CHAPTER 4

SIGNAL MESSAGE WRITING

INTRODUCTION

1.   Service efficiency cannot be achieved without accurate and efficient communication. One method of communication used is the signal message. Message writing is an important part of a staff officer's duties. The rules for writing messages are designed to ensure that they are handled quickly and arrive at the correct destination without loss of security. The communication system provides a service, and strict compliance by users with laid-down procedure is vital if congestion and delays are to be avoided.

USE OF SIGNAL MESSAGES

2.   It is impracticable to define precisely the types of communication for which signal message may be used. A message should not be sent if a letter or telephone call would be adequate. Some purposes for which messages are commonly used are as follows:

   a.   Issuing of warning orders.

   b.   Acknowledging operation orders and instructions.

   c.   Notification of casualties.

   d.   Conveying any information when speed is essential.

3.   In addition, each Service issues its peculiar rules for the use of signal messages. In the NAF for example, signal messages are used for:

   a.   Notification of the delay or grounding of aircraft.

   b.   Notification of aircraft daily status.

   c.   Requests for information on priority supply.

   d.   Notification, under 48 hours in advance, of the routine movement of individuals.

TERMINOLOGY

4.   The following terminologies are used in message writing:

a.   **Originator**.   The originator is the commander or headquarters of a formation or unit in whose authority the message is sent.

b.   **Drafter**.   The drafter is the person who composes the message for release by the releasing officer.

c.   **Releasing Officer**.   The releasing officer is the person who authorizes the transmission of the message. In most cases, he signs the message as the releasing officer except where he is unavoidably absent to sign or it was drafted for the signature of his superior officer.

d.   **Date Time Group**.   The Date Time Group (DTG) is the date and time at which a message is officially released by the releasing officer to the COMMCEN for transmission.

MESSAGE FORMS

5.   A sample of message form is at Annex A. A common form has not yet been adopted by all the Services but the example contains all the elements which make up the single Service forms. The numbers in brackets at Annex A refer to the paragraphs of this chapter.

USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS

6.   Capital letters are used for every letter in and outside the text. This rule applies equally to handwritten and typewritten messages.

ITEMS OUTSIDE THE TEXT

7.   The absolute accuracy of content, layout and spelling of items outside the text of a message is essential for the quick and correct transmission and subsequent distribution of the message.

PRECEDENCE

8. **Definition of Precedence**.

    a.   The 4 degrees of precedence given to messages are: FLASH (Code Z), IMMEDIATE (Code O), PRIORITY (Code P) and ROUTINE (Code R). Either the full word or code letter may be used when drafting messages. The precedence determines the relative order in which messages are to be handled. It also indicates the following:

        (1)   The urgency of the message and the speed of delivery required by the sender.

        (2)   The relative order of handling and delivery to be used by the communications staff.

        (3)   The relative order in which the recipient should note the message.

    b.   The precedence of the message is determined by the subject matter and the time factor involved. The precedence is not intended to indicate how quickly the addressee should react or what precedence should be assigned to the reply; if such instructions are necessary, they are included in the body of the text.

9. **Selection of Precedence**.   The recognized precedence, together with example of subjects appropriate to each, and the ranks and appointments of officers who may authorize them, are shown at Annex B. To prevent abuse, authorization of precedence higher than routine is limited to specific ranks and appointments. In an operational emergency, any releasing officer may authorize any precedence he is prepared to justify later to higher rank. Under these circumstances, he is to add after his signature: 'Notwithstanding Existing Instructions'. A duty officer may issue any precedence within the authority of the officer he is representing. Precedence given to signal messages are at Annex B:

10. **Communications Staff Responsibilities**.   The communications staff is responsible for checking the use of precedence and advising releasing officers accordingly. Persistent or flagrant misuse of precedence which are matters for commanders and their staff to deal with, are normally reported to the senior operations staff officer.

DTG

11.   A DTG consists of 3 pairs of digits, representing the date, the hour and the minutes past the hour, followed by a time zone suffix letter, the first 3 letters of the month and the last 2 numerals of the year; for example, 1530 hours ALFA on 7 Mar 11 is written 071530A Mar 11. The releasing officer thereafter inserts the DTG when he signs the message. See Chapter 2, Paragraph 62 for the convention applicable to the NN.

12.   **Time Zone**.   Local time may be used in messages within or affecting only that time zone. GMT (suffix) is used for messages:

      a.   Which pass from one time zone to another.

      b.   When the text relates to other time zones.

      c.   Which include any addressee in another country.

MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

13.   The box labeled 'MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS' enables releasing officers to give any special instruction to the communications staff. If there are no message instructions, the box is struck through. Internationally agreed message instructions include the following 2 types:

      a.   **'BOOK'**.   A book message is one that is sent to 2 or more addressees, none of whom needs to know of the others. 'BOOK' is inserted in the 'MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS' box on the message form. Distribution copies are marked 'BOOK MESSAGE'. The aim is to avoid transmitting the whole list of addressees to each addressee, thus saving transmission time.

      b.   **'NODUF'**.   The 'NODUF' procedure is used in peace time training exercise for the transmission of 'real' as opposed to 'exercise' messages. NODUF indicates that the transmission and content of the message are not part of the exercise. The word 'NODUF' is entered in the 'MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS' box and at the beginning of the text. The appropriate security classification is still required.

14.   **Special Handing Instructions**.   The 'MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS' box is also used for special handling instructions which require the communications staff and the addressee to handle the message in a certain manner. Special handling instructions must be repeated at the beginning of the body of the text; they include the following 2 types:

    a.   '**EXCLUSIVE**'.   When a message is to be seen by specified individuals or their authorized representatives, 'EXCLUSIVE' is to be written in the box and used to start the text, followed by 'FOR…. FROM', eg, 'EXCLUSIVE FOR GOC 7 MECH DIV FROM COAS'. The use of 'FOR…. FROM' after 'EXCLUSIVE' is mandatory. 'EXCLUSIVE' messages must be classified 'RESTRICTED' or higher; they are encrypted and handled in the same way as TOP SECRET messages, and only specially cleared communications staff handle the plain language versions. The use of 'EXCLUSIVE' may be authorized only by lieutenant colonels, commanders, wing commanders or above and officers below this rank in command of independent units, ships or stations.

    b.   '**DELICATE TEXT**'.   Delicate Text (DELTEXT), is used when the content of a message is particularly delicate and requires special safeguards in handling and distribution.   The privacy marking 'DELTEXT' is to be written in the box and used to start the text. 'DELTEXT' messages must be classified 'RESTRICTED' or higher; the authorization and handling procedure for 'DELTEXT' messages are similar to those for 'EXCLUSIVE' messages.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

15.   The security classification appropriate to the contents of the message is written in full in the 'SECURITY CLASSIFICATION' box on the form. Classified messages are handled in the same way as other classified documents. The classifications and the officers who may authorize their use are as follows:

    a.   **Top Secret**.   Lieutenant colonels, commanders, wing commanders and above; including their civil service equivalent.   In exceptional cases, majors, lieutenant commanders, squadron leaders in commands of an independent unit could also authorize top secret messages.

b. **Secret**. Any commissioned officer or civil service equivalent.

c. **Confidential**. Any commissioned officer or civil service equivalent.

d. **Restricted**. Any commissioned officer or warrant officer or civil service equivalent. In messages that include a treaty organization authority among the addressees, the appropriate prefix is to be added, eg, 'UN RESTRICTED', 'AU SECRET'.

16. The 'SECURITY CLASSIFICATION' box is to be completed in accordance with the following rules:

a. The classification is to be written in full in block capitals.

b. The classification is to appear on each page of a multi-page message.

c. The word 'CLEAR' may be used, to replace any security classification except TOP SECRET' if the speed of delivery is so essential that time cannot be spared for encryption. The message may then be transmitted in clear over any available means of communication. 'CLEAR' should only be used in tactical operations in which the enemy cannot react to the transmitted information in time to influence current operations.

17. **Reference to Classified Messages**.

a. A reply or reference to a message or document graded restricted or higher may be given a lower security grading than that of the original message or document if the text of the reply permits, but it must be classified at least restricted.

b. Messages referring to documents, letters or papers graded not higher than restricted may be sent 'UNCLAS' provided they make only brief, innocuous reference to the document, such as quoting the reference number and date.

PRIVACY MARKINGS

18.   The privacy terms 'STAFF IN CONFIDENCE', 'MEDICAL IN CONFIDENCE', 'CONTRACTS IN CONFIDENCE', etc, show the message requires careful handling as distinct from protection for security reasons. The terms are not security classifications and are therefore not written in the 'SECURITY CLASSIFICATION' box but at the beginning of the text. If the content of a message bearing a privacy marking also requires a security safeguard, the appropriate classification must be given as well.

ADDRESSES

19.   **Signal Messages Addresses**.   Normal NA, NN and NAF rules for abbreviations apply in addressing signal messages.

20.   **General Rules for Addresses**.   In signal message addresses, the following rules must be applied:

    a.   Spaces are left between words (including abbreviated words) and between letters and figures.

    b.   No spaces are left between letters of an abbreviation.

    c.   The names of departments, branches and appointments may be used at higher formation level but not those of individuals.

    d.   The addresses of the originator and addressee in a peacetime location must indicate the headquarters for brigade and above, when completing the message pad. For example:

        From: HQ 7 MECH DIV

        To: HQ 7 MECH BDE
                  HQ 72 MECH BDE
                  HQ 7 ARMD BDE
                  7 RECCE BN

In the NA, headquarters could be split during war into Main and Rear. See Paragraph 21b.

