

from  
**Army Regulation 600-43: Conscientious Objection**  
 Department of the Army

**1-5. Policy**

a. Personnel who qualify as conscientious objectors under this regulation will be classified as such, consistent with the effectiveness and efficiency of the Army. However, requests by personnel for qualification as a conscientious objector after entering military service will not be favorably considered when these requests are—

(1) Based on a claim of conscientious objection that existed and satisfied the requirements for classification as a conscientious objector according to section 6(j) of the Military Selective Service Act, as amended (50 USC, App 456(j)), and other provisions of law when such a claim was not presented before dispatch of the notice of induction, enlistment, or appointment. Claims based on conscientious objection growing out of experiences before entering military service, however, which did not become fixed until after the person's entry into the service, will be considered.

(2) Based solely on conscientious objection claimed and denied on their merits by the Selective Service System before induction when application under this regulation is based on substantially the same grounds, or supported by substantially the same evidence, as the request that was denied under the Selective Service System....

(3) Based solely upon policy, pragmatism, or expediency. Applicants who are otherwise eligible for conscientious objector status may not be denied that status simply because of their views on the nation's domestic or foreign policies.

(4) Based on objection to a certain war.

(5) Based upon insincerity.

(a) The most important consideration is not whether applicants are sincere in wanting to be designated as a conscientious objector, but whether their asserted convictions are sincerely held. Sincerity is determined by an impartial evaluation of each person's thinking and living in totality, past and present. The conduct of persons, in particular their outward manifestation of the beliefs asserted, will be carefully examined and given substantial weight in evaluating their application.

(b) Relevant factors that should be considered in determining a person's claim of conscientious objection include training in the home and church; general demeanor and pattern of conduct; participation in religious

**pragmatism** ►

(prag'mə tiz'əm) *n.*  
 attitude or outlook  
 addressing actual  
 practices, not theory  
 or speculation;  
 practicality

**expediency** ►

(ek spē'dē ən sē)  
*n.* quality of being  
 appropriate or suited  
 to a particular goal

**demeanor** ►

(di mēn'ər) *n.*  
 outward behavior

activities; whether ethical or moral convictions were gained through training, study, contemplation, or other activity comparable in rigor and dedication to the processes by which traditional religious convictions are formulated; credibility of persons supporting the claim.

*(c) Applicants may have sought release from the Army through several means simultaneously, or in rapid succession (medical or hardship discharge, and so forth). They may have some major commitments during the time their beliefs were developing that are inconsistent with their claim. They may have applied for conscientious objector status shortly after becoming aware of the prospect of undesirable or hazardous duty or having been rejected for a special program. The timing of their application alone, however, is never enough to furnish a basis in fact to support a disapproval. These examples serve merely as indicators that further inquiry as to the person's sincerity is warranted. Recommendations for disapproval should be supported by additional evidence beyond these indicators.*

*b. Care must be exercised not to deny the existence of beliefs simply because those beliefs are incompatible with one's own. Church membership or adherence to certain theological tenets<sup>1</sup> are not required to warrant separation or assignment to noncombatant training and service. Mere affiliation with a church or other group that advocates conscientious objection as a tenet of its creed does not necessarily determine a person's position or belief. Conversely, affiliation with a church group that does not teach conscientious objection does not necessarily rule out adherence to conscientious objection beliefs. Applicants may be or may have been a member of a church, religious organization, or religious sect; and the claim of conscientious objection may be related to such membership. If so, inquiry may be made as to their membership, the teaching of their church, religious organization or sect, as well as their religious activity. However, the fact that these persons may disagree with, or not subscribe to, some of the tenets of their church does not necessarily discredit their claim. The personal convictions of each person will dominate so long as they derive from the person's moral, ethical, or religious beliefs. The task is to decide whether the beliefs professed are sincerely held and whether they govern the claimant's actions in word and deed.*

1. **tenets** (ten'its) *n.* principles; doctrines; beliefs

