

CHAPTER 5

SOME SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ON ARMY CORRESPONDENCE

- CHAPTER OBJECTIVE: When you have completed this lesson, you should be able to perform the following task.
- TASK: Name and define the parts of a memorandum, the staff study and the decision paper.
- CONDITION: Given several questions relative to a review of the staff study and decision paper, and their parts and purpose. You may use Lesson 5, Some Specific Guidance on Army Correspondence, which explains these concepts.
- STANDARD: Identify the basic parts of a staff study and a decision paper and their purposes in Army correspondence.
- REFERENCES: AR 25-50, *Preparing and Managing Correspondence* and DA Pamphlet 600-67, *Effective Writing for Army Leaders*.

CHAPTER 5

SOME SPECIFIC GUIDANCE ON ARMY CORRESPONDENCE

1. **INTRODUCTION.** Army Regulation 25-50, *Preparing and Managing Correspondence*, gives specific guidance on the many correspondence formats used by the Army. In this lesson we will review the informal memorandum, the staff study, and the decision paper.

2. **MEMORANDUMS.**

a. The basic format for Army correspondence is the formal memorandum. It is used to correspond formally (internally and externally) with any command, staff, or activity within the Department of Defense.

b. You can modify the basic format to create the various other types of memorandums used in the Department of the Army. However, critical reasoning, creative thinking, the five steps of effective writing, and elements of style are common to all memorandums. Three common modifications are the *Informal Memorandum*, *Memorandum for Record*, and *Memorandum of Agreement (or Understanding)*.

(1) The Informal Memorandum. Commands use the *informal memorandum* to communicate informally within a unit, organization, or agency. Its format is the same as the formal memorandum, except that you do not use letterhead stationery.

(2) The Memorandum for Record. The purpose of the Memorandum for Record (MFR) is to document conversations, meetings, and other events for future reference. Its format is the same as the *informal memorandum*, except the word "RECORD" appears in the place of the addressee.

(3) The Memorandum of Agreement (or Understanding). The *Memorandum of Agreement (or the Memorandum of Understanding)* is to document agreements or understandings. The format is the same as the *memorandum* except for two changes. First the phrase "MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT" or "MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING" appears on the second line below the seal. Second, a signature block appears for each party entering into the agreement or understanding.

c. *Format rules for a memorandum.*

(1) The Heading.

(a) Use letterhead stationery for the first page only. If not available, use plain white paper.

(b) Put the suspense date at the right margin on the same line as the "Reply to Attention Of" or one clear space above the date of the memorandum.

(c) List the office symbol of the originating office or unit flush left two lines below the seal, three lines above the MEMORANDUM FOR line.

(d) In parenthesis two spaces after the office symbol add a Modern Army Recordkeeping System (MARKS) number. This number indicates where to file the document.

(e) Type the date of signature flush right on the same line as the office symbol. Use military dates in memorandums. For example: 23 June 1999. If you abbreviate the month use upper and lower case letters and also abbreviate the year. For example: 23 Jun 99.

(f) Three lines below the office symbol line and beginning at the left margin type MEMORANDUM FOR followed by the address line. If the address line extends to a second line, indent the second line to start under the third letter of the word after FOR. For example:

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027

(g) Type SUBJECT: flush left on the second line below MEMORANDUM FOR. Skip two spaces and begin typing your subject. Identify your subject clearly. Use a noun phrase.

(2) The Body.

(a) Begin the first paragraph on the third line below the subject line.

(b) Maintain 1-inch margins all around.

(c) Single-space the text, and double-space between paragraphs.

(d) Acronyms, abbreviations, and brevity codes.

1. Use only those acronyms, abbreviations, and brevity codes your reader will understand. The first time an acronym is used in a document, spell it out and follow it with the acronym in parenthesis.

2. Type acronyms in upper case letters without periods. Don't use apostrophes to form the plurals.

(e) Separate each major section by using numbered paragraphs and lettered or numbered subparagraphs with clear headers. All major sections begin at the left margin.

(f) Subparagraphs.

1. Indent all first level subparagraphs four spaces and begin typing on the fifth space. Indent second level subparagraphs eight spaces. Wrap all second and succeeding lines to the left margin.