21. **Special Nigerian Army Instructions**.

a. If the message is to be handed directly to a radio or line terminal, the call signs or address groups of the addressee and originator are to be used instead of their signal message addresses.

b. When an headquarters is split, care must be taken to distinguish between its main or rear elements, eg:

FROM: 7 MECH DIV (MAIN)

TO: 7 MECH DIV (REAR)

This rule is applicable only at brigade level and above.

22. **Special Nigerian Navy Instructions**.

a. **Sea-going NN Ships**. The names of ships appearing in the address of messages are not normally prefixed with NNS except when it is necessary to avoid ambiguity.

b. **Rear Link Address Procedure**. The rear link address procedure may be ordered when a flag officer or other naval authority is absent from his administrative office. It provides for addressing and routing of administrative and routine messages to his main administrative office, and for messages of immediate concern to his temporary flag ship or location.

23. **Limiting Number of Addressees**. A message to more than one addressee has to be transmitted simultaneously to all of them. However, messages to too many addressees can overload the communications system. The number of addressees must therefore be limited to those for whom the message is essential. Long, multiple-address messages should not be sent unless all addressees need all the text; instead, separate messages containing only the relevant parts of the text should be sent. Examples of lengthy multiple address messages to be avoided are as follows:

a. Flight itineraries containing detailed lists of aircraft loads, addressed to every staging post on a route.

b. Consolidated nominal rolls of personnel posted to several places, addressed to all such places.

24. **Originator**. The originator (FROM) section of the message form contains the signal message address or short title of the formation, ship or unit originating the message, eg, 711 MECH BN, 64 ADG or FLOT.

25. **Addresses**. Each signal message address is written on a separate line of the message form. If there is one action addressee, the signal message address is written against 'TO'. If there are many addressees it may be necessary to encroach upon the space allocated for the text. If there are more action addressees than spaces available on the message form, 'INFO' is crossed out and re-written lower down.

26. **Multiple Address**. A multiple address consists of all the formations and units which need to receive the message, listed separately under 'TO' and 'INFO'. Within each of these groupings, formations and units are listed by seniority, numerical order and alphabetical order. The example for each Service is as shown below:

    a. **NA**.

        FROM: HQ 7 MECH DIV

        TO: HQ 71 MECH BDE
                     HQ 72 MECH BDE
                     HQ 7 ARMD BDE
                     7 RECCE BN

        INFO: HQ 7 ARTY BDE

    b. **NN**.

        FROM: NHQ

        TO: FOC WEST
                     FOC NAVTRAC

        INFO: FOC EAST
                     ONURA
                     BEECROFT

c. **NAF**.

FROM: HQ NAF

TO: HQ TAC
           HQ MC
           HQ TC
           HQ LC

INFO: 64 ADG
           75 STG
           107 HQ NAF CAMP

DRAFTER AND RELEASING OFFICER

27.   The drafter may release the message provided his rank or his appointment entitles him to do so, or if the authority is delegated to him. The drafter is to complete the boxes showing his name, branch and telephone extension. The releasing officer is responsible for the following actions:

a.   Confirming that the message is necessary.

b.   Ensuring that the text is correctly drafted.

c.   Approving the security classification and any message instructions.

d.   Confirming the precedence for action and information addressees.

e.   Inserting the DTG.

f.   Ensuring that 'Refers to Message' box has been completed.

g.   Signing and thus authorizing the message.

h.   Sending the message to the COMMCEN for transmission.

ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER

28.   The 'Delivery Indicator System' (DIS) is not yet in use in the Nigerian Armed Forces. However, it is the convention adopted by some other armed forces. The knowledge of the system may become useful during international military operations.

29.   The Delivery Indicator Group (DIG) is designed to permit the accurate distribution of a message within an headquarters without the need to refer to the message text. Each message must bear a DIG selected by the drafter. This is a distinct 3-letter group that indicates the subject matter of the message. When received at an headquarters, the message is delivered to the branches of the staff appropriate to the DIG (subject). Each headquarters will keep 'Standard Distribution Lists' (SDLs) for each of the DIGs it normally receives. To implement this system, it is necessary to publish a full list of DIGs to be used and to issue the publication down to unit level.

30.   More than one DIG may be used to indicate more than one subject in the text, and hence more than one recipient at the receiving headquarters; multiple DIGs are separated by oblique strokes.

