

R.C.M. 404(c)

(c) Forward any charges to a superior commander for disposition;

Discussion

See R.C.M. 401(c)(2)(A) for guidance concerning forwarding charges to a superior.

(d) Subject to R.C.M. 601(d), refer charges to a summary court-martial or to a special court-martial for trial; or

Discussion

See Article 23 and R.C.M. 504(b)(2) concerning who may convene special courts-martial.

See R.C.M. 601 concerning referral of charges to a special court-martial. See R.C.M. 1302(c) concerning referral of charges to a summary court-martial.

(e) Unless otherwise prescribed by the Secretary concerned, direct a pretrial investigation under R.C.M. 405, and, if appropriate, forward the report of investigation with the charges to a superior commander for disposition.

Discussion

An investigation should be directed when it appears that the charges are of such a serious nature that trial by general court-martial may be warranted. See R.C.M. 405. If an investigation of the subject matter already has been conducted, see R.C.M. 405(b).

Rule 405. Pretrial investigation

(a) *In general.* Except as provided in subsection (k) of this rule, no charge or specification may be referred to a general court-martial for trial until a thorough and impartial investigation of all the matters set forth therein has been made in substantial compliance with this rule. Failure to comply with this rule shall have no effect if the charges are not referred to a general court-martial.

Discussion

The primary purpose of the investigation required by Article 32 and this rule is to inquire into the truth of the matters set forth in the charges, the form of the charges, and to secure information on which to determine what disposition should be made of the

case. The investigation also serves as a means of discovery. The function of the investigation is to ascertain and impartially weigh all available facts in arriving at conclusions and recommendations, not to perfect a case against the accused. The investigation should be limited to the issues raised by the charges and necessary to proper disposition of the case. The investigation is not limited to examination of the witnesses and evidence mentioned in the accompanying allied papers. See subsection (e) of this rule. Recommendations of the investigating officer are advisory.

If at any time after an investigation under this rule the charges are changed to allege a more serious or essentially different offense, further investigation should be directed with respect to the new or different matters alleged.

Failure to comply substantially with the requirements of Article 32, which failure prejudices the accused, may result in delay in disposition of the case or disapproval of the proceedings. See R.C.M. 905(b)(1) and 906(b)(3) concerning motions for appropriate relief relating to the pretrial investigation.

The accused may waive the pretrial investigation. See subsection (k) of this rule. In such case, no investigation need be held. The commander authorized to direct the investigation may direct that it be conducted notwithstanding the waiver.

(b) *Earlier investigation.* If an investigation of the subject matter of an offense has been conducted before the accused is charged with an offense, and the accused was present at the investigation and afforded the rights to counsel, cross-examination, and presentation of evidence required by this rule, no further investigation is required unless demanded by the accused to recall witnesses for further cross-examination and to offer new evidence.

Discussion

An earlier investigation includes courts of inquiry and similar investigations which meet the requirements of this subsection.

(c) *Who may direct investigation.* Unless prohibited by regulations of the Secretary concerned, an investigation may be directed under this rule by any court-martial convening authority. That authority may also give procedural instructions not inconsistent with these rules.

(d) *Personnel.*

(1) *Investigating officer.* The commander directing an investigation under this rule shall detail a commissioned officer not the accuser, as investigating officer, who shall conduct the investigation and make a report of conclusions and recommendations.

The investigating officer is disqualified to act later in the same case in any other capacity.

Discussion

The investigating officer should be an officer in the grade of major or lieutenant commander or higher or one with legal training. The investigating officer may seek legal advice concerning the investigating officer's responsibilities from an impartial source, but may not obtain such advice from counsel for any party.

(2) *Defense counsel.*

(A) *Detailed counsel.* Except as provided in subsection (d)(2)(B) of this rule, military counsel certified in accordance with Article 27(b) shall be detailed to represent the accused.

