

(1) The acquisition of military status, whether through enlistment or induction, involves a commitment to the United States, the service, and one's fellow citizens and servicemembers to complete successfully a period of obligated service. Early separation for failure to meet required standards of performance or discipline represents a failure to fulfill that commitment.

(2) Millions of Americans from diverse backgrounds and with a wide variety of aptitudes and attitudes upon entering military service have served successfully in the armed forces. It is the policy of the Department of Defense to provide servicemembers with the training, motivation, and professional leadership that inspires the dedicated enlisted member to emulate his or her predecessors and peers in meeting required standards of performance and discipline.

(3) The Military Services make a substantial investment in training, time, equipment, and related expenses when persons are enlisted or inducted into military service. Separation prior to completion of an obligated period of service is wasteful because it results in loss of this investment and generates a requirement for increased accession. Consequently, attrition is an issue of significant concern at all levels of responsibility within the armed forces. Reasonable efforts should be made to identify enlisted members who exhibit a likelihood for early separation, and to improve their chances for retention through counseling, retraining, and rehabilitation prior to initiation of separation proceedings. Enlisted members who do not demonstrate potential for further military service should be separated in order to avoid the high costs in terms of pay, administrative efforts, degradation of morale, and substandard mission performance that are associated with retention of enlisted members who do not conform to required standards of discipline and performance despite efforts at counseling, retraining, or rehabilitation.

(c) Standards and procedures for implementation of these policies are set forth in appendix A to this part.

§ 41.4 Responsibilities.

(a) The *Secretaries of the Military Departments* shall prescribe implementing documents to ensure that the policies, standards, and procedures set forth in this part are administered in a manner that provides consistency in separation policy to the extent practicable in a system that is based on command discretion. The implementing documents also shall address the following matters:

(1) *Processing goals.* The Secretary concerned shall establish processing time goals for the types of administrative separations authorized by this part. Such goals shall be designed to further the efficient administration of the armed forces and shall be measured from the date of notification to the date of separation. Normally such goals should not exceed 15 working days for the Notification Procedure (part 3, section B., appendix A) and 50 working days for the Administrative Board Procedure (part 3, section C., appendix A). Goals for shorter processing times are encouraged, particularly for cases in which expeditious action is likely. Variations may be established for complex cases or cases in which the Separation Authority is not located on the same facility as the respondent. The goals, and a program for monitoring effectiveness, shall be set forth in the implementing document of the Military Department. Failure to process an administrative separation within the prescribed goal for processing times shall not create a bar to separation or characterization.

(2) *Periodic explanations.* The Secretary concerned shall prescribe appropriate internal procedures for periodic explanation to enlisted members of the types of separations, the basis for their issuance, the possible effects of various actions upon reenlistment, civilian employment, veterans' benefits, and related matters, and the effects of 10 U.S.C. 977 and Pub. L. 97-66, concerning denial of certain benefits to members who fail to complete at least 2 years of an original enlistment. Such explanation may be provided in the form of a written fact sheet or similar document. The periodic explanation shall take place at least each time the provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice

(UCMJ) are explained pursuant to Article 137 of the UCMJ. The requirement that the effects of the various types of separations be explained to enlisted members is a command responsibility, not a procedural entitlement. Failure on the part of the member to receive or to understand such explanation does not create a bar to separation or characterization.

(3) *Provision of information during separation processing.* The Secretary concerned shall ensure that information concerning the purpose and authority of the Discharge Review Board and the Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records, established under 10 U.S.C. 1552 and 1553 and 32 CFR part 70 (DoD Directive 1332.28) is provided during the separation processing of all members, except when the separation is for the purpose of an immediate reenlistment. Specific counseling is required under 38 U.S.C. 3103(a) which states that a discharge under other than honorable conditions, resulting from a period of continuous, unauthorized absence of 180 days or more, is a conditional bar to benefits administered by the Veterans Administration, notwithstanding any action by a Discharge Review Board. The information required by this paragraph should be provided in the form of a written fact sheet or similar document. Failure on the part of the member to receive or to understand such explanation does not create a bar to separation or characterization.

(b) The *Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics)* may modify or supplement the enclosures to this Directive, and may delegate the authority to establish reporting requirements for the reasons for separation (part 1, appendix A) to a Deputy Assistant Secretary.

§41.5 Effective date and implementation.

(a) This part applies only to administrative separation proceedings initiated on or after October 1, 1982.

(b) Part 41, effective December 29, 1976 shall continue to be used for administrative separation proceedings initiated on or before September 30, 1982.

§41.6 Definitions.

(a) *Member.* An enlisted member of a Military Service.

(b) *Discharge.* Complete severance from all military status gained by the enlistment or induction concerned.

(c) *Release from active duty.* Termination of active duty status and transfer or reversion to a reserve component not on active duty, including transfer to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

(d) *Separation.* A general term which includes discharge, release from active duty, release from custody and control of the armed forces, transfer to the IRR, and similar changes in active or reserve status.

(e) *Military record.* An individual's overall performance while a member of a Military Service, including personal conduct and performance of duty.

(f) *Separation Authority.* An official authorized by the Secretary concerned to take final action with respect to a specified type of separation.

(g) *Convening Authority.* (1) The Separation Authority or (2) a commanding officer who has been authorized by the Secretary concerned to process the case except for final action and who otherwise has the qualifications to act as a Separation Authority.

(h) *Respondent.* A member of a Military Service who has been notified that action has been initiated to separate the member.

(i) *Entry level status.* The first 180 days of continuous active military service. For members of a reserve component who have not completed 180 days of continuous active military service and who are not on active duty, entry level status begins upon enlistment in a reserve component (including a period of assignment to a delayed entry program) and terminates 180 days after beginning an initial period of entry level active duty training. For purposes of characterization of service or description of separation, the member's status is determined by the date of notification as to the initiation of separation proceedings.