31.   Selection of the correct DIG is essential for fast and correct distribution. If the list of DIGs does not contain a DIG appropriate to a subject on which regular messages are sent, the originator should apply for a DIG to be allocated to the subject. Until such a DIG is allocated, Radio Telephone Telegraph (RTT) may be used, with the recipient designated after 'FOR' at the start of the text. However, the word 'FOR…..' is not to be used in a message with a DIG; distribution is always made by reference to the DIG, not to the text.

32.   **Special DIGs**.   Specific rules apply to some special DIGs. Some examples are given below:

    a.   **RTT**.   Except as provided for in Paragraph 31, the use of the DIG/ RTT should be confined to 'EXCLUSIVE' messages.

    b.   **WWW**.   The DIG 'WWW' followed by a subject DIG restricts distribution by the addressee to the primary recipient on the SDL; this recipient then arranges further distribution if necessary. 'WWW' should be used, for acknowledgement messages and those

messages which, although not 'EXCLUSIVE' or 'DELTEXT', deserve restricted distribution. The use of 'WWW' helps the COMMCEN to save paper and time.

c. **National Assembly Question**. A message relating to a National Assembly Question (NAQ) must have 'NAQ' immediately before the subject DIG. Such messages therefore bear 2 DIGs; the first is 'NAQ' and the second is the DIG appropriate to the subject of the question.

33. **SDL**. Each HQ is responsible for producing its own SDL for those DIGs which are likely to be of interest to it. SDLs must be frequently reviewed and amended if the system is to work.

34. **Serial Number**. To assist in the identification of a message, the DIG is sometimes followed by a serial number; this may be allocated by the originator or by the COMMCEN, according to local arrangements.

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION

35. Internal addressees are written in the 'INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION' box in the order defined in Chapter 2, Paragraph 16c.

36. When a SDL system (see Paragraph 33) exists at the formation or unit level, the internal distribution of outgoing messages will be made automatically according to the SDL corresponding to the DIG used. If the releasing officer decides that any additional internal distribution is necessary, he will enter details on the message form as 'ADDITIONAL TO SDL'.

37. The internal distribution of outgoing messages is the responsibility of the branch registry concerned.

FILE REFERENCE

38. The originator's file reference is inserted in the 'FILE NUMBER' or 'REFERENCE' box.

REFERENCE TO OTHER MESSAGES

39.   When the text refers to another classified message (not a document or letter), the appropriate box at the foot of the form is ticked. On all other occasions; ie, when the text refers to an unclassified message or does not refer to any message, the 'does not refer….' box is ticked. A message should never be released unless only one of the 2 boxes is ticked.

PAGE NUMBER

40.   The page number box is completed on all pages.

MULTI-PAGE MESSAGE

41.   On the first page of a multi-page message, the page number box and all the items above the body of the text are completed. On the last page, the security classification box and all the items below the body of the text are completed. On all pages between the first and last, only the security classification and page number boxes are completed. If the message is classified, every page must be overstamped top and bottom, front and back, with the security classification.

SEQUENCE OF TEXT

42.   The text of a message consists of some or all of the following elements, listed in the order in which they are generally used:

    a.   Special handling instructions, eg, 'EXCLUSIVE' (see Paragraph 14).

    b.   Privacy marking, eg 'STAFF IN CONFIDENCE' (see Paragraph 18).

    c.   Code word or nicknames indicating that the message is connected with an operation or exercise; eg, OPERATION CLOUDBURST.

    d.   Reference to previous messages or documents.

    e.   The body of the message.

    f.   Any acknowledgement instructions.

REFERENCE

43.   The text of a message often starts with reference to a previous message or other documents. The following methods of reference are used:

a.   **Reference to Messages**.   References to previous messages consists of MY, YOUR or the correct abbreviations for a third party, followed by the originator's number (or the DIG if in use) and its DTG. Note that there is no 'of' between the originators number (or DIG). The following are examples:

(1)   A message sent by the addressee at 103OZ on 22 Jul 11. YOUR MED 39 22103OZ JUL 11. (This example illustrates the use of an originator's number).

(2)   A message sent by a third party; eg, HQ ATG at.… 2315Z on 30 Dec 11. ATG NBB 702 302315Z DEC 11. (This example illustrates the use of a DIG).

b.   **Other Documents**.   Reference to documents other than messages are made in a similar way; the file reference and full date must be quoted, as follows:

(1)   A letter, reference ATG/105/Admin 13 Mar 11, from the formation to which the drafter is sending a message is quoted as: ATG/105/ADMIN 13 MAR 11.

