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HEADQUARTERS  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
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PERSONNEL—GENERAL

PERSONAL NOTIFICATION OF PRIMARY NEXT OF KIN OF DECEASED AND MISSING PERSONS

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**1. Purpose.** This regulation establishes a system for personal notification of the primary next of kin of deceased and missing members of the Active Army whose primary next of kin resides in CONUS. This regulation will be used in conjunction with AR 600-65, AR 600-66, and AR 600-67.

**2. Objective.** The objective of this regulation is to insure that prompt and accurate notification of the primary next of kin of deceased and missing members of the Active Army is accomplished in a manner which conveys the Army's respect for human dignity and personal feelings and attests to the truth of the traditional statement: "The Army takes care of its own."

**3. Scope.** *a.* Personal notification prescribed herein will be limited to primary next of kin of deceased and missing members of the Active Army residing in CONUS. Army Reserve and National Guard personnel on active duty for training, USMA cadets, and ROTC cadets attending summer training are considered as part of the Active Army for this purpose.

*b.* Initial notification of primary next of kin will be accomplished through a personal visit by a military representative of the Army.

*c.* Notification of secondary next of kin will be accomplished by commercial telegram after receipt of information that the primary next of kin has been notified.

**4. Resources.** *a.* All personnel of the Active Army (including Army Reserve advisers and ROTC instructors) on duty at class I and II

installations and activities and with units of the U.S. Army Air Defense Command located in CONUS are available for use in the personal notification system. Army National Guard advisers may be used with the concurrence of state adjutants general. Recruiting Service personnel, students at military or civil schools, and personnel involved in intelligence activities whose duties are such that they are required not to wear the uniform will not be used in the system (personnel assigned to such duties as division or corps G2 or to battalion or brigade S2 duties may be used)

*b.* Military officers will be used to the fullest practicable extent. When this is not feasible then enlisted personnel in grades E-7, E-8 or E-9 may be designated to accomplish notification. Whenever possible, the grade of the Army representative will be equal to, or higher than, that of the casualty. The appendix contains guidance for Army representatives designated to accomplish notification.

**5. Responsibilities.** *a.* When a member of the Active Army whose primary next of kin resides in CONUS dies or becomes missing outside CONUS, the Chief, Casualty Branch, TAGO, Department of the Army, will initially notify by telephone the Commanding General of the CONUS Army within the geographical limits of which the primary next of kin resides.

*b.* The Commanding General of each CONUS Army and Commanding General, MDW will—

(1) Establish procedures to insure that when a member of the Active Army whose

\*This regulation rescinds DA Circular 600-19, 20 January 1966, DA message 30072, 4 March 1966, and DA message 752574, 28 February 1966.

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next of kin resides in CONUS dies or becomes missing within his geographical area of responsibility, the Commanding General of the CONUS Army within the geographical limits of which the primary next of kin resides is initially notified by telephone.

- (2) Upon receipt of notice of death or missing person status requiring notification action, direct the commander of the installation or activity nearest the residence of the primary next of kin to assign responsibility for notification and confirmation action required of the Army representative notifying the primary next of kin.
- (3) Upon receipt of information that the primary next of kin has been personally notified, immediately inform by telephone the agency that provided the casualty information (normally the Casualty Branch, TAGO, Department of the Army or a CONUS installation or hospital) of this fact.

c. The commander of a CONUS installation or hospital where a member of the Active Army whose primary next of kin resides in CONUS dies or becomes missing will initially notify by telephone the Commanding General of the CONUS Army within the geographical limits of which the primary next of kin resides.

**6. Procedures.** *a. Confirmation messages.* Every personal notification of primary next of kin will be confirmed by commercial telegram. However, under no circumstances will the confirmation telegram be sent to primary next of kin until receipt of telephonic verification from the Commanding General of the CONUS Army within the geographical limits of which the next of kin resides that personal notification of primary next of kin has been accomplished. Upon receipt of verification, confirmation telegrams will be sent to primary next of kin by the Chief, Casualty Branch, TAGO, Department of the Army or the appropriate CONUS installation commander through commercial facilities. The same procedures will apply to the Commanding General of the CONUS Army concerned in those cases where the casualty occurs and the primary next of kin resides within the geographical limits of the same CONUS Army.

*b. Method of communication.* Telephonic communication exclusively will be used in order to expedite the dissemination of casualty information

among Headquarters, Department of the Army; CONUS Army headquarters; and CONUS installations. The AUTOVON network will be used when convenient; however, if delay is experienced, commercial telephone facilities will be used.

*c. Hours of notification.* The personal notification of primary next of kin will be restricted to the hours of 0600-2200.

