

§ 815. Art. 15. Commanding officer's non-judicial punishment

(a) Under such regulations as the President may prescribe, and under such additional regulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary concerned, limitations may be placed on the powers granted by this article with respect to the kind and amount of punishment authorized, the categories of commanding officers and warrant officers exercising command authorized to exercise those powers, the applicability of this article to an accused who demands trial by court-martial, and the kinds of courts-martial to which the case may be referred upon such a demand. However, except in the case of a member attached to or embarked in a vessel, punishment may not be imposed upon any member of the armed forces under this article if the member has, before the imposition of such punishment, demanded trial by court-martial in lieu of such punishment. Under similar regulations, rules may be prescribed with respect to the suspension of punishments authorized hereunder. If authorized by regulations of the Secretary concerned, a commanding officer exercising general court-martial jurisdiction or an officer of general or flag rank in command may delegate his powers under this article to a principal assistant.

(b) Subject to subsection (a), any commanding officer may, in addition to or in lieu of admonition or reprimand, impose one or more of the following disciplinary punishments for minor offenses without the intervention of a court-martial—

(1) upon officers of his command—

(A) restriction to certain specified limits, with or without suspension from duty, for not more than 30 consecutive days;

(B) if imposed by an officer exercising general court-martial jurisdiction or an officer of general or flag rank in command—

(i) arrest in quarters for not more than 30 consecutive days;

(ii) forfeiture of not more than one-half of one month's pay per month for two months;

(iii) restriction to certain specified limits, with or without suspension from duty, for not more than 60 consecutive days;

(iv) detention of not more than one-half of one month's pay per month for three months;

(2) upon other personnel of his command—

(A) if imposed upon a person attached to or embarked in a vessel, confinement on bread and water or diminished rations for not more than three consecutive days;

(B) correctional custody for not more than seven consecutive days;

(C) forfeiture of not more than seven days' pay;

(D) reduction to the next inferior pay grade, if the grade from which demoted is within the promotion authority of the officer imposing the reduction or any officer subordinate to the one who imposes the reduction;

(E) extra duties, including fatigue or other duties, for not more than 14 consecutive days;

(F) restriction to certain specified limits, with or without suspension from duty, for not more than 14 consecutive days;

(G) detention of not more than 14 days' pay;

(H) if imposed by an officer of the grade of major or lieutenant commander, or above—

(i) the punishment authorized under clause (A);

(ii) correctional custody for not more than 30 consecutive days;

(iii) forfeiture of not more than one-half of one month's pay per month for two months;

(iv) reduction to the lowest or any intermediate pay grade, if the grade from which demoted is within the promotion authority of the officer imposing the reduction or any officer subordinate to the one who imposes the reduction, but an enlisted member in a pay grade above E-4 may not be reduced more than two pay grades;

(v) extra duties, including fatigue or other duties, for not more than 45 consecutive days;

(vi) restrictions to certain specified limits, with or without suspension from duty, for not more than 60 consecutive days;

(vii) detention of not more than one-half of one month's pay per month for three months.

Detention of pay shall be for a stated period of not more than one year but if the offender's term of service expires earlier, the detention shall terminate upon that expiration. No two or more of the punishments of arrest in quarters, confinement on bread and water or diminished rations, correctional custody, extra duties, and restriction may be combined to run consecutively in the maximum amount imposable for each. Whenever any of those punishments are combined to run consecutively, there must be an apportionment. In addition, forfeiture of pay may not be combined with detention of pay without an apportionment. For the purposes of this subsection, "correctional custody" is the physical restraint of a person during duty or nonduty hours and may include extra duties, fatigue duties, or hard labor. If practicable, correctional custody will not be served in immediate association with persons awaiting trial or held in confinement pursuant to trial by court-martial.

(c) An officer in charge may impose upon enlisted members assigned to the unit of which he is in charge such of the punishments authorized under subsection (b)(2)(A)–(G) as the Secretary concerned may specifically prescribe by regulation.

