

HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES EUROPEAN COMMAND  
UNIT 30400  
APO AE 09131

STAFF MEMORANDUM  
NUMBER 25-7

19 June 2002

**SECURITY**

Joint Code Words, Nicknames and Exercise terms  
(SHORT TITLE—NICKA)

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1. **Summary.** To prescribe policies and procedures concerning the use of joint code words, nicknames and exercise terms within HQ USEUCOM.
  2. **Applicability.** This staff memorandum only applies to HQ, USEUCOM, directorates and staff offices.
  3. **Internal Control Systems.** This staff memorandum contains no internal control provisions and is subject to the requirements of the internal management control program. For HQ USEUCOM and subordinate joint activities, the applicable internal control directive is ED 50-8, Internal Management Control Program.
  4. **Suggested Improvements.** The proponent for this staff memorandum is the Exercise Division, Operations Directorate. Suggested improvements should be forwarded to HQ USEUCOM, ATTN: ECJ37, Unit 30400, APO AE 09131.
  5. **References.**
    - a. DoD Regulation 5200.1-R, subject: Information Security Program, January 1997.
    - b. CJCS Manual 3150.00, subject: Joint Reporting Structures General Instructions, 30 June 1999 .
    - c. DoD Manual 8910.1-M, subject: DoD Procedures for Management of Information Requirements, June 1998.
    - d. CJCS Manual 3150.29B, subject: CODE WORD, NICKNAME, AND EXERCISE TERM REPORT (SHORT TITLE--NICKA), 1 September 2001.

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This staff memorandum supersedes SM 25-7, dated 11 August 1997.

- e. JANAP 119(L), subject: Joint Voice Call Sign Book, October 1997.

6. **Definitions.**

a. Code Word. A single word assigned a classified meaning by appropriate authority to ensure proper security concerning intentions and to safeguard information pertaining to actual military plans or operations classified as Confidential or higher. A code word shall not be assigned to test, drill or exercise activities. A code word is placed in one of three categories:

(1) AVAILABLE. Allocated to USCINCEUR by Joint Staff. AVAILABLE code words individually will be unclassified until placed in the ACTIVE category.

(2) ACTIVE. Assigned a classified meaning and currently in use.

(3) CANCELED. Formerly ACTIVE but discontinued due to compromise, suspected compromise, cessation or completion of operation to which the code word pertained. CANCELLED code words will be regraded CONFIDENTIAL and remain inactive for two years, then be returned to the AVAILABLE inventory for future use.

b. Nickname. A combination of two separate unclassified words which is assigned an unclassified meaning and is employed only for unclassified administrative, morale or public information purposes.

c. Exercise Term. A combination of two words, normally unclassified, used exclusively to designate a test, drill or exercise. An exercise term is employed to preclude the possibility of confusing exercise directions with actual operations directives.

d. Using Agency. A directorate or office of HQ USEUCOM which has requested allocation of a joint code word, nickname and exercise term. The using agency assigns a classified meaning to code word or exercise term or an unclassified meaning to a nickname or exercise term.

e. Joint Usage. Activities Operations, and organizations in which elements of more than one Service component of USEUCOM participate under directives from HQ USEUCOM.

f. Assigning Authority. Operations Directorate, HQ USEUCOM ECJ3, for all joint usage of code words, nicknames and exercise terms.

7. **General.**

a. JCS instructions make USCINCEUR responsible for the use and assignment of joint usage words, nicknames, and exercise terms within USEUCOM.

b. USEUCOM component commands requiring code words, nicknames, or exercise terms for use in operations involving only elements of their service will be directed to request these through Service channels.

c. The Exercise Division, ECJ37, within the HQ USEUCOM Operations Directorate, ECJ3, is responsible for SM 25-7.

## 8. **Policy and Procedures.**

a. Code Words. The Joint Staff is responsible for allocating code words or block of code words to DOD components. DOD components may reallocate available code words to their organizations in accordance with individual Service policy and procedures subject to rules provided in the references above.

(1) The Code Word Action officer (CWAO), Operations Directorate, HQ USEUCOM ECJ3, is designated cognizant officer for HQ USEUCOM and is the central point for control, assignment and issuance of code words, and reporting usage to the Joint Staff.

(2) The CWAO, ECJ3, will maintain records on code words within the blocks assigned by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He or she will account for available code words and maintain a record of each ACTIVE code word. A record of CANCELLED code words will be kept two years, then returned to the AVAILABLE inventory. The CWAO will verify all ACTIVE code words to the Joint Staff by 01 Oct of each year.

b. Nicknames. Nicknames may be assigned to real-world events, projects, movements of forces, or other non-exercise activities involving elements of information of any classification category. The nickname, the description or meaning it represents, and the relationship of the nicknames and its meaning must be unclassified. A nickname is not designed to achieve a security objective. DOD Regulation 5200.1R, subsection 12-104, provides further guidance. Nicknames must contain two separate words.