*d. Hours of reporting.* Reports concerning deaths and missing persons will be made by telephone as soon as possible after receipt of such information. Although personal notification of primary next of kin will not be accomplished during the period from 2200 to 0600 hours, the expediting of reports between Headquarters, Department of the Army; CONUS Army headquarters; and CONUS installations on a 24-hour basis, 7 days a week, will provide additional time in which to relay instructions to installations and activities responsible for notification and to select Army representatives to personally inform the primary next of kin.

*e. Notification of next of kin.* Regardless of whether the secondary next of kin resides within or outside the CONUS Army area in which the primary next of kin resides, the primary next of kin will be personally notified and the secondary next of kin will be notified by commercial telegram after receipt of information that the primary next of kin has been personally notified. Under no circumstances will the secondary next of kin be notified before the primary next of kin.

*f. Disposition of remains.* In death cases, the message regarding disposition of remains will not be sent to the primary next of kin until information is received that the primary next of kin has been notified.

*g. Redirect actions.*

- (1) *Within the same CONUS Army area.*

Redirect action necessitated by the relocation of primary next of kin within the geographical limits of a CONUS Army will be the responsibility of the CONUS Army headquarters. Emphasis will be placed on insuring that regardless of the number of redirect actions involved, the primary next of kin if still residing in the same CONUS Army area will be personally notified by an Army representative.

- (2) *Outside the CONUS Army area.* Redirect action necessitated by the relocation of primary next of kin from one CONUS Army area to another CONUS Army

area will be the responsibility of the organization or activity initially referring the casualty information to the Commanding General of the CONUS Army from which the next of kin has relocated (normally the Chief, Casualty Branch, TAGO, DA, or a CONUS installation commander). In such cases, the Commanding General of the CONUS Army area from which the next of kin has relocated will notify the appropriate organization or activity by telephone of the necessity for redirect action. The responsible organization or activity will then notify the Commanding General of the CONUS Army area to which the next of kin has relocated for accomplishment of personal notification of the primary next of kin. For next of kin who have relocated outside CONUS, notification of next of kin will be the responsibility of the Chief, Casualty Branch, TAGO, Department of the Army.

*h. Survivor assistance.*

- (1) The mission of survivor assistance is inherent in the initial telephonic casualty notification from the Chief, Casualty Branch, TAGO, DA; Commanding General of a CONUS Army; CONUS installation commander; or CONUS hospital commander.
- (2) Immediately upon receipt of the initial casualty notification, and concurrent with the designation of the installation or activity commander who will assign responsibility for notification (para 5b (2)), the Commanding General of the CONUS Army concerned will designate the installation or activity commander who will be responsible for survivor assistance (normally, this will be the commander designated to assign responsibility for notification action).
- (3) Immediately upon receipt of verification of notification of the primary next of kin, the designated installation or activity commander will appoint the survivor assistance officer, who may or may not be the Army representative who was designated to make the personal notification.
- (4) In order to accomplish timely maximum partial payment of the death gratuity

to surviving spouses, the following procedures (applicable only if there is a surviving spouse) will be followed in death cases:

- (a) Reports of delivery of notification messages made to the agency that provided the casualty information (para 5b(3)) will include the duty title and address of the installation commander designated to appoint the survivor assistance officer and/or name and address of the survivor assistance officer. Upon receipt of this information the agency that provided the casualty information will send a message to the installation commander designated to appoint the survivor assistance officer or direct to the survivor assistance officer, as applicable, authorizing maximum partial payment of the death gratuity to the surviving spouse and including data concerning the basic pay and years of service of the decedent (for completion of DD Form 397 (Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment)).
- (b) The survivor assistance officer will use a copy of the message authorizing maximum partial payment of the death gratuity to arrange payment with the nearest finance and accounting officer, who will accept the message as authority for payment.
- (c) Payment of the death gratuity will be made within 72 hours after receipt of the message authorizing payment. If circumstances preclude payment within 72 hours, the survivor assistance officer will notify the Chief, Claims Division, Settlement Operations, Finance Center, U.S. Army, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, Indiana, by telephone (AUTOVON 923-2910 or 923-3982) or priority message.

**7. Exceptions.** If there is an indication of intense interest in a casualty incident on the part of public news media and there is danger that those media might release casualty information before personal notification of the next of kin could be made (considering restrictions concerning hours of notification contained in this regulation and natural limitations of time and distance), the installation commander responsible for notification of primary next of

kin may make an exception to the requirement for personal notification and/or the restriction in paragraph 6c concerning hours when notification may be accomplished. In such a case, the installation commander may notify the next of kin regardless of the hour, and may make notification

by telegram if that method will be faster than personal notification.