(B) *Individual military counsel.* The accused may request to be represented by individual military counsel. Such requests shall be acted on in accordance with R.C.M. 506(b). When the accused is represented by individual military counsel, counsel detailed to represent the accused shall ordinarily be excused, unless the authority who detailed the defense counsel, as a matter of discretion, approves a request by the accused for retention of detailed counsel. The investigating officer shall forward any request by the accused for individual military counsel to the commander who directed the investigation. That commander shall follow the procedures in R.C.M. 506(b).

(C) *Civilian counsel.* The accused may be represented by civilian counsel at no expense to the United States. Upon request, the accused is entitled to a reasonable time to obtain civilian counsel and to have such counsel present for the investigation. However, the investigation shall not be unduly delayed for this purpose. Representation by civilian counsel shall not limit the rights to military counsel under subsections (d)(2)(A) and (B) of this rule.

Discussion

See R.C.M. 502(d)(6) concerning the duties of defense counsel.

(3) *Others.* The commander who directed the investigation may also, as a matter of discretion, detail or request an appropriate authority to detail:

- (A) Counsel to represent the United States;
- (B) A reporter; and
- (C) An interpreter.

(e) *Scope of investigation.* The investigating officer shall inquire into the truth and form of the charges, and such other matters as may be necessary to make a recommendation as to the disposition of the charges. If evidence adduced during the investigation indicates that the accused committed an uncharged offense, the investigating officer may investigate the subject matter of such offense and make a recommendation as to its disposition, without the accused first having been charged with the offense. The accused's rights under subsection (f) are the same with regard to investigation of both charged and uncharged offenses.

Discussion

The investigation may properly include such inquiry into issues raised directly by the charges as is necessary to make an appropriate recommendation. For example, inquiry into the legality of a search or the admissibility of a confession may be appropriate. However, the investigating officer is not required to rule on the admissibility of evidence and need not consider such matters except as the investigating officer deems necessary to an informed recommendation. When the investigating officer is aware that evidence may not be admissible, this should be noted in the report. See also subsection (i) of this rule.

In investigating uncharged misconduct identified during the pretrial investigation, the investigating officer will inform the accused of the general nature of each uncharged offense investigated, and otherwise afford the accused the same opportunity for representation, cross examination, and presentation afforded during the investigation of any charge offense.

(f) *Rights of the accused.* At any pretrial investigation under this rule the accused shall have the right to:

- (1) Be informed of the charges under investigation;
- (2) Be informed of the identity of the accuser;
- (3) Except in circumstances described in R.C.M. 804(b)(2), be present throughout the taking of evidence;
- (4) Be represented by counsel;
- (5) Be informed of the witnesses and other evidence then known to the investigating officer;
- (6) Be informed of the purpose of the investigation;

(7) Be informed of the right against self-incrimination under Article 31;

(8) Cross-examine witnesses who are produced under subsection (g) of this rule;

(9) Have witnesses produced as provided for in subsection (g) of this rule;

(10) Have evidence, including documents or physical evidence, within the control of military authorities produced as provided under subsection (g) of this rule;

(11) Present anything in defense, extenuation, or mitigation for consideration by the investigating officer; and

(12) Make a statement in any form.

(g) *Production of witnesses and evidence; alternatives.*

(1) *In general.*

(A) *Witnesses.* Except as provided in subsection (g)(4)(A) of this rule, any witness whose testimony would be relevant to the investigation and not cumulative, shall be produced if reasonably available. This includes witnesses requested by the accused, if the request is timely. A witness is “reasonably available” when the witness is located within 100 miles of the situs of the investigation and the significance of the testimony and personal appearance of the witness outweighs the difficulty, expense, delay, and effect on military operations of obtaining the witness’ appearance. A witness who is unavailable under Mil. R. Evid. 804(a)(1)-(6), is not “reasonably available.”