2. If you create an "a" subparagraph, you must also have at least a "b" subparagraph. If you have a "(1)," you must also have a "(2)." Do not subdivide paragraphs beyond the third subdivision; however, do not indent any further than the second subdivision.

(g) Continuation pages.

1. Put the office symbol at the left margin on line eight of each continuation page. Do not type the date.

2. Type the subject line (worded exactly as on page 1) on the line immediately following the office symbol (don't skip a line).

3. Center the page number 1 inch from the bottom of the page starting with page 2.

(3) Point of contact. If you have a point of contact (POC), list the rank, name, office, and telephone number in the last paragraph.

(4) Authority line. Use an authority line (FOR THE COMMANDER, FOR THE DIRECTOR, etc.) if applicable. The authority line is flush left on the second line below the last paragraph.

(5) Signature block. Type the signature block on the fifth line below the last paragraph or the authority line (if included). The signature block starts at the center of the page. Spell out the name of the signing official in all upper case letters. Rank and branch may be all upper case or, if spelled out, upper and lower case. For example:

JOHNNY P. JONES, JR.
2LT, FA
Co, FSO

JOHNNY P. JONES, JR.
Second Lieutenant, Field Artillery
Company Fire Support Officer

(6) Enclosures. Type the number of enclosures and the word "Encls" flush left on the same line on which the signature block begins. Number and attach enclosures in the order they appear in the text. Identify them in the text (Encl 1, Encl 2, etc.) and list them after the enclosure line. List them in the same way you would a reference. If you have only one enclosure, use the word "Encl," and do not number it. For example:

3 Encls	NAME
1. Memo, office symbol, date, subject	RANK, BRANCH (or Rank, Branch)
2. DA Form	Duty Position
3. AR #-###	

Encl	NAME
DA Form	RANK, BRANCH (or Rank, Branch)
	Duty Position

(7) Distribution. Type DISTRIBUTION: flush left on the second line after the signature block or the last listed enclosure (whichever is lower on the page). To use the distribution line, you must have stated MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION in your MEMORANDUM FOR line. List the addressees in logical order, each on a separate line immediately below the word DISTRIBUTION.

(8) Copies furnished. Type CF: on the second line after the signature block, the last listed enclosure, or the last addressee in the distribution list (whichever is lower on the page). List all addresses in logical order, each on a separate line immediately below the word CF. Show whether or not enclosures are included by adding either "(w/encls)" or "(wo/encls)" at the end of each CF address.

(9) Figure 5-1 gives a sample of the memorandum format.

	DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY Organizational Name/Title City, State Zip Code		S: Suspense Date Date of Signature
1			
2	OFFICE SYMBOL (MARKS NUMBER)		
1			
2			
3	MEMORANDUM FOR	Addressee's Duty Position or Title, Organization, City, State, Zip Code	
1	SUBJECT:		
1			
2			
3	1. xx		
1			
2	a. xx		
1			
2	(1) xx		
1			
2	(2) xx		
1			
2	(a) xx		
1			
2	(b) xx		
1			
2	b. xx		
1			
2	AUTHORITY LINE: (If needed)		
1			
2			
3			
4			
5	2 Encls (If needed)	NAME	
1	1. xx	RANK, BRANCH	
2	2. xx	Duty Position	
1			
2	DISTRIBUTION: (If needed)		
1	Addressee's Duty Position, Unit		
1			
2	CF: (If needed)		
1	Duty Position, Unit		

Figure 5-1. Memorandum format.

3. **THE STAFF STUDY.** The staff study incorporates the elements of critical reasoning, creative thinking, the five steps of effective writing, and the elements of style to produce a document your commander can effectively use when making important decisions. The staff study follows a pattern that proceeds from identifying the problem to deciding on the best course of action (see 5-2).

STAFF STUDY
Step 1: Identify and state the problem.
Step 2: List facts and assumptions.
Step 3: Develop possible solutions.
Step 4: Research and collect data.
Step 5: Interpret data.
Step 6: Evaluate alternative solutions.
Step 7: Prepare the staff study.

Figure 5-2. Staff Study.

- a. *Objective.* The objective of this section is to show you—
 - (1) How to plan and prepare a staff study.