**8. Points of Contact.** The following telephone numbers are designated for use in the personal notification system:

Organization	AUTOVON			COMMERCIAL		
	Dial access code	Plus number	Plus extension	Dial area code	Plus number	Plus extension
Casualty Branch TAGO, DA	22	None	50531 50536 50980	202	OX 5	0531 0536 0980
HQ, First U.S. Army (Ft. Meade, Md.)	21	231-1470	6720 6040	301	677	6720 6040
HQ, Third U.S. Army (Ft. McPherson, Atlanta, Ga.)	21	431-1350	2403 3501 2314 2436 3468	404	752	2403 3501 2314 2436 3468
HQ, Fourth U.S. Army (Ft. Sam Houston, San Antonio, Tex.)	21	733-1380	5155 5156	512	CA 1	5155 5156
HQ, Fifth U.S. Army (Chicago, Ill.)	21	928	3388 3389	312	288	3388 3389
HQ, Sixth U.S. Army (Presidio of San Francisco, Calif.)	21	831-1360	5074 5075	415	561	5074 5075
HQ, MDW (Washington, D.C.):						
Normal Duty Hours:	22	None	78400 79813	202	OX 7	8400 9813
Other Hours:	22	None	74275 57148	202	OX 7 OX 5	4275 7148

## APPENDIX

### GUIDANCE FOR PERSONAL NOTIFICATION

#### REMEMBER:

As a personal representative of the Secretary of the Army, you are expected to be courteous, helpful, and sympathetic toward the next of kin. The sensitive nature of personal notification is apparent, and your presence is designed to soften the blow, if possible, and show the Army's concern for its personnel and their dependents or next of kin. More than likely, each notification will be different, precipitating different reactions from each one. Your alertness to the needs of the individual will assist the Department of the Army in maintaining rapport with the next of kin at this time of greatest need and acquiring public confidence in support of the notification system.

#### DO'S

1. DO call on next of kin only during the hours from 0600 to 2200.
2. DO make visit as inconspicuous as possible.
3. DO be neat in appearance and attire—cleanly shaven, well groomed, and dressed in freshly pressed uniform, if possible, in order to make as favorable an impression as possible.
4. DO be as natural as possible in speech, manner, and method of delivery of the notification.
5. DO be alert for any reaction to the news. If there apparently is no other adult member of the family at home and the news produces a shock that would seem to make it desirable for someone to be with the next of kin, the Army representative should ask, "Is there anything I can do?" or in case of severe reaction he should say, "May I call someone or ask a neighbor to step in?"
6. DO inform next of kin of subsequent visit of survivor assistance officer.
7. DO inform next of kin of followup confirmatory message which he/she will receive by telegram. Advise that a 24-hour lapse of time in this process is not considered excessive.
8. DO, in a death case, if the remains have been recovered, inform next of kin that a message on disposition of remains will be forthcoming.
9. DO furnish next of kin essentially the following information:

#### FOR DEATH

"The Secretary of the Army has requested me to inform you of the death of your husband (son/brother) who died from mortar wounds of the head and chest in a combat operation in Vietnam (died as a result of cerebral hemorrhage), on (date). The Secretary extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family in your tragic loss."

#### FOR MISSING PERSON

"The Secretary of the Army has asked me to inform you that your husband (son/brother) has been missing in Vietnam since (date). He was the gunner aboard a helicopter which was struck by hostile small arms fire and crashed while on a combat assault mission. When additional information is received, you will be promptly informed. The Secretary extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family."

10. DO solicit help of neighbors, friends, postmaster, or police chief as appropriate in locating next of kin who are not at home. If absence is tempo-

rary (shopping or visiting) you can await his/her return or go in search depending upon the circumstances. If the next of kin is out of town on visit or vacation, you should ascertain exact location and accomplish visit if within reasonable geographic distance or redirect action through telephonic chain of command if applicable.

11. DO, in the case of a missing person, request cooperation of next of kin in making public only information concerning the missing person's name, grade, service number, and date of birth.

#### **DON'TS**

1. DON'T touch or handle the next of kin in any manner unless there is extreme shock or fainting, in which case assist next of kin to a chair or couch or obtain glass of water and summon medical assistance if considered necessary.

2. DON'T hold prepared speech in hand when approaching residence of next of kin.

3. DON'T continuously refer to notes when talking to next of kin.

4. DON'T speak hurriedly, or extend oversympathetic gestures or manifestations which might be misconstrued.

5. DON'T discuss entitlements in death cases. (Acknowledge the fact that you are not knowledgeable in this field and that a survivor assistance officer will call upon him/her in the immediate future to discuss such matters. If you are to be the survivor assistance officer also, don't discuss entitlements initially, but inform next of kin that you will return later that day/evening/next morning after he/she has regained his/her composure.)

6. DON'T notify next of kin by telephone under any circumstances.

7. DON'T call for an appointment prior to visiting next of kin.

8. DON'T discuss disposition of remains with next of kin.

9. DON'T divulge your message except to the person or persons concerned.

[AGPB]

By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

HAROLD K. JOHNSON,  
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