(2)   A letter reference 7BDE/278/Ops dated 2 Jan 11 to which the drafter is referring in a message to 7 Mech Div is quoted as: 7BDE/278/OPS 2 JAN 11.

c.   **Multiple References**.   A message may refer to 2 or more messages or documents as REF A, REF B, etc. They are all listed at the start of the body of the text in the order in which they appear in the message, as follows: REF A MY OPS 31 28145OZ JAN 11, REF B NAF/321/OPS 16 JUL 11.

d.   **Use of Not to All**.   'Not to All' (NOTAL) is inserted immediately after a reference; eg, MY INT 22 1532Z JAN 11 NOTAL

when not all addressees in a multi-address message hold the reference.

e. **Use of Passes Separately**. 'Passes Separately' (PASEP) is used in the same manner as NOTAL to indicate that a reference signal is being separately sent to an addressee who did not originally receive it. This is applicable to the NN only.

TEXT

44. **Methods**. Two methods are used to compose the text of signal messages in the Nigerian Armed Forces. These are continuous text and indented text. Text of signal messages are ended by inserting 3 forward slashes; eg, ///.

a. **Continuous Text**. The body of the message is written continuously without indentation of paragraphs. This is the method applicable in the NA and NAF. It is preferred for Joint Service Writing. An example is at Annex C.

b. **Indented Text**. Each paragraph of the body of a signal message, written in indented text starts on a new line. They are numbered with Arabic numerals in sequence and are followed by a full stop. This is the practice in the NN and allied forces which the Nigerian Armed Forces may serve with during multi-national military engagements. An example is at Annex D.

45. **General Rules**.

a. The text must be unambiguous and concise with no unnecessary words.
b. Commonly used conjunctions, prepositions and articles such as 'and', 'for', 'in', 'on', and 'the' are not used unless essential to the meaning.

c. Formal phrases such as 'please inform me' should be omitted, and expressions such as 'it is requested that' shortened to 'request' or 'grateful'.

46. **Format**.

a.   The message text should normally be prepared in modified letter format as follows:

(1)   Titles, headings and references are included only if essential.

(2)   Single-line spacing is used throughout.

(3)   Paragraphs start on a new line and are numbered with numerals and full stop, as in a letter. In the NA and NAF, the text of signal messages runs continuously without paragraphing.

b.   Sub-paragraphs start on a new line but are not indented and are lettered in sequence followed by a full stop; further sub-divisions also start on a new line and the designating numbers or letters are in brackets but see Paragraph 46a(3).

c.   When the text is short, for instance, if it consists of one reference and 2 or 3 sentences, it may be written in block, for example:

YOUR OPS 12 012345Z SEP APPROVED.
PROCEED TO CUP CAMEL.

47. **Abbreviations**.   Recognized abbreviations, without full stop or spacing between the letters, may be used but only if the originator is satisfied that their meaning will be readily understood by all addressees.

48. **Punctuation**

a.   Punctuation is not to be used unless necessary to the sense of the message. When it is essential to employ punctuation, the following abbreviations or symbols are to be used:

Serial	Punctuation	Abbreviation	Symbol
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
1.	Question mark	QUES	?
2.	Hyphen		-
3.	Colon	CLN	:
4.	Parenthesis open	PAREN	(
5.	Parenthesis close	UNPAREN	)
6.	Period/full stop	PD	.
7.	Comma	CMM	,
8.	Forward/Backward slash		/ \
9.	Semi colon	SM CLN	;

b.   Symbols are used in preference to abbreviations.

c.   In hand-written messages, full stops and commas are to be ringed to make them conspicuous, eg:

(1)   Full stop   (.)

(2)   Comma   (,)

A full stop is not used at the end of the text.

d.   If punctuation marks other than those above are necessary, they are to be written out in full; eg, QUOTE, UNQUOTE, and APOSTROPHE.

49.   **Signs**.   All signs are spelt out in words, eg:

a.   ₦   NAIRA.

b.   o (Degrees)   DEGREES.

    c   %   PER CENT.

50. **Phonetic Alphabets**.

a.   The internationally agreed phonetic alphabets are as follows:

ALFA	HOTEL	OSCAR	VICTOR
BRAVO	INDIA	PAPA	WHISKY
CHARLIE	JULIET	QUEBEC	XRAY
DELTA	KILO	ROMEO	YANKEY
ECHO	LIMA	SIERRA	ZULU
FOXTROT	MIKE	TANGO	
GOLF	NOVEMBER	UNIFORM	

b.   Phonetic equivalents may be used to write letters that do not form a word. They are especially desirable when expressing lettered coordinates in operational orders or when ordering equipment by letter and number. Phonetic equivalents are not to be used for the following:

    (1)   In initials, eg 'AM OMKOIYI,' or 'ABAH MUSA OMKOIYI' not 'ALFA MIKE OMKOIYI'.

