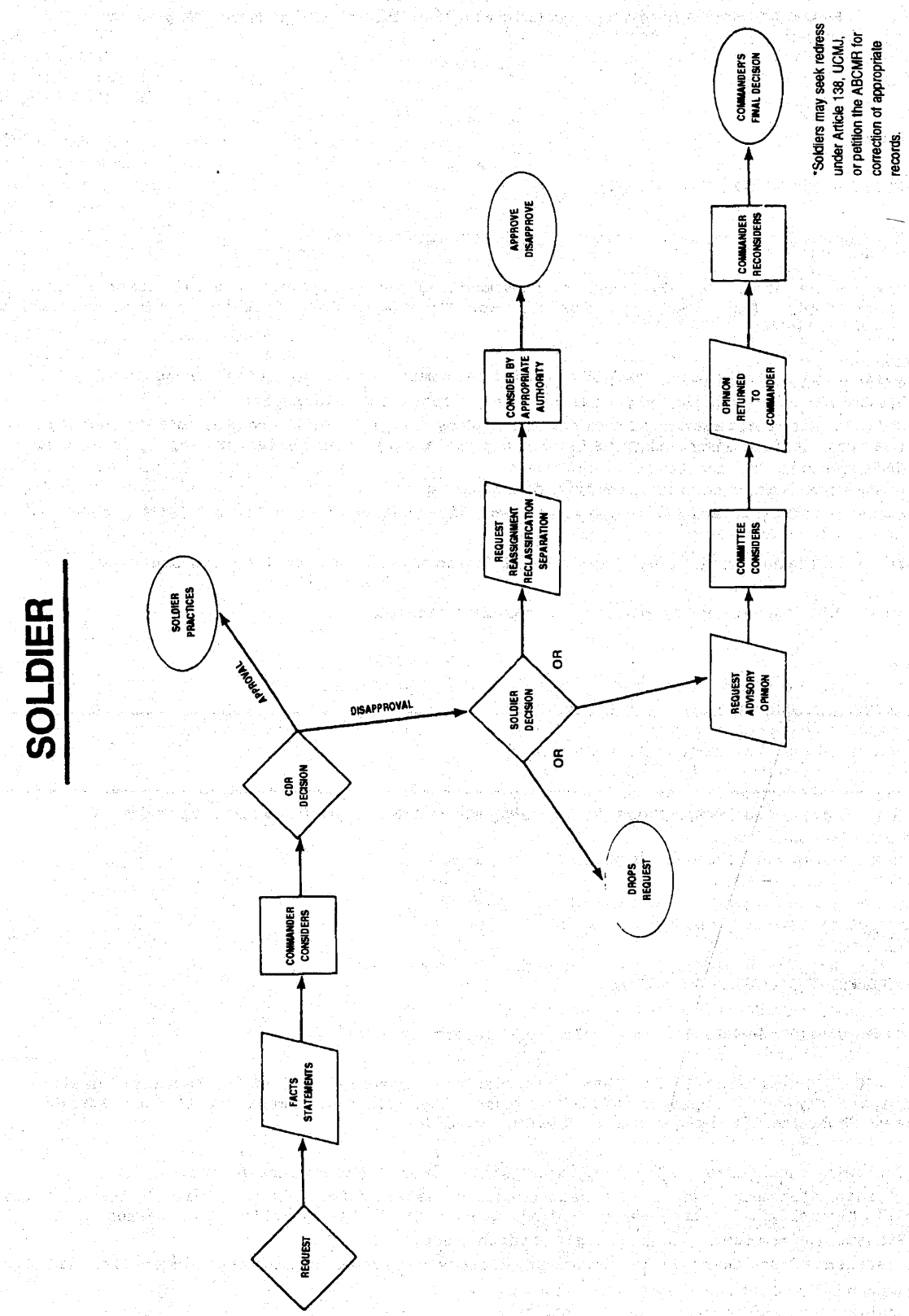


Figure 3–1. Soldier alternatives for accommodation of religious practices

Figure 3–2. Sample format for requesting accommodation of a religious worship practice

(Letterhead)

(Office Symbol) *(Date)*

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, *(Unit Address)*

SUBJECT: Request for Accommodation for Religious Worship Practice

1. Under AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6, I request accommodation of my religious worship practice. I would like to have my duty schedule modified in order to worship at *(name of place)* from *(hours of worship)* with *(name of group, fellowship, and so forth)*.

2. The following enclosures are provided to assist the commander in evaluating my request:

a. Statements outlining the reason for conflict or special consideration.

b. Official statement extracted from documents of my religious faith group or letters on official letterhead from leaders of my religious faith group pertaining to our religious worship tenets and practices.

c. Statements from members of my religious faith group.

d. Statements from others who know me and the worship practices of my religious faith group.

