



# From the Desk of



*Staff Judge Advocate*

## RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOLDIERS/AIRMEN OF DIFFERENT RANKS AR 600-20/AFI 36-2909

AR 600-20, para 4-14&15 and AFI 36-2909, chap 7-4 applies to relationships between Army/Air Force personnel and dual-status military technicians in the Army/Air Force Reserve and the Army/Air National Guard and between Army/Air Force personnel and personnel of other military services. It also applies to different-gender relationships and same-gender relationships.

**I am sure that most people are aware that certain types of relationships between officers and enlisted personnel are prohibited:**

1. Ongoing business relationships. This prohibition **does not apply** to landlord/tenant relationships or one-time transactions such as the sale of a vehicle or home. It **does apply** to the borrowing or lending of money, commercial solicitation, and any other type of on-going financial or business relationship.

2. Dating, shared living accommodations (other than those directed by operational requirements) and intimate or sexual relationships. This **does not apply to:**

a. Marriages. In situations where this policy would be violated because of a change in status of individuals who are dating (change from enlisted to officer), the couple must either terminate the relationship permanently or marry within one year of the start date of the program that changes their status, *before* the change in status occurs.

b. Personal relationships between members of the National Guard or Army Reserves, and members of the Regular Army and members of the National Guard or Army Reserves, **unless** the individuals are on active duty (other than annual training), on full-time National Guard duty (other than annual training) or serving as dual-status military technician.

3. Gambling.

4. Trainee/Soldier relationships and Recruiter/recruit relationships.

But how many of you are aware that certain types of relationships between Soldiers/Airmen of different ranks are prohibited?

Relationships between Soldiers/Airmen of all different ranks are prohibited if they:

1. Compromise, or appear to compromise, the integrity of supervisory authority or the chain-of-command.
2. Cause actual or perceived partiality or unfairness.
3. Involve, or appear to involve, the improper use of rank or position for personal gain.
4. Are, or are perceived to be, exploitive or coercive in nature.
5. Create an actual or clearly predictable adverse impact on discipline, authority, morale, or the ability of the command to accomplish its mission.

For example:

The Adjutant General and Director, Joint Staff are prohibited from entering into any type of on-going relationship with an officer in the VI National Guard for the reasons listed in numbers 1, 2 or 5 above. The same would apply for the State Command Sergeant Major with respect to enlisted personnel.

Individuals who are a part of a civilian organization (Sorority, Fraternity) must not allow that on-going external relationship to carry-over into their military relationship for the reasons listed in 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Additionally, Commanders are to ensure that personal relationships that exist between Soldiers/Airmen of different ranks emanating from their civilian careers will not influence training, readiness or personnel actions.

A junior enlisted Soldier/Airmen having an on-going relationship with a senior NCO within their chain-of-command for reasons listed in 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

It is important to note that these prohibitions are not intended to preclude normal team building associations that occur in the context of activities such as community organizations, religious activities, Family gatherings, unit-based social functions, or athletic teams or events.