(B) *Evidence.* Subject to Mil. R. Evid., Section V, evidence, including documents or physical evidence, which is under the control of the Government and which is relevant to the investigation and not cumulative, shall be produced if reasonably available. Such evidence includes evidence requested by the accused, if the request is timely. As soon as practicable after receipt of a request by the accused for information which may be protected under Mil. R. Evid. 505 or 506, the investigating officer shall notify the person who is authorized to issue a protective order under subsection (g)(6) of this rule, and the convening authority, if different. Evidence is reasonably available if its significance outweighs the difficulty, expense, delay, and effect on military operations of obtaining the evidence.

Discussion

In preparing for the investigation, the investigating officer should consider what evidence will be necessary to prepare a thorough and impartial investigation. The investigating officer should consider, as to potential witnesses, whether their personal appearance will be necessary. Generally, personal appearance is preferred, but the investigating officer should consider whether, in light of the probable importance of a witness’ testimony, an alternative to testimony under subsection (g)(4)(A) of this rule would be sufficient.

After making a preliminary determination of what witnesses will be produced and other evidence considered, the investigating officer should notify the defense and inquire whether it requests the production of other witnesses or evidence. In addition to witnesses for the defense, the defense may request production of witnesses whose testimony would favor the prosecution.

Once it is determined what witnesses the investigating officer intends to call it must be determined whether each witness is reasonably available. That determination is a balancing test. The more important the testimony of the witness, the greater the difficulty, expense, delay, or effect on military operations must be to permit nonproduction. For example, the temporary absence of a witness on leave for 10 days would normally justify using an alternative to that witness’ personal appearance if the sole reason for the witness’ testimony was to impeach the credibility of another witness by reputation evidence, or to establish a mitigating character trait of the accused. On the other hand, if the same witness was the only eyewitness to the offense, personal appearance would be required if the defense requested it and the witness is otherwise reasonably available. The time and place of the investigation may be changed if reasonably necessary to permit the appearance of a witness. Similar considerations apply to the production of evidence.

If the production of witnesses or evidence would entail substantial costs or delay, the investigating officer should inform the commander who directed the investigation.

The provision in (B), requiring the investigating officer to notify the appropriate authorities of requests by the accused for information privileged under Mil. R. Evid. 505 or 506, is for the purpose of placing the appropriate authority on notice that an order, as authorized under subparagraph(g)(6), may be required to protect whatever information the government may decide to release to the accused.

(2) *Determination of reasonable availability.*

(A) *Military witnesses.* The investigating officer shall make an initial determination whether a military witness is reasonably available. If the investigating officer decides that the witness is not reasonably available, the investigating officer shall inform the parties. Otherwise, the immediate commander of the witness shall be requested to make the witness available. A determination by the immediate commander that the witness is not reasonably available is not subject to appeal by the accused but may

be reviewed by the military judge under R.C.M. 906(b)(3).

Discussion

The investigating officer may discuss factors affecting reasonable availability with the immediate commander of the requested witness and with others. If the immediate commander determined that the witness is not reasonably available, the reasons for that determination should be provided to the investigating officer.

(B) *Civilian witnesses.* The investigating officer shall decide whether a civilian witness is reasonably available to appear as a witness.

Discussion

The investigating officer should initially determine whether a civilian witness is reasonably available without regard to whether the witness is willing to appear. If the investigating officer determines that a civilian witness is apparently reasonably available, the witness should be invited to attend and when appropriate, informed that necessary expenses will be paid.

If the witness refuses to testify, the witness is not reasonably available because civilian witnesses may not be compelled to attend a pretrial investigation. Under subsection (g)(3) of this rule, civilian witnesses may be paid for travel and associated expenses to testify at a pretrial investigation.

(C) *Evidence.* The investigating officer shall make an initial determination whether evidence is reasonably available. If the investigating officer decides that it is not reasonably available, the investigating officer shall inform the parties. Otherwise, the custodian of the evidence shall be requested to provide the evidence. A determination by the custodian that the evidence is not reasonably available is not subject to appeal by the accused, but may be reviewed by the military judge under R.C.M. 906(b)(3).

Discussion

The investigating officer may discuss factors affecting reasonable availability with the custodian and with others. If the custodian determines that the evidence is not reasonably available, the reasons for that determination should be provided to the investigating officer.