(d) The officer who imposes the punishment authorized in subsection (b), or his successor in command, may, at any time, suspend probationally any part or amount of the unexecuted punishment imposed and may suspend probationally a reduction in grade or a forfeiture imposed under subsection (b), whether or not executed. In addition, he may, at any time, remit or mitigate any part or amount of the unexecuted punishment imposed and may set aside in whole or in part the punishment, whether executed or unexecuted, and restore all rights, privileges, and

property affected. He may also mitigate reduction in grade to forfeiture or detention of pay. When mitigating—

- (1) arrest in quarters to restriction;
- (2) confinement on bread and water or diminished rations to correctional custody;
- (3) correctional custody or confinement on bread and water or diminished rations to extra duties or restriction, or both; or
- (4) extra duties to restriction;

the mitigated punishment shall not be for a greater period than the punishment mitigated. When mitigating forfeiture of pay to detention of pay, the amount of the detention shall not be greater than the amount of the forfeiture. When mitigating reduction in grade to forfeiture or detention of pay, the amount of the forfeiture or detention shall not be greater than the amount that could have been imposed initially under this article by the officer who imposed the punishment mitigated.

(e) A person punished under this article who considers his punishment unjust or disproportionate to the offense may, through the proper channel, appeal to the next superior authority. The appeal shall be promptly forwarded and decided, but the person punished may in the meantime be required to undergo the punishment adjudged. The superior authority may exercise the same powers with respect to the punishment imposed as may be exercised under subsection (d) by the officer who imposed the punishment. Before acting on an appeal from a punishment of—

- (1) arrest in quarters for more than seven days;
- (2) correctional custody for more than seven days;
- (3) forfeiture of more than seven days' pay;
- (4) reduction of one or more pay grades from the fourth or a higher pay grade;
- (5) extra duties for more than 14 days;
- (6) restriction for more than 14 days; or
- (7) detention of more than 14 days' pay;

the authority who is to act on the appeal shall refer the case to a judge advocate or a lawyer of the Department of Homeland Security for consideration and advice, and may so refer the case upon appeal from any punishment imposed under subsection (b).

(f) The imposition and enforcement of disciplinary punishment under this article for any act or omission is not a bar to trial by court-martial for a serious crime or offense growing out of the same act or omission, and not properly punishable under this article; but the fact that a disciplinary punishment has been enforced may be shown by the accused upon trial, and when so shown shall be considered in determining the measure of punishment to be adjudged in the event of a finding of guilty.

(g) The Secretary concerned may, by regulation, prescribe the form of records to be kept of proceedings under this article and may also prescribe that certain categories of those proceedings shall be in writing.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 41; Pub. L. 87-648, §1, Sept. 7, 1962, 76 Stat. 447; Pub. L. 90-179, §1(4), Dec. 8, 1967, 81 Stat. 545; Pub. L. 90-623, §2(4), Oct. 22, 1968, 82 Stat. 1314; Pub. L. 98-209, §§2(c), 13(b), Dec. 6, 1983, 97 Stat. 1393,

1408; Pub. L. 107-296, title XVII, §1704(b)(1), Nov. 25, 2002, 116 Stat. 2314.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
815(a)	50:571(a).	May 5, 1950, ch. 169, §1 (Art. 15), 64 Stat. 112.
815(b)	50:571(b).	
815(c)	50:571(c).	
815(d)	50:571(d).	
815(e)	50:571(e).	

In subsection (a), the words “not more than” are substituted for the words “a period not to exceed”, “not to exceed”, and “a period not exceeding”.

In subsection (a)(1), the words “and warrant officers” are omitted, since the word “officer”, as defined in section 101(14) of this title, includes warrant officers.

In clause (1)(C), the words “one month’s pay” are substituted for the words “his pay per month for a period not exceeding one month”.

In subsection (b), the words “Secretary concerned” are substituted for the words “Secretary of a Department”.

In subsection (c), the word “subsections” is substituted for the word “subdivisions”. The words “enlisted members” are substituted for the words “enlisted persons”.