    (2)   When the actual word is better, eg '126 DEGREES WEST' rather than '126 DEGREES WHISKEY'.

    (3)   For originators number, DIGs (when introduced), and time zones in DTGs.

    (4)   When the abbreviation is readily recognizable and authorized; eg, 'NN', 'HQ'.

    (5)   For sub-paragraph letters in indented signal text.

    (6)   For the pronoun 'I' and article 'A'.

51. **Numbers**.

a.   Numbers are normally written in figures, but words may be used to avoid the chance of misinterpretation. Words should not be used for paragraph numbering.

b.   When written in words, numbers are expressed in digit by digit except that numbers from 10 to 20 are written as one word. Whole hundreds, thousands and millions are written in the form 'FIVE HUNDRED', etc.

c.   An expression containing a decimal point may be written either in the form 'TEN POINT FIVE' or in the form '10.5'. In handwritten messages, the decimal point is to be circled to make it conspicuous; eg, '10Ⓞ5.

d.   Roman numerals should be avoided but if required, should be written as letters and be preceded by the word ROMAN; eg, ROMAN XXIV.

e.   In messages written by hand, the figure, 'I' is to be written with a line underneath '1' and the figure '0' with a diagonal bar through it Ø to avoid confusion with the letters 'I' and 'O'; eg, 1 and Ø.

52.   **Fractions**.

a.   Fractions are written as Arabic digits divided by forward slash; eg, 1/2, 3/4.

b.   A group comprising a whole number and a fraction is written by separating the fraction from the number by a single hyphen without spacing; eg, 1¾ as 1-¾ and 30½ as 30-½. Alternatively, fractions may be spelt out by writing 1½ as 'ONE AND HALF'.

53.   **Dimensions**.   Dimensions are written as number followed by the linear unit and separated by the word BY; eg, 1½ CM x ½ CM as 1-½ CM BY 1/2 CM. Alternatively, they may be, spelt out; eg, ONE AND HALF CENTIMETRES BY HALF CENTIMETRE.

54.   **Date and Times**.

a.   **Date**.   A date in the text is expressed by 1 or 2 figures indicating the date followed by the first 3 letters or the name of the month; the year is included only if there may be doubt over the year concerned; eg, 8 APR or 8 APR 11. A night is described by the 2 dates over which it extends; eg, NI 29/30 SEP, NI 30 SEP/1 OCT.

b. **Time**. Time is expressed as 4 figures followed by a time-zone suffix. The time 2400 should be avoided unless it is necessary to indicate that particular instant; use 2359 or 0001 instead. The rules for the selection of the correct time-zone suffix in the text of a message are the same as those given in Paragraph 11 for DTGs but see Chapter 2, Paragraph 65 for the convention applicable to the NN.

c. **Date and Time Together**. The zone suffix may be omitted in messages containing several times and or DTGs when an all-embracing expression such as 'ALL TIMES ALFA' can be used unless there is any chance of confusion such as a time or DTG being mistaken for grid reference. The month and year may sometimes have to be given to avoid confusion; eg, '26223OZ SEP 11'. Use of the month and year is mandatory in the DTG box of a message.

55. **Repetition**. A word may be repeated to prevent errors but not for the purpose of emphasis. An example of legitimate repetitions is 'MIYA ZAKI' REPEAT 'MIYA ZAKI'.

56. **Tabulation**. In a tabulation message, headings should be arranged horizontally rather than vertically. To avoid confusion, a table may be prefaced by explanatory words; eg, 'READ IN 4 COLUMNS'. When identical words or numbers appear on consecutive lines, they are repeated. 'DITTO' is never used. The word 'Tabulate' is not to be used as message instruction.

57. **Acknowledgement Instructions**.

a. An acknowledgment indicates that the message has been received and is understood; it should not be confused with a reply. If it is essential that a message be acknowledged, 'ACK', 'ALL ACK' or 'ACK IMM' is written at the end of the body of the text. The meaning of these terms are as follows:

(1) 'ACK' means action addressees are to acknowledge this message as soon as it is understood. Electronic silence, if imposed, is not to be broken and the acknowledgement must be sent by other secure means.

(2)   'ALL ACK' means that information, as well as, action addressees are to acknowledge the message in the same way as (1) above.

(3)   'ACK IMM' means action addressees are to acknowledge this message as soon as it is understood, breaking electronic silence if necessary. Only operational commanders may use this instruction.

b.   The text of an acknowledgment message, which is to be addressed only to the originator of the message requesting the acknowledgement, is to include the following:

(1)   The word 'YOUR' or the title of the originator.

(2)   The reference of the message being acknowledged.