3. I understand the accommodation, if approved, is valid only for this unit and commander.

4. Copies of this request may be retained in Government records.

Encls

JOHN L. DOE
CPL, 000–00–0000

Figure 3–3. Sample format for requesting accommodation of religious dietary practice

(Letterhead)

Office Symbol *(Date)*

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, *(Unit Address)*

SUBJECT: Request for Accommodation of Religious Dietary Practice

1. Under 600–20, paragraph 5–6, I request accommodation of my religious dietary practice. I desire to ration separately and to supplement my field/combat rations in order to meet my religious dietary practices. These practices require me to *(describe your needs)*.

2. The following enclosures are provided to assist the commander in evaluating my request:

a. Official statements extracted from documents or statements written on official letterhead from leader(s) of my religious faith group pertaining to specific dietary practices/requirements.

b. Statements from members of my religious faith group.

c. Statements from others who know me and the dietary requirements/practices of my religious faith group.

3. I understand the accommodation, if approved, is valid only for this unit and this commander.

4. Copies of this request may be retained in Government records.

Encls

JOHN L. DOE
CPL 000–00–0000

Figure 3–4. Sample format for requesting accommodation of a religious medical request

(Letterhead)

Office Symbol *(Date)*

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, *(Unit Address)*

SUBJECT: Request for Accommodation of Religious Medical Practice

1. Under AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6, I request accommodation of my religious medical practice. I desire to *(list religious medical practice(s) requested)*.

2. The following enclosures are provided to assist the commander to evaluate my request:
a. Official statements extracted from documents of my religious faith group or statements on official letterhead from leader(s) of my faith group pertaining to my religious medical practice(s).
b. Statements from members of my religious faith group.
c. Statements from others who know me and the religious medical practices/requirements of my faith group.

3. I understand the accommodation, if approved, is valid only for this unit and this commander.

4. Copies of this request may be retained in Government records.

Encls

JOHN L. DOE
CPL 000–00–0000

Figure 3–5. Sample format for requesting an exception to wear and appearance policies as an accommodation of religious practices

(Letterhead)

Office Symbol *(Date)*

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, *(Unit Address)*

SUBJECT: Request for Exception to Wear and Appearance Standards Based on a Religious Practice

1. Under AR 600–20, paragraph 5–6, and AR 670–1, I request an exception to wear and appearance policies as an accommodation of my religious practices. These practices require me to (describe your needs and how they conflict with military requirements).

2. The following enclosures are provided to assist the commander to evaluate my request:
a. Official statements extracted from documents of my religious faith group or letters written on official letterhead from leaders of my religious faith group pertaining to requirements or practices of my religious faith group.
b. Statements from members of my religious faith group.
c. Statements from others who know me and the practices/requirements of my religious faith group.

3. I understand the accommodation, if approved, is valid only for this unit and this commander.

4. Copies of this request may be retained in Government records.

Encls

JOHN L. DOE
CPL, 000–00–0000

Chapter 4
Commanders

4–1. General

a. The unit commander who receives a request for accommodation of a religious practice will determine—

(1) If the request is sincere and religion-based. Only sincere religion-based practices will receive consideration under paragraph 1–3.

(2) If the requested religious practice would have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety, or discipline.

b. When determining whether a practice is based on religion, it is important to remember that religious practices are not limited to the mandatory tenets of a religious group. Religious practices required by individual conscience or personal piety may warrant the same consideration for accommodation even if not based on tenets of a recognized religious group. Questions about whether a practice is religious should be referred to the serving chaplain and staff judge advocate, or, on their recommendation, to the Committee for the Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices within the U.S. Army.

4–2. Procedures

a. When considering a request for accommodation of religious practices, the unit commander should consider the high value the Army places on the rights of its members to observe their respective religious beliefs. (See fig 4–1.)

b. The following factors promote a standard procedure for resolving difficult questions involving accommodation of religious practices.

(1) The importance of military requirements, such as individual readiness, military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety, morale, and discipline.

(2) The religious importance of the accommodation to the requester.

(3) The cumulative impact of repeated accommodations of a similar nature.

(4) Alternative means available to meet the requested accommodation.

