

(b) All rules and regulations made under this article shall be uniform insofar as practicable, except insofar as applicable to military commissions established under chapter 47A of this title. (Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 50; Pub. L. 96-107, title VIII, §801(b), Nov. 9, 1979, 93 Stat. 811; Pub. L. 101-510, div. A, title XIII, §1301(4), Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1668; Pub. L. 109-366, §4(a)(3), Oct. 17, 2006, 120 Stat. 2631.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
836(a)	50:611(a).	May 5, 1950, ch. 169, §1 (Art. 36), 64 Stat. 120.
836(b)	50:611(b).	

In subsection (a), the word “considers” is substituted for the word “deems”. The word “may” is substituted for the word “shall”.

In subsection (b), the word “under” is substituted for the words “in pursuance of”.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109-366, §4(a)(3)(A), inserted “, except as provided in chapter 47A of this title,” after “but which may not”.

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-366, §4(a)(3)(B), inserted before period at end “, except insofar as applicable to military commissions established under chapter 47A of this title”.

1990—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 101-510 struck out “and shall be reported to Congress” after “as practicable”.

1979—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 96-107 substituted provisions authorizing pretrial, trial, and post-trial procedures for cases under this chapter triable in courts-martial, military commissions and other military tribunals, for provisions authorizing procedure in cases before courts-martial, military commissions, and other military tribunals.

§ 837. Art. 37. Command influence

(a)(1) No court-martial convening authority, nor any other commanding officer, may censure, reprimand, or admonish the court or any member, military judge, or counsel thereof, with respect to the findings or sentence adjudged by the court, or with respect to any other exercise of its or his functions in the conduct of the proceeding.

(2) No court-martial convening authority, nor any other commanding officer, may deter or attempt to deter a potential witness from participating in the investigatory process or testifying at a court-martial. The denial of a request to travel at government expense or refusal to make a witness available shall not by itself constitute unlawful command influence.

(3) No person subject to this chapter may attempt to coerce or, by any unauthorized means, attempt to influence the action of a court-martial or any other military tribunal or any member thereof, in reaching the findings or sentence in any case, or the action of any convening, approving, or reviewing authority or preliminary hearing officer with respect to such acts taken pursuant to this chapter as prescribed by the President.

(4) Conduct that does not constitute a violation of paragraphs (1) through (3) may include, for example—

(A) general instructional or informational courses in military justice if such courses are

designed solely for the purpose of instructing persons on the substantive and procedural aspects of courts-martial;

(B) statements regarding criminal activity or a particular criminal offense that do not advocate a particular disposition, or a particular court-martial finding or sentence, or do not relate to a particular accused; or

(C) statements and instructions given in open court by the military judge or counsel.

(5)(A) Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) through (3), but subject to subparagraph (B)—

(i) a superior convening authority or officer may generally discuss matters to consider regarding the disposition of alleged violations of this chapter with a subordinate convening authority or officer; and

(ii) a subordinate convening authority or officer may seek advice from a superior convening authority or officer regarding the disposition of an alleged offense under this chapter.

(B) No superior convening authority or officer may direct a subordinate convening authority or officer to make a particular disposition in a specific case or otherwise substitute the discretion of such authority or such officer for that of the subordinate convening authority or officer.

(b) In the preparation of an effectiveness, fitness, or efficiency report, or any other report or document used in whole or in part for the purpose of determining whether a member of the armed forces is qualified to be advanced in grade, or in determining the assignment or transfer of a member of the armed forces or in determining whether a member of the armed forces should be retained on active duty, no person subject to this chapter may, in preparing any such report (1) consider or evaluate the performance of duty of any such member as a member of a court-martial, or (2) give a less favorable rating or evaluation of any member of the armed forces because of the zeal with which such member, as counsel, represented any person in a court-martial proceeding.

(c) No finding or sentence of a court-martial may be held incorrect on the ground of a violation of this section unless the violation materially prejudices the substantial rights of the accused.

(d)(1) A superior convening authority or commanding officer may withhold the authority of a subordinate convening authority or officer to dispose of offenses in individual cases, types of cases, or generally.

(2) Except as provided in paragraph (1) or as otherwise authorized by this chapter, a superior convening authority or commanding officer may not limit the discretion of a subordinate convening authority or officer to act with respect to a case for which the subordinate convening authority or officer has authority to dispose of the offenses.

(Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 50; Pub. L. 90-632, §2(13), Oct. 24, 1968, 82 Stat. 1338; Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §532(a), Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1359.)

HISTORICAL AND REVISION NOTES

Revised section	Source (U.S. Code)	Source (Statutes at Large)
837	50:612.	May 5, 1950, ch. 169, §1 (Art. 37), 64 Stat. 120.