(D) *Action when witness or evidence is not rea-*

sonably available. If the defense objects to a determination that a witness or evidence is not reasonably available, the investigating officer shall include a statement of the reasons for the determination in the report of investigation.

(3) *Witness expenses.* Transportation expenses and a per diem allowance may be paid to civilians requested to testify in connection with an investigation under this rule according to regulations prescribed by the Secretary of a Department.

Discussion

See Department of Defense Joint Travel Regulations, Vol 2, paragraphs C3054, C6000.

(4) *Alternatives to testimony.*

(A) Unless the defense objects, an investigating officer may consider, regardless of the availability of the witness:

- (i) Sworn statements;
- (ii) Statements under oath taken by telephone, radio, or similar means providing each party the opportunity to question the witness under circumstances by which the investigating officer may reasonably conclude that the witness' identity is as claimed;
- (iii) Prior testimony under oath;
- (iv) Depositions;
- (v) Stipulations of fact or expected testimony;
- (vi) Unsworn statements; and
- (vii) Offers of proof of expected testimony of that witness.

(B) The investigating officer may consider, over objection of the defense, when the witness is not reasonably available:

- (i) Sworn statements;
- (ii) Statements under oath taken by telephone, radio, or similar means providing each party the opportunity to question the witness under circumstances by which the investigating officer may reasonably conclude that the witness' identity is a claimed;
- (iii) Prior testimony under oath; and
- (iv) Deposition of that witness; and
- (v) In time of war, unsworn statements.

(5) *Alternatives to evidence.*

(A) Unless the defense objects, an investigating officer may consider, regardless of the availability of the evidence:

- (i) Testimony describing the evidence;
- (ii) An authenticated copy, photograph, or reproduction of similar accuracy of the evidence;
- (iii) An alternative to testimony, when permitted under subsection (g)(4)(B) of this rule, in which the evidence is described;
- (iv) A stipulation of fact, document's contents, or expected testimony;
- (v) An unsworn statement describing the evidence; or
- (vi) An offer of proof concerning pertinent characteristics of the evidence.

(B) The investigating officer may consider, over objection of the defense, when the evidence is not reasonably available:

- (i) Testimony describing the evidence;
- (ii) An authenticated copy, photograph, or reproduction of similar accuracy of the evidence; or
- (iii) An alternative to testimony, when permitted under subsection (g)(4)(B) of this rule, in which the evidence is described.

(6) *Protective order for release of privileged information.* If, prior to referral, the Government agrees to disclose to the accused information to which the protections afforded by Mil. R. Evid. 505 or 506 may apply, the convening authority, or other person designated by regulation of the Secretary of the service concerned, may enter an appropriate protective order, in writing, to guard against the compromise of information disclosed to the accused. The terms of any such protective order may include prohibiting the disclosure of the information except as authorized by the authority issuing the protective order, as well as those terms specified by Mil. R. Evid. 505(g)(1)(B) through (F) or 506(g)(2) through (5).

(h) *Procedure.*

(1) *Presentation of evidence.*

(A) *Testimony.* All testimony shall be taken under oath, except that the accused may make an unsworn statement. The defense shall be given wide latitude in cross-examining witnesses.

Discussion

The following oath may be given to witnesses:

"Do you (swear) (affirm) that the evidence you give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (, so help you God)?"

The investigating officer is required to include in the report of the investigation a summary of the substance of all testimony. See subsection (j)(2)(B) of this rule. After the hearing, the investigating officer should, whenever possible, reduce the substance of the testimony of each witness to writing and, unless it would unduly delay completion of the investigation, have each witness sign and swear to the truth of the respective summaries. The following oath may be given to a witness in such cases:

"You (swear) (affirm) that this statement is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth (, so help you God)?" If the accused testifies, the investigating officer may invite but not require the accused to swear to the truth of a summary of that testimony. If substantially verbatim notes of a testimony or recordings of testimony were taken during the investigation, they should be preserved until the end of trial.