(5) Previous treatment of the same or similar requests, including treatment of similar requests made for other than religious reasons.

c. The request for exception and approval will be prepared in triplicate. One copy will be placed in the unit policy file, a copy given to the soldier, and a copy forwarded to the review committee. Send to HQDA (DAPE–HR–S), WASH DC 20310–0300.

d. Commanders may refer difficult or unusual questions about requested accommodations under paragraph 1–4 or about other requested religious accommodations through command channels to the review committee for an advisory opinion. Soldiers may also address any unresolved or unfavorably resolved requests for accommodation of religious practices through their chain of command to the committee. The chain of command will endorse and forward any such requests to the committee for an advisory opinion as military necessity permits. Paragraph 3–2*d* applies to procedures to be used by the soldier and the commander in situations where HQDA has authorized an exception to policy in the wear and appearance area.

e. A soldier who requests accommodation of religious practices must continue to follow orders and perform all duties unless excused by the commander. Pending a decision on the soldier's request for accommodation, the commander should consider one of the following interim measures:

(1) Excuse the soldier from duties or activities that conflict with the soldier's religious practices because of the nature or hours of those duties or activities.

(2) Require the soldier to perform alternative duties that do not conflict with the soldier's religious practices.

(3) Require the soldier to perform normal duties during hours that do not conflict with the soldier's religious practices.

(4) Grant the accommodation temporarily until a final decision is made.

(5) Otherwise modify the soldier's duties.

f. A soldier who requests an advisory opinion from the Committee for the Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices within the U.S. Army is bound by the commander's final accommodation decision. The soldier must continue to perform all duties and participate in scheduled training unless excused by the commander.

g. When requested religious accommodations are not approved by the commander, and continued conflict between the unit's requirements and the soldier's religious practices is apparent, administrative action may be considered. These actions may include but are not limited to reassignment, reclassification, or separation.

(1) All commissioned or warrant officers with a service obligation due to education or training will be separated only by appropriate authority. This is after a review by the Committee for Review of Accommodation of Religious Practices within the U.S. Army and the appropriate Army Staff agencies. All commissioned or warrant officers who request separation for reasons of religious accommodations will follow the application procedure for a release from active duty as prescribed in AR 635–100 (for other than Regular Army [OTRA]), or apply for an unqualified resignation as outlined in AR 635–120 (for Regular Army [RA]).

(2) When the circumstances of an enlisted soldier's case do not warrant action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or initiation of adverse administrative separation proceedings, requests for separation of enlisted soldiers, both voluntary and involuntary, are submitted to HQDA. Separation, if approved, will be accomplished for the convenience of the Government. Submit requests for separation of Active Army enlisted soldiers under AR 635–200, paragraph 5–3, through command channels to HQDA, ATTN: TAPC–PDT–S, ALEX VA 22331–0479. Submit requests for separation of Reserve Component enlisted soldiers under AR 135–178, paragraph 4–4, through command channels. National Guard personnel will send requests to Chief, National Guard Bureau, ATTN: NGB–ARP–E, WASH DC 20310–2500. U.S. Army Reserve personnel will send requests to Commander, Army Reserve Personnel Center, ATTN: DARP–PAT–R, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63132–5200.

(3) Nothing in this paragraph precludes action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

h. The unit commander will place a copy of each approved request for accommodation with the commander's response in the unit policy file. The soldier will receive a copy of this action. If subsequent commanders determine a need to change the approved accommodation, the soldier should be informed of actions taken. Such actions should be consistent with paragraph 4–2.

i. An information copy of each request and its response, as well as any subsequent changes, will be furnished to the Committee for the Review of Accommodations of Religious Practices within the U.S. Army, HQDA, ATTN: DAPE–HR–S, WASH DC 20310–0300.

j. Commanders may request their units not be required to grant exceptions to wear and appearance standards due to special needs, inter-Service requirements, or other problems the exceptions cause in their units. Forward through command channels to HQDA, ATTN: DAPE–HR–S, WASH DC 20310–0300, for approval.