(2) How to refer to appropriate references, gather background material, and coordinate these actions.

b. Purpose. The purpose of the staff study is to assist your commander, or other superior, in making a decision. To serve this purpose a staff study must incorporate the following principles of effective writing:

(1) Clarity. There must be no doubt of your meaning.

(2) Brevity. Your commander should be able to get a clear picture of the problem and the recommended solution with a minimum of reading. However, you should never sacrifice brevity for clarity.

(3) Accuracy. There must be no factual or mechanical errors. Check and recheck source data and the final paper so that your commander can accept the paper with confidence.

(4) Coherence. You should present your ideas in a logical order with the relationships between ideas clearly shown.

(5) Unity. Your paper must deal with only one subject--the problem. Keep away from side issues and irrelevant material.

(6) Completeness. You must cover every angle of the problem, including all reasonable courses of action. All papers needed to put the recommended action into effect should accompany your study.

(7) Objectivity. Your paper must present an unprejudiced viewpoint.

c. Research. To solve a problem, the author of a staff study must research the problem to identify the issues, develop and evaluate alternatives, and recommend effective action based on relevant facts.

d. Preparing the staff study. The most difficult task in preparing a staff study is the beginning. We recommend you review Lesson 1, **Critical Reasoning and Creative Thinking**, and Lesson 2, **Steps to Effective Communication**.

(1) Identify and state the problem. This step is crucial as the actual problem may not at first be obvious. Therefore, before undertaking the study, you must determine exactly what the problem is and clearly define the problem's scope and limitations. Then you write the problem statement and submit it for approval to the authority directing the study.

(2) List facts and assumptions. Next list all facts and assumptions bearing on the problem. Identify those that are known. Examine the inferences underlying the facts and assumptions and the effect they may have on possible conclusions. Develop a plan of attack that enables you to identify the information you need, the sources of information, and what agencies to consult. Establish the criteria which you will use to analyze both data and possible solutions.

(3) Develop possible solutions--courses of action (COA). Analyze the subordinate topics you have identified and list what facts and assumptions you know about each one. You are trying to identify possible solutions to resolve the problem and fulfill the mission. A helpful technique is to list the subordinate topic and then brainstorm assumptions and solutions for each one before doing the actual research. Next evaluate each solution and select the best available solution. (There may be more than one that is equally good, but try to narrow the alternatives.) Now analyze the alternatives, and the best solution against previously determined evaluation criteria using an "advantages and disadvantages" format. One way of determining the advantages and disadvantages of a possible solution is to prepare a checklist.

(4) Research and collect data. After developing possible solutions, you begin to collect additional information from technical libraries, abstracts, DOD document center, subject-matter experts, operational personnel, etc.

(5) Interpret data. Data by itself is useless, it must be interpreted. Apply the standards of critical reasoning and creative thinking (lesson 1) to determine the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability of tentative solutions the data supports.

(6) Evaluate alternative solutions – courses of action (COA). Apply the criteria you have established to the known facts and assumptions. Next compare and contrast the alternatives. The best solution will be the one most feasible, suitable, and acceptable that fulfills the evaluation criteria.

SAMPLE PROBLEM AND SOLUTION

a. *Problem.* The problem is to select a site for a 50-target, known-distance rifle range at Camp Targee. But there is a special condition imposed by Tenth U.S. Army--the site must conform to the requirements of the emergency expansion plan. This is an important element of the problem and has a direct bearing on the solution. Tenth U.S. Army has also implied that, if fully justified, they will approve the purchase of additional land.

b. *Assumptions.* You have made the assumption that because Camp Targee has an assigned mobilization mission there will be no change in the mission. By making this basic assumption, you can accept all aspects of the mobilization as documentable facts. You can accept that the acquisition of land and the range requirements even though based on future developments are valid. Tenth U.S. Army has also stipulated that the command is to justify any additional land acquisition before they grant any approval. However, the approval is not a fact; therefore, you must include it as an assumption.

c. *Facts bearing on the problem.* You have listed several facts that are important and pertinent to the solution of the problem. You have arranged these in a logical sequence for discussion.