In subsections (d) and (e), the words “authority of” are omitted as surplusage.

In subsection (d), the word “considers” is substituted for the word “deems”. The word “may” is substituted for the words “shall have power to * * * to”.

In subsection (e), the words “is not” are substituted for the words “shall not be”.

AMENDMENTS

2002—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 107-296 substituted “of Homeland Security” for “of Transportation” in concluding provisions.

1983—Pub. L. 98-209, §13(b)(1), substituted “non-judicial” for “nonjudicial” in section catchline.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 98-209, §13(b)(2)(A), struck out “of this section” after “subsection (a)” in provisions preceding par. (1).

Subsec. (b)(2)(H)(i). Pub. L. 98-209, §13(b)(2)(B), substituted “clause (A)” for “subsection (b)(2)(A)”.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 98-209, §2(c), substituted “or a lawyer of the” for “of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps, or a law specialist or lawyer of the Coast Guard or”.

1968—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 90-623 substituted “or a law specialist or lawyer of the Coast Guard or Department of Transportation” for “or a law specialist or lawyer of the Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Treasury Department”.

1967—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 90-179 inserted reference to judge advocate of the Marine Corps and substituted reference to judge advocate of the Navy for reference to law specialist of the Navy.

1962—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 87-648 redesignated former subsec. (b) as (a), inserted references to such regulations as the President may prescribe, permitted limitations to be placed on the categories of warrant officers exercising command authorized to exercise powers under this article, and on the kinds of courts-martial to which a case may be referred upon demand therefor, promulgation of regulations prescribing rules with respect to the suspension of punishment authorized by this article, and the delegation of powers to a principal assistant by a commanding officer exercising general court-martial jurisdiction or an officer of general or flag rank in command, if so authorized by the Secretary’s regulations, and prohibited, except for members attached to or embarked in a vessel, imposition of punishment under this article on any member of the armed forces who, before imposition of such punishment, demands trial by court-martial. Former subsec. (a) redesignated (b).

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 87-648 redesignated former subsec. (a) as (b), enlarged authority of commanding officers to

impose punishment upon officers by increasing the number of days restriction from not more than 14 to not more than 30 days, and the number of months one-half of one month's pay may be ordered forfeited by an officer exercising general court-martial jurisdiction from one to two months, empowering officers exercising general court-martial jurisdiction and officers of general or flag rank in command to impose arrest in quarters for not more than 30 consecutive days, restriction, with or without suspension from duty, for not more than 60 consecutive days, and detention of not more than one-half of one month's pay per month for three months, and officers of general or flag rank in command to order forfeiture of not more than one-half of one month's pay per month for two months, and the authority of commanding officers to impose punishment upon other personnel of his command to permit correctional custody for not more than seven consecutive days, forfeiture of not more than seven days' pay, and detention of not more than 14 days' pay, empowered officers of the grade of major or lieutenant commander, or above, to impose the punishments prescribed in clauses (i) to (vii) of subpar. (2) (H) upon personnel of his command other than officers, changed provisions which permitted reduction to next inferior grade, if the grade from which demoted was established by the command or an equivalent or lower command to permit reduction to the next inferior pay grade, if the grade from which demoted is within the promotion authority of the officer imposing the reduction or any officer subordinate to the one who imposes the reduction, and provisions which permitted extra duties for not more than two consecutive weeks, and not more than two hours per day, holidays included, to authorize extra duties, including fatigue or other duties, for not more than 14 consecutive days, inserted provisions limiting detention of pay for a stated period of not more than one year, prohibiting two or more of the punishments of arrest in quarters, confinement on bread and water or diminished rations, correctional custody, extra duties, and restriction to be combined to run consecutively in the maximum amount imposable for each, combining of forfeiture of pay with detention without an apportionment, and service of correctional custody, if practicable, in immediate association with persons awaiting trial or held in confinement pursuant to court-martial, requiring apportionment of punishments combined to run consecutively, and in those cases where forfeiture of pay is combined with detention of pay, defining "correctional custody", and struck out provisions which permitted withholding of privileges of officers and other personnel for not more than two consecutive weeks and which authorized confinement for not more than seven consecutive days if imposed upon a person attached to or embarked in a vessel. Former subsec. (b) redesignated (a).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 87-648 substituted "under subsection (b)(2)(A)-(G) as the Secretary concerned may specifically prescribe by regulation" for "to be imposed by commanding officers as the Secretary concerned may by regulation specifically prescribe, as provided in subsections (a) and (b)," and deleted "for minor offenses" after "an officer in charge may".