If it appears that material witnesses for either side will not be available at the time anticipated for trial, the investigating officer should notify the commander who directed the investigation so that depositions may be taken if necessary.

If during the investigation any witness subject to the code is suspected of an offense under the code, the investigating officer should comply with the warning requirements of Mil. R. Evid. 305(c), (d), and, if necessary, (e).

(B) *Other evidence.* The investigating officer shall inform the parties what other evidence will be considered. The parties shall be permitted to examine all other evidence considered by the investigating officer.

(C) *Defense evidence.* The defense shall have full opportunity to present any matters in defense, extenuation, or mitigation.

(2) *Objections.* Any objection alleging failure to comply with this rule, except subsection (j), shall be made to the investigating officer promptly upon discovery of the alleged error. The investigating officer shall not be required to rule on any objection. An objection shall be noted in the report of investigation if a party so requests. The investigating officer may require a party to file any objection in writing.

Discussion

See also subsection (k) of this rule.

Although the investigating officer is not required to rule on objections, the investigating officer may take corrective action in response to an objection as to matters relating to the conduct of the proceedings when the investigating officer believes such action is appropriate.

If an objection raises a substantial question about a matter

within the authority of the commander who directed the investigation (for example, whether the investigating officer was properly appointed) the investigating officer should promptly inform the commander who directed the investigation.

(3) *Access by spectators.* Access by spectators to all or part of the proceeding may be restricted or foreclosed in the discretion of the commander who directed the investigation or the investigating officer.

Discussion

Closure may encourage complete testimony by an embarrassed or timid witness.

Ordinarily the proceedings of a pretrial investigation should be open to spectators.

(4) *Presence of accused.* The further progress of the taking of evidence shall not be prevented and the accused shall be considered to have waived the right to be present, whenever the accused:

(A) After being notified of the time and place of the proceeding is voluntarily absent (whether or not informed by the investigating officer of the obligation to be present); or

(B) After being warned by the investigating officer that disruptive conduct will cause removal from the proceeding, persists in conduct which is such as to justify exclusion from the proceeding.

(i) *Military Rules of Evidence.* The Military Rules of Evidence—other than Mil. R. Evid. 301, 302, 303, 305, 412 and Section V—shall not apply in pretrial investigations under this rule.

Discussion

The investigating officer should exercise reasonable control over the scope of the inquiry. *See* subsection (e) of this rule. An investigating officer may consider any evidence, even if that evidence would not be admissible at trial. However, *see* subsection (g)(4) of this rule as to limitations on the ways in which testimony may be presented.

Certain rules relating to the form of testimony which may be considered by the investigating officer appear in subsection (g) of this rule.

(j) *Report of investigation.*

(1) *In general.* The investigating officer shall

make a timely written report of the investigation to the commander who directed the investigation.

Discussion

If practicable, the charges and the report of investigation should be forwarded to the general court-martial convening authority within 8 days after an accused is ordered into arrest or confinement. Article 33.

(2) *Contents.* The report of investigation shall include:

(A) A statement of names and organizations or addresses of defense counsel and whether defense counsel was present throughout the taking of evidence, or if not present the reason why;

(B) The substance of the testimony taken on both sides, including any stipulated testimony;

(C) Any other statements, documents, or matters considered by the investigating officer, or recitals of the substance or nature of such evidence;

(D) A statement of any reasonable grounds for belief that the accused was not mentally responsible for the offense or was not competent to participate in the defense during the investigation;

Discussion

See R.C.M. 909 (mental capacity); 916(k) (mental responsibility).

(E) A statement whether the essential witnesses will be available at the time anticipated for trial and the reasons why any essential witness may not then be available;

(F) An explanation of any delays in the investigation;

(G) The investigating officer's conclusion whether the charges and specifications are in proper form;

(H) The investigating officer's conclusion whether reasonable grounds exist to believe that the accused committed the offenses alleged; and

(I) The recommendations of the investigating officer, including disposition.