(1) Tenth U.S. Army says that Camp Targee will be one of the first installations they will expand if mobilization occurs. This fact has a direct bearing on the problem because it indicates time will be a vital factor carrying out the emergency expansion plan. While it is not wrong to do so, there is no need to include the mobilization mission of the post since we can assume the commander is aware of it. It can also be assumed that the commander is familiar with the emergency expansion plan; however, it is the duty of the writer to determine which elements of the plan have a direct bearing on the problem. An analysis of the notes from the emergency expansion plan reveals that the most important elements are those concerning the range requirements and the additional land to acquire. The commander must have these facts to make a decision, and he should not have to look beyond the body of the study to find them.

(2) The second fact is stated in general terms. The commander who will approve or disapprove the study has had considerable experience as an infantry officer. You can assume, therefore, that the commander has at least a general knowledge of range requirements. If he desires to study them, the annexes will give him detailed information. The fact that Tenth U.S. Army directed we try to locate the range on the post is essential for an objective consideration of the problem.

(3) Tenth U.S. Army's position is that you must justify the acquisition of additional land. Therefore, the commander will want to know the location of the sites being considered. The fact that Sites I and II are the only adequate sites on the post is essential. This immediately assures the commander that you have investigated all possible sites on the post. Since Site III is located off-post on land designated for acquisition under the emergency expansion plan, the commander will be particularly concerned with the justification for use of this site. Inclusion about the location of the sites sets the stage for the discussion to follow.

Figure 5-3. Sample problem and solution.

d. *Discussion.* One way of determining the advantages of each site is to prepare a checklist. Below is an example of a checklist for this staff study.

Checklist for 50-target, known-distance rifle range at Camp Targee	SITE #1		SITE #2		SITE #3	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
10 th Army Requirements						
Site conforms to emergency expansion plan		X	X		X	
Located on present post (conditional)	X		X			X
General Requirements, TM 0-0000-000-00						
Within 30 minutes marching time of cantonment area	X		X		X	
Good drainage						
Minimum danger area required for	X		X		X	
One range		X		X	X	
Small arms and field target ranges		X		X	X	
Can use artillery impact areas as common impact area	NA			X	X	
Avoids isolating useful maneuver areas		X		X	X	
Does not prevent use of existing roads (expansion area)	X			X		X
Greatest economy in mobilization construction						
Costs less to build one range						

The chart above is only a partial listing of the advantages and disadvantages. This method makes it relatively simple to write the discussion paragraph of the study.

e. *Conclusions.* The objective analysis developed in the discussion leads naturally to a logical solution.

(1) Site I must be eliminated because it does not conform to the requirements of the emergency expansion plan. Site I is not expandable and will be destroyed when the cantonment expands.

(2) Site II does not meet all of the mobilization requirements. It lacks a common impact area for the artillery, small arms, and field target ranges; this will increase the acreage needed for danger areas. In addition, the required relocation of the road will add several thousand dollars to the cost of building the ranges at this site. This will increase the mobilization construction cost far beyond that of Site III and will increase the time needed to make the expanded post operational.

(3) Site III best meets the general requirements of TM 0-0000-000-00, and it does conform to the emergency expansion plan. Based on the information furnished and without reading other factors into the problem, it appears that Site III is the best location. The lower mobilization construction cost fully justifies the purchase of additional land. This lower cost will result because the impact areas and danger zones for all ranges will need less acreage. Finally, we will not have to relocate the road, thus saving further time and money.

Figure 5-3. Continued.

(7) Prepare the staff study. The staff study consists of a summary sheet (body) and annexes. Along with the 10 basic paragraphs, the summary sheet may include--

- A list of annexes.
- Concurrences.
- Nonconcurrences.

- Considerations of nonconcurrences.
- A list of annexes added to summarize lengthy nonconcurrences and their consideration.
- Action by the approving authority.
- An implementing document.

e. Staff study format. The staff study consists of 10 basic paragraphs in a memorandum format (see h below for the specific staff study format). The staff study paragraphs include:

- Problem statement.
- Recommendation.
- Background.
- Facts.
- Assumptions.
- Courses of action.
- Criteria.
- Analysis.
- Comparison of courses of action.
- Conclusion.

f. Coordinating a staff study. Conducting staff studies normally involves coordination with other staff officers to obtain concurrences or nonconcurrences on desired recommendations and other aspects of the study. Coordination is important because the views of each agency involved are available to the commander. You should anticipate nonconcurrences. You should write considerations of nonconcurrences, assess them objectively and accurately, and make them into enclosures (annexes) to the staff study.

g. Common problems of staff studies. The following list of questions identifies the most common problems found in staff studies. You should review this list before beginning a staff study.