(3)   The word 'ACK'.

An example is: YOUR OPS 57 271439Z SEP 11 ACK.

Annexes:

A.   Sample of Signal Message Form.
B.   Precedence given to Signal Messages.
C.   Example of Continuous Signal Text.
D.   Example of Indented Signal Text.

SAMPLE OF SIGNAL MESSAGE FORM

MESSAGE FORM

DRATER'S NAME IN
BLOCK LETTERS [27]

PRECEDENCE – ACTION [8]	FROM: [24]	BRANCH
PRECEDECNCE – INFO	TO: (25-26)	TELEPHONE NUMBER
DATE TIME GROUP MONTH [11] MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS [13] [14]		RELEASING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE AND RANK
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION (messages referring to a classified message must be classified RESTRICTED or above) (15)		NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS
	INFO:	DIG SERIAL NO (if used) (29)
		(ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER) (28)

TEXT: (44 – 57)

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION [35 – 37]	[38] FILE NUMBER OR REFERENCE
This message Refers to a classified Message ☐ Does not refer to a classified message ☐ (tick appropriate box) [39]	Page………................of [40] ……………………Pages

Comm/Gen Serial No	Sender Receiver Op	System	Time In/Out

PRECEDENCE GIVEN TO SIGNAL MESSAGES

Serial	Precedence	Definition, Use and Examples	Authority Required for the Allocation of Precedence (1)		
			NA	NN	NAF
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
1.	FLASH	FLASH precedence is reserved for initial enemy contact messages or operational combat messages of extreme urgency. Brevity is mandatory. Examples are: a. Initial enemy contact reports. b. Recall or diversion of friendly aircraft about to bomb targets unexpectedly occupied by friendly forces or messages initiating emergency action to prevent conflict between friendly forces. c. Warning of imminent large scale attack. d. Extremely urgent intelligence messages.	1. Members of the Army Council. 2. GOCs. 3. Commanders specially designated by 1 or 2 above. 4. Commanders of operational units directly affected.	1. Members of the Navy Board. 2. The Flag Officer Commanding may delegate officers to release messages for him and may issue instructions concerning the release of messages bearing certain degrees of precedence. 3. Specimens of these officers signatures are given to the COMMCEN and cryptographic office Before dispatch, a message is checked to ensure that it has been authorized by such officer. 4. Certain messages such as maneuvering and alarm messages may be authorized verbally.	1. Members of the Air Force Council. 2. Commander of major formations. 3. All officers in charge of HQ Nigerian Air Force Staff Branches. 4. Commanders specially designated by 1 or 2 above. 5. Authority may be delegated by those holding it to anyone whose duty it is to report enemy activity.
2.	IMMEDIATE	IMMEDIATE is the precedence reserved for very urgent messages relating to situations which gravely affect the security of national/allied forces. Example are:	1. Commanders not below the rank of lieutenant colonel.	1. Commanding officers of shore establishments of the rank of commander and above.	Staff Officers not below the rank of wing commander, station commanders and commanding officers of unit operating independently.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
		a. Report of unusual major movements of military forces of foreign powers in time of peace or strained relations. b. Messages, which report enemy counter attacks or which request or cancel additional support. c. Attack orders to commit a force in reserve without delay. d. Messages concerning logistics support of special weapons when essential to sustain operations. e. Reports of wide-spread civil disturbance. f. Reports of warning of grave natural disaster (earthquake, flood, storm etc). g. Request for or directions concerning distress assistance. h. Urgent intelligence messages. i. Aircraft movement reports (eg messages relating to requests for news of aircraft in flight, flight plans and cancellation messages to prevent unnecessary search and rescue action).	2. Staff officers and heads of Services not below the rank of brigadier general.	2. Commanding officers of ships. 3. Staff officers of the rank of commander and above.	Authority may be delegated to: a. Officers of operations rooms. b. Duty officers.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
3.	PRIORITY	PRIORITY is the precedence reserved for messages concerning the conduct of operations in progress and for other important and urgent matters when ROUTINE precedence will not suffice. Examples are: a. Situation reports on the position of a front where attack is impending or where fire and air support will soon be placed. b. Orders to aircraft formations or units to coincide with ground or naval operations. c. Messages concerning immediate movement of naval, air and ground forces.	1. Commanders of units and establishments 2. All staff officers. 3. Adjutants.	1. COs of shore establishments not below the rank of commander 2. Captain's secretaries.	1. All officers of the staff of a command or group HQ. 2. The CO of a station or unit and his deputy. 3. On the authority of a CO of a station of unit, those officers whose duties necessitate the frequent release of PRIORITY messages. The CO is to ensure that the COMMCEN holds a list of such authorized officers.
4.	ROUTINE	ROUTINE is the precedence to be used for all types of messages which justify transmission by rapid means but are not of sufficient urgency and importance to require higher precedence. Examples are: a. Messages concerning peace-time military operations, plans and projects. b. Messages concerning stabilized tactical operations. c. Operational plans concerning projected operations. d. Periodic or consolidated intelligence reports. e. Troop movement messages except when factors dictate the use of a higher precedence.	Any officer or warrant officer authorized to release messages.	Any officer authorized by the formation/establishment commander.	Any officer or warrant officer authorized to release messages.