Subsecs. (d), (e). Pub. L. 87-648 added subsec. (d), redesignated former subsec. (d) as (e), inserted provisions requiring the authority who is to act on an appeal from any of the seven enumerated punishments to refer the case to a judge advocate of the Army or Air Force, a law specialist of the Navy, or a law specialist or lawyer of the Marine Corps, Coast Guard, or Treasury Department for advice, and authorizing such referral of any case on appeal from punishments under subsec. (b) of this section, and substituted "The superior authority may exercise the same powers with respect to the punishment imposed as may be exercised under subsection (d) by the officer who imposed the punishment" for "The officer who imposes the punishment, his successor in command, and superior authority may suspend, set aside, or remit any part or amount of the punishment, and restore all rights, privileges, and property affected." Former subsec. (e) redesignated (f).

Subsecs. (f), (g). Pub. L. 87-648 redesignated former subsec. (e) as (f) and added subsec. (g).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2002 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 107-296 effective on the date of transfer of the Coast Guard to the Department of Homeland Security, see section 1704(g) of Pub. L. 107-296, set out as a note under section 101 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1983 AMENDMENT

Amendment by section 13(b) of Pub. L. 98-209 effective Dec. 6, 1983, and amendment by section 2(c) of Pub. L. 98-209 effective first day of eighth calendar month beginning after Dec. 6, 1983, see section 12(a)(1) of Pub. L. 98-209, set out as a note under section 801 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1968 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 90-623 intended to restate without substantive change the law in effect on Oct. 22, 1968, see section 6 of Pub. L. 90-623, set out as a note under section 5334 of Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1962 AMENDMENT

Section 2 of Pub. L. 87-648 provided that: "This Act [amending this section] becomes effective on the first day of the fifth month following the month in which it is enacted [September 1962]."

SUBCHAPTER IV—COURT-MARTIAL JURISDICTION

Sec.	Art.	
816.	16.	Courts-martial classified.
817.	17.	Jurisdiction of courts-martial in general.
818.	18.	Jurisdiction of general courts-martial.
819.	19.	Jurisdiction of special courts-martial.
820.	20.	Jurisdiction of summary courts-martial.
821.	21.	Jurisdiction of courts-martial not exclusive.

§ 816. Art. 16. Courts-martial classified

The three kinds of courts-martial in each of the armed forces are—

(1) general courts-martial, consisting of—

(A) a military judge and not less than five members or, in a case in which the accused may be sentenced to a penalty of death, the number of members determined under section 825a of this title (article 25a); or

(B) only a military judge, if before the court is assembled the accused, knowing the identity of the military judge and after consultation with defense counsel, requests orally on the record or in writing a court composed only of a military judge and the military judge approves;

(2) special courts-martial, consisting of—

(A) not less than three members; or

(B) a military judge and not less than three members; or

(C) only a military judge, if one has been detailed to the court, and the accused under the same conditions as those prescribed in clause (1)(B) so requests; and

(3) summary courts-martial, consisting of one commissioned officer.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 42; Pub. L. 90-632, §2(3), Oct. 24, 1968, 82 Stat. 1335; Pub. L. 98-209, §3(a), Dec. 6, 1983, 97 Stat. 1394; Pub. L. 107-107, div. A, title V, §582(a), Dec. 28, 2001, 115 Stat. 1124.)