- Is the topic too broad?
- Is the problem properly defined?
- Are facts or assumptions clear and valid?
- Are there any unnecessary facts or assumptions?
- Are there any facts that appear for the first time in the discussion?
- Are there a limited number of options or courses of action?
- Are evaluation criteria invalid or too limited?
- Is the discussion too long?
- Is the discussion incomplete; must the reader look at annexes?
- Does the conclusion include a discussion?
- Is the logic incorrect or incomplete; does the conclusion follow from analysis?
- Can the solution be implemented within resource or time constraints?
- Do the conclusions and recommendations answer the problem?
- Is there an implementing directive?
- Have new criteria been introduced?

h. Staff study format. The staff study uses the memorandum format (see figure 5-1).

Figure 5-4 (from FM 101-5) gives a detailed discussion of the parts of the staff study.

Office Symbol (Marks Number)

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR

SUBJECT: Briefly describe the study's contents. Be specific. Do not just say Staff Study.

1. **Problem.** Write a concise statement of the problem, stated as a task, in the infinitive or question form; for example, *To determine...* or *How to...* Normally include the *who, what, when, and where* if pertinent.
2. **Recommendation.** Recommend a specific course of action (*who, what, when, and where*). The *recommendation must solve the problem*. If necessary or directed, place an implementing document at Annex A.
3. **Background.** *Provide a lead-in to the study, briefly stating why the problem exists.*
4. **Facts.** *State facts that influence the problem or its solution. Make sure the facts are stated and attributed correctly. The data must stand-alone; either it is a clear fact or is attributed to a source that asserts it true. There is no limit to the number of facts. Provide all the facts relevant to the problem (not just the facts used to support the study). State any guidance given by the authority directing the study. Refer to annexes as necessary for amplification, references, mathematical formulas, or tabular data.*
5. **Assumptions.** Identify any assumptions necessary for a logical discussion of the problem. If deleting the assumption has no effect on the problem, you do not need the assumption.
6. **Courses of Action.** List *all* possible suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete courses of action. If a course of action (COA) is not self-explanatory, include a brief explanation of what the COA consists of to ensure the reader understands. If the COA is complex, refer to an annex for a complete description (including pertinent CAO facts).
 - a. **COA 1.** *List specifically by name, for example, Route A.*
 - b. **COA 2.** Same as above.
 - c. **COA 3.** Same as above.
7. **Criteria.** List the criteria used to judge COAs. Criteria serve as yardsticks or benchmarks against which to measure each COA. Define criteria to ensure the reader understands them. Be specific. For example, if using cost as a criterion, talk about that measurement in dollars. *Use criteria that relate the facts and assumptions.* There should be a fact or an assumption listed in paragraph 4 or 5, respectively, that supports each of the criteria. Consider criteria in three related but distinct areas, as indicated below.
 - a. **Screening Criteria.** Define screening criteria that a COA must meet to be suitable, feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, and complete. *Accept or reject a COA based solely on these criteria.* Define each criterion and state the required standard in absolute terms. For example, using cost as a screening criterion, define cost as "dollars" and specify the maximum (or minimum) cost you can pay. In subsequent subparagraphs, describe failed COAs and state why they failed.
 - b. **Evaluation Criteria.** This is criteria used to measure, evaluate, and rank-order each COA during analysis and comparison paragraphs. Use issues that will determine the quality of each COA and *define*

Figure 5-4. Continued.

how to measure each COA against each criterion and specify the preferred state for each. For example, define cost as total cost including research, development, production, and distribution in dollars—less is better; or cost is manufacturer’s suggested retail price—less is better. *Establish a dividing line that separates advantages and disadvantages for a criterion.* An evaluation criterion must rank-order COAs to be valid.

Some criteria may be both screening and evaluation criteria, such as, cost. You may use one definition of cost; however, the required or benchmark value cannot be the same for both screening and evaluation criteria. If the value is the same, the criteria will not distinguish between advantages and disadvantages for remaining COAs.

(1) Define Evaluation Criteria. Each evaluation criterion is defined by five elements written in paragraph or narrative form.

