

reports thereof, together with recommendations regarding assertion and enforcement, will be forwarded through command channels to Commander, USARCS.

(5) *National Guard Members.* Claims arising from the tortious conduct of NG members will be investigated and if assertion appears appropriate, a recommendation shall be made to Commander, USARCS.

(c) *Concurrent claims under other regulations—(1) Section 537.1.* Claims for medical care and claims for damage to DA property arising from the same incident will be processed by the RJA in accordance with §537.1(g). If an RJA lacks settlement authority sufficient to settle a concurrent claim under §537.1, he may request additional authority under that section from the appropriate major overseas command SJA or area claims authority, who may delegate such additional authority in an amount not exceeding his own settlement authority. Where time is of the essence, telephonic delegations of authority are encouraged, provided they are confirmed in a writing which will be made a part of the case file.

(2) *Counterclaims.* Claims for medical care and claims against the United States which arise from the same incident will be processed by the RJA in accordance with §537.1(g)(2). If an RJA lacks authority sufficient to settle the claim against the Government, he will coordinate his action with that claims echelon which has the necessary authority to settle the particular claim against the United States.

§ 537.23 Predemand procedures.

(a) *Relations with the injured party—*

(1) *Advice.* The injured party, or, in appropriate cases, his guardian, next-of-kin, personal representative, or the executor or administrator of his estate, will be advised of the following:

(i) That under the Act of September 25, 1962 (76 Stat. 593, 42 U.S.C. 2651-3, the United States may be entitled to recover the reasonable value of medical care furnished or to be furnished him in the future from the person or persons who injured him, or who were otherwise responsible for his injury or disease; and

(ii) That if he is otherwise entitled to legal assistance under AR 27-3, he should seek guidance from a legal assistance officer regarding any claim he may have for personal injury; and

(iii) That he is required to cooperate in the prosecution of all actions of the United States against the person or persons who injured him; and

(iv) That he is required to furnish a complete statement regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding the incident which resulted in the injury or disease; and

(v) That he is required to furnish information concerning any legal action brought or to be brought by or against the prospective defendant, or to furnish the name and address of the attorney representing him; and

(vi) That he should not execute a release or settle any claim which he may have as a result of his injury without first notifying the RJA.

(2) *Statement.* A written statement will be obtained from the injured party, or his representative, in which he acknowledges receipt of the advice in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, and provides the information required by paragraphs (a)(1) (iv) and (v) of this section. If the injured party or representative fails or refuses to furnish necessary information or cooperation, the originator of the notification of potential claims may be requested to withhold records as to medical history, diagnoses, findings, and treatment, from the injured party or anyone acting on his behalf pending compliance with the requirements in paragraph (a)(1) of this section. Mere refusal by the injured party or his representative to include the Government's claim in his claim is not sufficient basis, by itself, for this action.

(b) *Determination and assertion—(1) Liability.* The RJA will review all the evidence including any claims officer's report of investigation and, after assuring completeness of the file, will make a written determination as to the liability of the prospective defendant and note his reasons for such determination.

(2) *Value.* If the RJA determines that the prospective defendant is liable, he will also ascertain the reasonable value

of medical care furnished or to be furnished to the injured party, in accordance with § 537.22(a)(3) and rates established by the Office of Management and Budget. When a military member has been retained in a military hospital for administrative reasons, or where the patient was absent from the hospital or was in a purely convalescent status, the amount of the claim will be recomputed to apply the outpatient rate, if under circumstances warranting only outpatient treatment in a civilian hospital or eliminate such periods altogether if the injured party received no treatment during those periods. In making these determinations the RJA will coordinate with the registrar or other responsible official of the hospital or medical unit in his area of responsibility.

(3) *Amount.* In the event of doubt concerning the extent of medical care furnished or to be furnished an injured party, the RJA will assert the claim in an indefinite amount. Demand will be made in a definite amount at the earliest possible date, based on an estimate of a reasonable value of medical care to be furnished, if appropriate. The RJA will assure that the file contains complete statements of the value of medical care furnished, including all charges by civilian physicians, medical technicians and civilian hospitals.

§ 537.24 Post demand procedures.

(a) *Coordination with the injured party's claim.* (1) Every effort will be made to coordinate action to collect the claim of the United States with the injured party's action to collect his own claim for damages, in order that the injured party's recovery for his damages, other than the reasonable value of medical care furnished or to be furnished by the United States, is not prejudiced by the Government's claim.

(2) Attorneys representing an injured party may be authorized to assert the claim on behalf of the government as an item of special damages with the injured party's claim or suit except where prohibited by law. Any agreement to this effect will be in writing, and the agreement should expressly recognize the fact that counsel fees may be neither paid by the Government (5 U.S.C. 3106) nor computed on

the basis of the Government's portion of the recovery. The agreement must also require the Government's permission to settle its claim.

(3) If the injured party, denies or his attorney or legal representative, fails or refuses to cooperate in the prosecution of the claim of the United States, independent collection action will be vigorously pursued.

(b) *Independent collection action.* Unless suit between the injured party and the prospective defendant is pending, all available administrative collection procedures will be followed prior to reference of the claim to the Department of Justice under paragraph (e) of this section. Direct contact with the prospective defendant's insurer, if known, is desirable. If the prospective defendant is an uninsured motorist, timely and appropriate action will be taken to collect the claim, or to request suspension of driving and registration privileges under the applicable uninsured motorist fund statute, or to seek compensation from the victim's insurer, or otherwise under financial responsibility laws.

(c) *Delegation of authority.* Subject to the provisions of paragraphs (d) and (e) of this section, authority to compromise or waive, in whole or in part, claims of the United States not in excess of \$40,000 exclusive of interest penalties and administrative fees is delegated as follows. The Area Claims Office as defined in paragraph (c)(6) of section 537.1 is authorized to:

(1) Compromise claims, provided the compromise does not reduce the claim by more than \$15,000 in any claim not asserted for more than \$25,000; and

(2) Waive claims for the convenience of the Government (but not on account of undue hardship upon the injured party) provided the uncollected amount of the claim does not exceed \$15,000 in any claim not asserted for more than \$25,000; and

(3) Redelegation in an amount not to exceed \$5,000 compromise authority to any claim processing office with approval authority is permitted.

(d) *Compromise and waiver of claims—*
(1) *General.* A debtor's liability to the United States arising from a particular incident will be considered as a single claim in determining whether the