Discussion

For example, the investigating officer may recommend that the charges and specifications be amended or that additional

R.C.M. 405(j)(2)(I)

charges be preferred. *See* R.C.M. 306 and 401 concerning other possible dispositions.

See Appendix 5 for a sample of the Investigating Officer's Report (DD Form 457).

(3) *Distribution of the report.* The investigating officer shall cause the report to be delivered to the commander who directed the investigation. That commander shall promptly cause a copy of the report to be delivered to each accused.

(4) *Objections.* Any objection to the report shall be made to the commander who directed the investigation within 5 days of its receipt by the accused. This subsection does not prohibit a convening authority from referring the charges or taking other action within the 5-day period.

(k) *Waiver.* The accused may waive an investigation under this rule. In addition, failure to make a timely objection under this rule, including an objection to the report, shall constitute waiver of the objection. Relief from the waiver may be granted by the investigating officer, the commander who directed the investigation, the convening authority, or the military judge, as appropriate, for good cause shown.

Discussion

See also R.C.M. 905(b)(1); 906(b)(3).

If the report fails to include reference to objections which were made under subsection (h)(2) of this rule, failure to object to the report will constitute waiver of such objections in the absence of good cause for relief from the waiver.

The commander who receives an objection may direct that the investigation be reopened or take other action, as appropriate.

Even if the accused made a timely objection to failure to produce a witness, a defense request for a deposition may be necessary to preserve the issue for later review.

Rule 406. Pretrial advice

(a) *In general.* Before any charge may be referred for trial by a general court-martial, it shall be referred to the staff judge advocate of the convening authority for consideration and advice.

Discussion

A pretrial advice need not be prepared in cases referred to special or summary courts-martial. A convening authority may, however, seek the advice of a lawyer before referring charges to such a court-martial. When charges have been withdrawn from a general court-martial (*see* R.C.M. 604) or when a mistrial has

been declared in a general court-martial (*see* R.C.M. 915), supplementary advice is necessary before the charges may be referred to another general court-martial.

The staff judge advocate may make changes in the charges and specifications in accordance with R.C.M. 603.

(b) *Contents.* The advice of the staff judge advocate shall include a written and signed statement which sets forth that person's:

(1) Conclusion with respect to whether each specification alleges an offense under the code;

(2) Conclusion with respect to whether the allegation of each offense is warranted by the evidence indicated in the report of investigation (if there is such a report);

(3) Conclusion with respect to whether a court-martial would have jurisdiction over the accused and the offense; and

(4) Recommendation of the action to be taken by the convening authority.

Discussion

The staff judge advocate is personally responsible for the pretrial advice and must make an independent and informed appraisal of the charges and evidence in order to render the advice. Another person may prepare the advice, but the staff judge advocate is, unless disqualified, responsible for it and must sign it personally. Grounds for disqualification in a case include previous action in that case as investigating officer, military judge, trial counsel, defense counsel, or member.

The advice need not set forth the underlying analysis or rationale for its conclusions. Ordinarily, the charge sheet, forwarding letter and indorsements, and report of investigation are forwarded with the pretrial advice. In addition, the pretrial advice should include when appropriate: a brief summary of the evidence; discussion of significant aggravating, extenuating, or mitigating factors; and any previous recommendations, by commanders or others who have forwarded the charges, for disposition of the case. However, there is no legal requirement to include such information and failure to do so is not error.

Whatever matters are included in the advice, whether or not they are required, should be accurate. Information which is incorrect or so incomplete as to be misleading may result in a determination that the advice is defective, necessitating appropriate relief. *See* R.C.M. 905(b)(1);906(b)(3).

The standard of proof to be applied in R.C.M. 406(b)(2) is probable cause. *See* R.C.M. 601(d)(1). Defects in the pretrial advice are not jurisdictional and are raised by pretrial motion. *See* R.C.M.905(b)(1) and its Discussion.

(c) *Distribution.* A copy of the advice of the staff