- A short title. (“Cost,” for example.)
- Definition. (The amount of money to buy ...)
- Unit of measure. (For example, US dollars, miles, acres.)
- Dividing line or benchmark. (The point at which a criterion becomes an advantage. Ideally the benchmark should result in gaining a tangible benefit. Be able to justify how you came up with the value—through reasoning, historical data, current allocation, averaging.)
- Formula. (Stated in two different ways. That “more or less is better” {\$400 is an advantage, >\$400 is a disadvantage, less is better} or subjectively in terms such as “a night movement is better than a daylight movement.”)

(2) Evaluation Criterion #2. Again define and write the criterion in one coherent paragraph. To curtail length, do not use multiple subparagraphs.

(3) Evaluation Criterion #3, and so on.

c. Weighting of Criteria. Establish the relative importance of one criterion over the others. Explain how each criterion compares to each of the other criteria (equal, favored, slightly favored), or provide the values from the decision matrix and explain why you measured the criterion as such.

NOTE: Screening criteria are not weighted. They are required, absolute standards that each COA must meet or the COA is rejected.

8. Analysis. For each COA, list the advantages and disadvantages that result from testing the COAs against the stated evaluation criteria. Include the payoff value for each COA as tested. *Do not compare one COA with the others* (that is the next step). *Do not introduce new criterion.* If there are six criteria, there must be six advantages or disadvantages (as appropriate) for each COA. If there are many “neutral” payoffs, examine the criteria to ensure they are specific and examine the application of the criteria to ensure it is logical and objective. Neutral should rarely be used.

a. The first subparagraph of the analysis should state the results of applying the screening criterion if not already listed in paragraph 7b(2). List screened COAs as part of paragraph 7b for clarity and unity.

b. COA 1. (List the COA by name.)

(1) Advantage(s). List the advantages in narrative form in a single clear, concise paragraph. Explain why it is an advantage and provide the payoff value for the COA measured against the criteria. Do not use bullets; remember, the paper must stand-alone.

Figure 5-4. Continued.

(2) **Disadvantage(s).** List the disadvantages for each COA and explain why they are disadvantages. Include the payoff values or how the COA measured out.

c. **COA 2.**

(1) **Advantage.** If there is only one advantage or disadvantage, list it as shown here.

(2) **Disadvantage.** If there is no advantage or disadvantage, state "none."

9. **Comparison of the COAs.**

a. After testing each COA against the stated criteria, compare the COAs to each other. Determine which COA best satisfies the criteria. Develop for the reader, in a logical, orderly manner, the rationale you use to reach the conclusion in paragraph 10 below. For example, *Cost: COA 1 cost less than COA 2, which is equal to the cost of COA 4. COA 3 has the greatest cost.*

b. You can use quantitative techniques (such as decision matrixes, select weights, and sensitivity analyses) to support your comparisons. Summarize the results of these quantitative techniques clearly so that the reader does not have to refer to an annex. *Do not explain the quantitative technique, simply*

10. **Conclusion.** Address the conclusion drawn from analyzing and comparing all the relevant factors (for example, *COA 2 is the best COA because*). The conclusion must answer the problem statement. If it does not, then either the conclusion or the problem statement is incorrect.

Encl.

NAME
RANK, BRANCH
Duty Position

NOTE: Address supporting enclosures in the body of the study. The enclosures you produce (implementing document, decision matrixes, and so on) must comply with common format requirements (AR 25-50).

Concurrences/Nonconcurrences: (List directorates/agencies/persons with whom you must coordinate.)

Section/Agency **Concur/Nonconcur** _____ **Date** _____

NOTE: Each officer must initial his/her concurrence or nonconcurrence, followed by his rank, name, position and/or title, telephone number, and E-mail address, and briefly state the reason for his nonconcurrence. This statement normally is on a separate page that will become an annex to the study.

Consideration of Nonconcurrence: The author of the study states the results of the consideration of any nonconcurrences. He either briefly states the results or attaches them as another annex. If consideration shows he cannot support the concurrence he must state the reasons. The author signs or initials the consideration of nonconcurrence(s).

Figure 5-4. Continued.