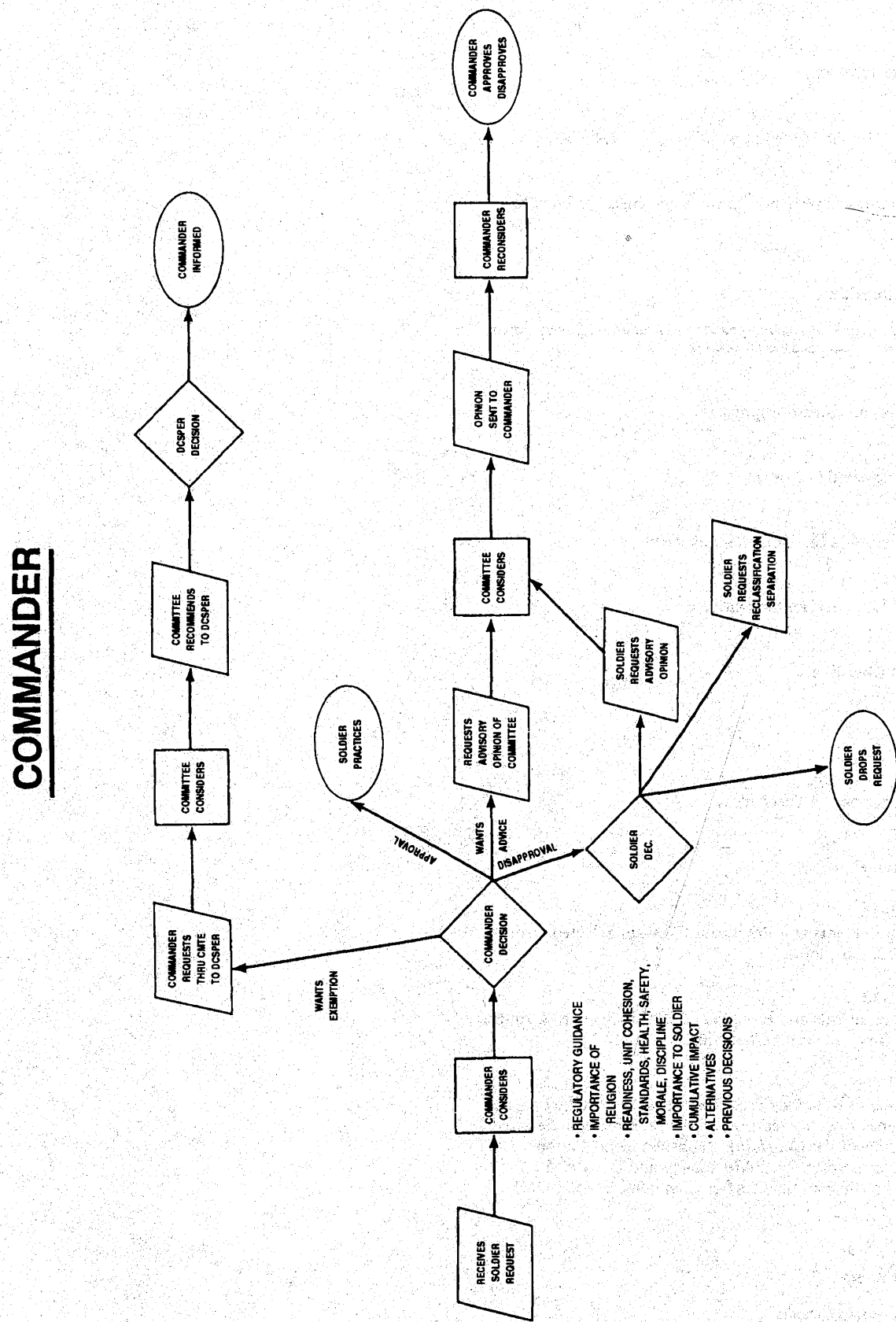


Figure 4–1. Commander actions in response to request for accommodation of religious practices

Appendix A
References

Section I
Required Publications

AR 600–20
Army Command Policy (cited in paras 1–4, 1–5, 1–6, 3–1, 3–2).

AR 670–1
Wear and Appearance of Army Uniform and Insignia (cited in paras 1–5 and 3–2).

Section II
Related Publications

A related publication is merely a source of additional information. The user does not have to read it to understand this publication.

AR 40–562
Immunizations and Chemoprophylaxis

AR 135–178
Separation of Enlisted Personnel

AR 165–1
Chaplain Activities in the United States Army

AR 350–100
Officer Active Duty Service Obligations

AR 600–43
Conscientious Objection

AR 635–100
Officer Personnel

AR 635–120
Officer Resignations and Discharges

AR 635–200
Enlisted Personnel

DA PAM 165–13
Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains

DA PAM 165–13–1
Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook Supplement for Chaplains

DODD 1300.17
Accommodation of Religious Practices within the Military Services *Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains.* Published in 1992 as an additional supplement to DA PAM 165–13 and DA PAM 165–13–1 by the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, WASH DC 20310–2700.

Section III
Prescribed Forms

This pamphlet prescribes no forms.

Section IV
Referenced Forms

DA Form 4187
Personnel Action

Glossary

Section I
Abbreviations

ARNG
Army National Guard

DCSPER
Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel

DOD
Department of Defense

HQDA
Headquarters, Department of the Army

MEPS
Military Entrance Processing Stations

OTRA
other than Regular Army

UCMJ
Uniform Code of Military Justice

USAR
U. S. Army Reserve

Section II
Terms

This section contains no entries.

Section III
Special Abbreviations and Terms

This section contains no entries.

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This index is organized alphabetically by topic and subtopic. Topics and subtopics are identified by paragraph number.

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*U.S. G.P.O.:1993-342-064:80006