(1) To avoid duplication and ambiguity, the Director for Operations, Joint Staff (JCS-J3), has allocated blocks of alphabetical letters to be used by unified and specified commands, the Services and components of DOD.

(a) USCINCEUR has been assigned words within the following Letter Blocks: AS-AZ, FG-FL, JS-JZ, NM-NR, and SG-SL.

(b) The first two letters of the first word must be from the alphabetical blocks assigned to USCINCEUR as listed above. Correct first word examples are "ASPIRE," "FIGHTER," "SLOUCH," etc. The second word can be selected at random.

(2) Nicknames improperly selected can be counter-productive, so this must be avoided. A nickname must be chosen with sufficient care to ensure that it does not:

(a) Express a degree of bellicosity inconsistent with traditional American ideals or current foreign policy;

(b) Convey connotations offensive to good taste, or derogatory to a particular group, sect, or creed;

- (c) Convey connotations offensive to our allies or other Free World Nations; or
- (d) Detract from the perceived relevance of the operation.

(3) The following shall not be used as nicknames:

(a) Any two-word combination voice call sign found in JANAP 119 or Allied Communications Publication (ACP) 119. However, single words in JANAP 119 or ACP119 may be used as part of a nickname if the first word of the nickname does not appear in Joint Staff code words;

(b) Any combination of words including the words "project," "exercise," or "operation";

(c) Words which may be used correctly either as a single word or as two words, such as moonlight; or

(d) Exotic words, trite expressions, or well-known commercial trademarks.

c. Exercise Terms. Exercise terms may be assigned only to tests, drills, or exercises for the purpose of emphasizing that the event is a test, drill, or exercise and not an actual real world operation.

(1) The exercise term, the description or meaning it represents, and the relationship of the exercise term and its meaning may be unclassified or classified. A classified term is designed to simulate actual use of DOD code words, and must be employed using identical security procedures throughout the planning, preparation, and execution of the test, drill, or exercise to insure realism.

(2) Selection of exercise terms will follow the same guidance as contained in paragraphs 5b(1) through 5b(3) above.

d. Requesting/receiving nickname. Component commands in theater will request/receive nickname items from their respective Service headquarters when not involved in HQ USEUCOM directed exercises or projects.

## 9. Use of Joint Code Words.

a. Joint code words will be activated only to provide for maximum security on a continual basis to:

(1) Designate a classified military plan or operation;

(2) Designate a classified geographic location in conjunction with the plan or operation;

and

(3) Conceal intentions in discussions and messages or other documents pertaining to a plan, operation, or geographic location.

b. The using agency shall assign to a code word a specific meaning classified Top Secret, Secret, or Confidential commensurate with military security requirements. Code words shall not be used to cover unclassified meanings. The assigned meaning does not always require a classification as high as the classification assigned to the plan or operation as a whole.

c. Code words shall be selected in such a manner that the word used does not suggest the nature of its meaning.

d. A code word shall not be used repeatedly for similar purposes; that is, if the initial phase of an operation is designated "meaning," succeeding phases will not be designated "Meaning II" and "Meaning III" but will have different code words.

#### 10. **Code Word Classification-Downgrading and Declassification.**

a. During the development of a plan or operation, the ACTIVE code word and its meaning shall have the same classification. When dissemination of the plan to subordinate echelons or agencies is required, the using agency may downgrade the ACTIVE code word classification to facilitate implementation and execution by other agencies and echelons. ACTIVE code words will not be downgraded below CONFIDENTIAL.

b. An ACTIVE code word which is replaced by another available code word due to a compromise, suspected compromise, or for any other reason, shall be CANCELLED and classified CONFIDENTIAL for a period of two years after which the CANCELLED code word will become unclassified.

c. In every case, whenever an ACTIVE code word is referred to in a document, its security classification shall be placed in parentheses immediately following the ACTIVE code word, e.g., LABEL (C).

d. Upon changing the classification of an ACTIVE code word or its meaning, or canceling the ACTIVE code word and its meaning, the using agency will notify the CWAO.