4. DECISION PAPERS.

a. *Decision papers.* The decision paper is a staff action that is brief and contains the essential information the decision maker needs to reach a decision. The decision paper follows the informal memorandum format and should not exceed two pages (excluding supporting documents). The decision paper should synthesize the facts, summarize the issues, and present feasible alternatives.

b. *Seven paragraphs.* The decision paper consists of the following seven paragraphs:

(1) Paragraph 1 states: "1. For DECISION." Indicate in this paragraph if the decision is time-sensitive to an event or has a suspense to a higher headquarters. Suspenses to the command group are not shown.

(2) Paragraph 2 states: "2. PURPOSE." This paragraph clearly states what decision is required. You will state the purpose in the infinitive form, "To determine the ..." or "To obtain ..."

(3) Paragraph 3 states: "3. RECOMMENDATION." This paragraph contains the specific recommendation the staff believes will solve the problem. If the purpose of the decision paper is to obtain a signature, place the document requiring the signature under the first lettered tab. If the paper presents a solution to the problem and has implementing documents for approval/signature, the recommendation may be twofold. For example:

“3. RECOMMENDATION.

- a. That the (state the recommended solution).
- b. That the (title of the decision maker) approve and sign the implementing directive(s) found at TAB(s) ____.”

Under each recommendation type: APPROVED ____ DISAPPROVED ____ SEE ME _____. This allows the decision maker to note the action taken on each separate recommendation by initialing the line.

“3. RECOMMENDATION.

- a. That the (state the recommended solution).
APPROVED ____ DISAPPROVED ____ SEE ME _____
- b. That the (title of the decision maker) approve and sign the implementing directive(s) found at TAB(s) ____.
APPROVED ____ DISAPPROVED ____ SEE ME _____”

(4) Paragraph 4 states: "4. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION." This paragraph explains the origin of the action, why the problem exists, and a summary of events in chronological form to help put the problem in perspective and provide an understanding of the alternatives and recommendation.

(5) Paragraph 5 states: "5. IMPACTS." This paragraph explains the affect on personnel, equipment, funding, environment, or stationing. State who, and to what extent, is affected by the recommendation. If none, state "No impact."

(6) Paragraph 6 states: "6. COORDINATION." All coordination is accomplished prior to submission of the decision paper. Concurrence/nonconcurrence is indicated by lining through either CONCUR or NONCONCUR, signing/initialing, and dating. A STATEMENT OF NONCONCURRENCE is placed under a tab and identified as nonconcurrence in the coordination block. The proponent office will attempt to resolve the nonconcurrence. If this is not possible, a CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCE is added as a tab to the staff paper.

(7) Paragraph 7 is used for point of contact or action officer, organization, and telephone number.

c. *Sample Decision Paper Format.* Figure 5-5 (below) is also from FM 101-5, pp. D-7 and D-8.

ABCA-XX-XXX (Marks Number)	Date
MEMORANDUM THRU (or FOR) FOR (If THRU is required) SUBJECT:	
1. For <u>DECISION</u> . (Indicate if decision is time-sensitive to an event or has a suspense to a higher headquarters. Suspenses to the command group are not shown.)	
2. <u>PURPOSE</u> . (Brief description of the situation requiring a decision. Keep it short. If you need more space for details, use an enclosure.)	
3. <u>RECOMMENDATION</u> . (State a specific recommendation, for example, "That the commander approve and sign the memorandum at TAB A tasking xx Brigade with installation support detail." Designate additional implementers as TAB A1, A2, and so forth. Add a line after each separate recommendation where the approving authority may indicate action taken.)	
APPROVED _____ DISAPPROVED _____ SEE ME _____	
4. <u>BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION</u> .	
a. (Refer to background information at TAB E through ____.)	
b. xx	
c. xx	
5. <u>IMPACTS</u> . (Indicate resource-funding impact of the recommendation decision(s), if any.)	
a. Personnel. (Refer to background information at TAB E through ____.)	
b. Equipment.	
c. Funding.	
6. <u>COORDINATION</u> .	
ACofS, G1/AG	CONCUR/NONCONCUR _____ CMT _____ DATE _____
ACofS, G2	CONCUR/NONCONCUR _____ CMT _____ DATE _____
DPTM	CONCUR/NONCONCUR _____ CMT _____ DATE _____

Figure 5-5. Sample decision paper format.