The word “may” is substituted for the word “shall”.

Editorial Notes

AMENDMENTS

2019—Pub. L. 116-92, §532(a)(1), substituted “Command influence” for “Unlawfully influencing action of court” in section catchline.

Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 116-92, §532(a)(2), amended subsec. (a) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (a) read as follows: “No authority convening a general, special, or summary court-martial, nor any other commanding officer, may censure, reprimand, or admonish the court or any member, military judge, or counsel thereof, with respect to the findings or sentence adjudged by the court, or with respect to any other exercise of its or his functions in the conduct of the proceeding. No person subject to this chapter may attempt to coerce or, by any unauthorized means, influence the action of a court-martial or any other military tribunal or any member thereof, in reaching the findings or sentence in any case, or the action of any convening, approving, or reviewing authority with respect to his judicial acts. The foregoing provisions of the subsection shall not apply with respect to (1) general instructional or informational courses in military justice if such courses are designed solely for the purpose of instructing members of a command in the substantive and procedural aspects of courts-martial, or (2) to statements and instructions given in open court by the military judge, president of a special court-martial, or counsel.”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 116-92, §532(a)(3), substituted “advanced in grade” for “advanced, in grade” and “person in a court-martial proceeding” for “accused before a court-martial”.

Subsecs. (c), (d). Pub. L. 116-92, §532(a)(4), added subsecs. (c) and (d).

1968—Pub. L. 90-632 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), substituted “military judge” for “law officer”, inserted provisions specifically exempting instructional or general informational lectures on military justice and statements and instructions given in open court by the military judge, president of a special court-martial, or counsel from prohibitions of subsec. (a), and added subsec. (b).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2019 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 116-92, div. A, title V, §532(c), Dec. 20, 2019, 133 Stat. 1361, provided that: “The amendments made by subsections (a) and (b) [amending this section] shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 20, 2019] and shall apply with respect to violations of section 837 of title 10, United States Code (article 37 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice), committed on or after such date.”

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1968 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 90-632 effective first day of tenth month following October 1968, see section 4 of Pub. L. 90-632, set out as a note under section 801 of this title.

§ 838. Art. 38. Duties of trial counsel and defense counsel

(a) The trial counsel of a general or special court-martial shall prosecute in the name of the United States, and shall, under the direction of the court, prepare the record of the proceedings.

(b)(1) The accused has the right to be represented in his defense before a general or spe-

cial court-martial or at a preliminary hearing under section 832 of this title (article 32) as provided in this subsection.

(2) The accused may be represented by civilian counsel if provided by him.

(3) The accused may be represented—

(A) by military counsel detailed under section 827 of this title (article 27); or

(B) by military counsel of his own selection if that counsel is reasonably available (as determined under regulations prescribed under paragraph (7)).

(4) If the accused is represented by civilian counsel, military counsel detailed or selected under paragraph (3) shall act as associate counsel unless excused at the request of the accused.

(5) Except as provided under paragraph (6), if the accused is represented by military counsel of his own selection under paragraph (3)(B), any military counsel detailed under paragraph (3)(A) shall be excused.

(6) The accused is not entitled to be represented by more than one military counsel. However, the person authorized under regulations prescribed under section 827 of this title (article 27) to detail counsel, in his sole discretion—

(A) may detail additional military counsel as assistant defense counsel; and

(B) if the accused is represented by military counsel of his own selection under paragraph (3)(B), may approve a request from the accused that military counsel detailed under paragraph (3)(A) act as associate defense counsel.

(7) The Secretary concerned shall, by regulation, define “reasonably available” for the purpose of paragraph (3)(B) and establish procedures for determining whether the military counsel selected by an accused under that paragraph is reasonably available. Such regulations may not prescribe any limitation based on the reasonable availability of counsel solely on the grounds that the counsel selected by the accused is from an armed force other than the armed force of which the accused is a member. To the maximum extent practicable, such regulations shall establish uniform policies among the armed forces while recognizing the differences in the circumstances and needs of the various armed forces. The Secretary concerned shall submit copies of regulations prescribed under this paragraph to the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(c) In any court-martial proceeding resulting in a conviction, the defense counsel—

(1) may forward for attachment to the record of proceedings a brief of such matters as he determines should be considered in behalf of the accused on review (including any objection to the contents of the record which he considers appropriate);

(2) may assist the accused in the submission of any matter under section 860, 860a, or 860b of this title (article 60, 60a, or 60b); and

(3) may take other action authorized by this chapter.

(d) An assistant trial counsel of a general court-martial may, under the direction of the trial counsel or when he is qualified to be a trial