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
		f. Supply and equipment requisition and movement messages, except when time factors dictate the use of a higher precedence. g. Administrative, logistics and personnel matters.			

Note:

1.   A duty officer may use any precedence or security classification within the authority of the officer he is representing.

EXAMPLE OF CONTINUOUS SIGNAL TEXT

DRAFTER'S NAME IN
BLOCK LETTERS

_____   FROM   75 STG _____   OO BOLAJI _____

PRECEDENCE – ACTION

PRIORITY   TO   99 ACTG _____

_____   _____   BRANCH   TOPS _____

PRECEDENCE – INFO   TELEPHONE NUMBER

ROUTINE _____   _____

DATE TIME GROUP MONTH   EXT 227 _____

                                                                           RELEASING OFFICER'S

27Ø7ØØZ JUL 11 _____   _____   SIGNATURE AND RANK

MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS

                                                                                                       SQN LDR ____

_____   _____   NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

(Message referring to a   _____

classified message must   INFO   HQ NAF _____   MAD HAMZA _____

be classified   HQ TAC _____

RESTRICTED or above)   HQ MC _____   DIG SERIAL NO

                                                      HQ TC _____   (if used)   75 STG/290Ø

RESTRICTED   HQ LC _____   (ORIGINATOR'S NUMBER)

_____   _____   _____

TEXT: EX   CRACKER   REF   MY   OPO   3/94   DTG   251445Z   AUG Ɵ
EX TIMINGS Ɵ ALPHA Ɵ FIRST SORTIE Ɵ Ø2Ø63ØZ SEP Ɵ BRAVO Ɵ SECOND
SORTIE Ɵ Ø21825Z SEPƟ EX ENDS Ø3223ØZ SEP Ɵ DEBRIEF Ø41ØØØ Z SEPƟ
ACK///

_____

_____

_____

_____

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION   FILE NUMBER OR REFERENCE
ADDL TO SDL: TOPS, LOG   75 STG/739/HQ

        refers to a classified
        Message (tick appropriate Box)   [✓]   Page _____1_____
                                                                                              of

Does not refer to a classified Message   [.]   1   PAGE

Comm/Gen Serial No | Sender Receiver Op | System | Time   In/Out

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EXAMPLE OF INDENTED SIGNAL TEXT

MESSAGE FORM

LINE 1		Serial No	
LINE 2		CHECK BOX	
LINE 3	DE	Routed by	
LINE 4		Time	
ROUTING		Perforated by	
INDICATORS		Time	

Precedence Action	Precedence Info Routine	Date Time Group Month 1312ØØSEP11	
- P -	- P -		FOR SINGLE TRANSIMISSION
FROM FC WEST			
TO SIRI			Transmitted to
			Channel No/System
			Time
			Operator
INFO NHQ			MESSAGE INSTRUCTIONS
FOC WEST			SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
FOC EAST			(Messages referring to a
YOLA			classified message must be
DOLPHIN MIRA			classified RESTRICTED or above
			RESTRICTED
GR			DIG SERIAL NO. (if used)

VISIT OF GERMAN WARSHIPS   ⊙

1 ⊙   THREE GERMAN CORVETTES AND A SUBMARINE ARRIVING LAGOS ON A FIVE DAY VISIT ⊙

2 ⊙   ETA LAGOS FWB 151Ø3Ø SEP ⊙

3 ⊙   TAKE YOLA AND DOLPHIN MIRA UNDER COMMAND AND ESCORT VISITING SHIPS INTO HARBOUR ⊙ ACK///

INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION	FILE NUMBER/REFERENCE WNC/419/2
	DRAFTER'S NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS SR SEKONI

Page 1	refers to a classified		TELEPHONE	BRANCH
Of	message. This message		NUMBER 212	X
1 Page	(tick appropriate box)		RELEASING OFFICER'S	RANK
	does not refer to a	✓	SIGNATURE *Dzharus*	CAPT
	Classified message			

FOR OPR'S USE	R	FILING/ TOR TIME / OPERATOR	SYSTEM	OPERATOR	FINAL CHECK OPERATOR	NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS TF ADEKOYA

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