#### 11. **Security Measures.**

a. Using agencies will ensure that personnel who receive knowledge of ACTIVE code words or the meaning of ACTIVE code words are informed of pertinent security regulations.

b. In handling correspondence pertaining to ACTIVE code words, care shall be used to avoid bringing the code words and their meanings together. They will be handled in separate card files, catalogs, indexes, or lists, enveloped separately, and dispatched at different times so they do not travel through mail or courier channels together.

c. Both the code word and its meaning may be used in a message or other document only when it is essential to do so. Active code words may be used in correspondence or other documents forwarded to addressees who may or may not have knowledge of the meaning. If the context of a document contains detailed instructions or similar information which indicates the purpose or nature of the related meaning, the ACTIVE code word shall not be used.

d. Code words shall not be used for addresses, return addresses, shipping designators, file indicators, call signs, identification signals, or other similar purposes.

e. The use of CANCELLED code word for the purpose of referring to the classified meaning originally assigned to it is prohibited. Upon receipt of notice that a code word has been CANCELLED, commands or agencies concerned will discontinue use of the word. Correspondence between commands and agencies of HQ USEUCOM concerning the substitution of new words for other code words will be specific as to the status of the replaced words.

f. During discussions involving details of a classified plan or operation which reveal a classified meaning, the use of the related ACTIVE code word will be avoided unless all personnel present or within hearing also require knowledge of the code word. Likewise, whenever an ACTIVE code word is used during discussions, disclosures of information indicating the related meaning will be avoided unless all personnel present or within hearing also require knowledge of the meaning.

g. All nicknames will be unclassified.

h. In cases where a classified exercise term is designated to simulate actual use of a DOD code word, the provisions of paragraphs 6, 7, and 8a through 8f above apply.

i. Directorates or offices receiving a document or message containing an unfamiliar code word, and requiring knowledge of the meaning of the word, will request this information from the CWAO.

## 12. **Requests and Assignments.**

a. Code Words.

(1) Using agencies having a requirement for a code word will submit a request to the CWAO. The request will include the following:

- (a) The full meaning to be assigned;
- (b) The classification to be assigned to the word and its related meanings;
- (c) A complete list of the commands/agencies to whom the code word will be disseminated; and

(d) The date of activation and deactivation. (If the termination date is unknown, it should be listed as indefinite.)

(2) Upon receipt of a code word request, the CWAO will assign a word and notify the requester. The CWAO will also disseminate the word and the meaning to the Director of Operations, Joint Staff (JCS/J3).

(3) Using agencies originating a code word request will be responsible for dissemination to those commands or staff elements, other than the Joint Staff, which have a need to know.

b. Nicknames and Exercise Terms.

(1) Using agencies having a requirement for a nickname(s) or exercise term(s) should follow the same guidance set forth in para 9a.

(2) When selecting nicknames and exercise terms, the originator should follow the guidance in paragraph 5b and include in the request three or four choices listed in order of preference.

(3) Upon receipt of the request, the CWAO will review those names listed and approve the one(s) which best meet the criteria established herein.

(4) After approval of nicknames or exercise term(s), the CWAO will notify the Director of Operations, Joint staff (JCS/J3) of the activation of the nicknames or exercise term(s).

13. **Compromise.**

a. In the event of a compromise or a suspected compromise of an ACTIVE code word or a classified exercise term, the using agency having such knowledge will notify the CWAO by the most expeditious secure means and request a replacement. In the request for a new ACTIVE code word, the following terms may be used: "compromise," "suspected compromise" or "excessive dissemination."

b. The directorate or office having knowledge of a known or suspected compromise of code words or classified exercise team meanings will notify the CWAO and the responsible agency.

14. **Records.**

a. The CWAO will maintain a record of:

(1) U.S. Joint Services Code Word Index.

(2) Code words made available to USCINCEUR by the Joint Staff.

(3) Code words CANCELLED by using agencies for a two-year period after the dates of cancellation.

(4) ACTIVE code words and meanings not assigned to USCINCEUR but for which USCINCEUR has been given the meaning on a "need-to-know" basis.

b. The using agency will account for each ACTIVE code word assigned to it. The record of the status of the code word will be maintained for two years after the code word has been CANCELLED, at which time the CANCELLED code word will be returned to the AVAILABLE inventory of the CWAO, and the record disposed of in accordance with current practice.

15. **Reports and Reviews.**

a. To ensure the accuracy and correctness of code word status, using agencies will annually:

(1) Verify classification and meanings of all ACTIVE code words assigned by CWAO.

(2) Review classification and meanings of all CANCELLED code words assigned by CWAO.

(3) Submit the report "Annual Review and Verification of Joint Code Words and Meanings" as of 1 September to reach the CWAO, ECJ3, by 15 September. Reports will be in two parts: Part I to consist of Code Words, Nicknames, and Exercise Terms (ACTIVE and CANCELLED); and Part II to consist of meanings (ACTIVE and CANCELLED). Parts I and II will be forwarded separately and will be classified in accordance with the contents.

b. Using agencies will continually review the nicknames and exercise terms and the meanings assigned to those words by CWAO, ECJ3, and submit appropriate additions, deletions, or changes as they occur. When a nickname or exercise term is no longer required, the using agency will request CWAO to cancel the nickname or exercise term. The CANCELLED nickname or exercise term will then become a part of the inactive file.

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