

CHAPTER 9

COUNTERSIGNS AND PAROLE WORDS

87. General

The commanding officer (para 4 *a*) directs the use of the countersign and parole word.

- a.* The *countersign* is used in combat and, when necessary, in garrison.
- b.* The *parole* (word) is used to check on the countersign when inspecting guards.
- c.* Any person in time of war who discloses the parole word or countersign to any person not entitled to receive it, shall be punished by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct (Article 101, Uniform Code of Military Justice).

88. By Whom Authorized

If a countersign and parole word are prescribed, they are devised by the highest headquarters within a zone or area. This authority (app F) may be delegated to subordinate units so they can designate a countersign or parole immediately, if it becomes necessary; however, these units notify higher headquarters of such action without delay.

89. Selecting Countersigns--Challenge and Password

- a.* The choice of words or sounds is made with care. Words are selected that are difficult for the

9-1

enemy to pronounce and do not indicate the expected answer. When sounds are selected for use they should be distinctive and similar to those normally heard in the locality.

- b.* The use of the countersign is rigidly controlled and the initiative to use it rests with the challenger (guard). Mutual identification is essential; therefore, the person challenged should not give the password if he fails to recognize the challenge. The challenger (guard) will use only the challenge, never the password, except as prescribed in paragraph 92.

- c.* Positive identification by the guard of all persons claiming authority to pass is the main consideration. Persons whose sole means of identification is the password are not allowed to pass. If there is

a reasonable doubt of the challenged person's authority to pass, even if he gives the password, he apprehended and turned over to the commander on the relief for further investigation.

90. Using Countersigns

When a challenge and password are prescribed, the challenge is given by the guard after the person is advanced to be recognized. The password is given by the challenged person. The challenge and password are given in a low tone to prevent them from being overheard by others. For example, a guard at an ammunition dump observes a group approaching his post. While the group is far enough away (for the guard to take effective measures should the group rush him) he calls "Halt! Who is there?" After receiving an answer (such as "Sergeant

9-2

Black, Delta Company") indicating the group is friendly and that it may be authorized to pass, the guard says, "Advance, Sergeant Black, to be recognized." When Sergeant Black reaches a point where the challenge, spoken in a low tone, can be heard only by Sergeant Black, the guard again says, "Halt!" Then he gives the challenge in a low tone (e.g. "Rainbow"). After receiving the correct password from Sergeant Black (e.g. "Archer") and otherwise satisfying himself that Sergeant Black is authorized to pass, the guard says, "Advance, Sergeant Black." The guard then tells Sergeant Black to bring up his men and identify them as they pass (app F).

91. Parole Words

The commanding officer directs the use of a parole word. *It is a secret word imparted only to those persons entitled to inspect the guard and to commanders and members of the guard.* It is used as a check on the countersign.

92. Using Parole Words

a. The parole word is used by authorized persons to inspect the guards. When the inspector gives a guard the parole word, the guard gives the inspector *both parts* (the *challenge* and the *password*) of the countersign. *The guard does not use the password*

at any other time. The parole word may be used before or after the hours of challenging; the inspector gives the parole word when he is close enough to prevent it from being overheard by unauthorized persons. Upon hearing the parole word, the guard

9-3

knows that he is being inspected by an authorize person. The guard then repeats both parts of the countersign (challenge and password).

b. When used during the hours of challenging, the inspector does not give the parole word until he is advanced to a position near the guard. After being advanced to be recognized, the inspector would then use the parole word and the guard gives him both parts of the countersign. If the guard challenges the inspector with the first part of the countersign, the inspector answers with the parole word instead of the password. The guard then gives the password to the inspector. If the inspector does not wish to reveal his official capacity while inspecting the guard he gives an answer such as “friend” when halted by the guard. Examples of using the parole word: The countersign is “Rainbow-Archer” and the parole word is “Sunshine.” During daylight hours the officer of the day (or any person authorized to inspect the guard) approaches a guard. The guard salutes the officer at the appropriate time. When the officer of the day is close enough to the guard he gives the parole word by saying “Sunshine” in a low tone to prevent it from being overheard. The guard answers by saying “Rainbow-Archer.” This is to insure that the guard knows both parts of the countersign.

c. If the guard halts the officer of the day during the hours for challenging and receives the reply “friend,” then the guard says, “Advance, friend, to be recognized.” When the officer of the day is close enough to be recognized, the guard again halts him. The officer of the day then says, “Sunshine.” The

9-4

guard answers “Rainbow-Archer.” If the guard challenges the officer of the day with the *challenge* he says, “Halt, Rainbow.” The officer of the day

answers, “Sunshine,” giving the parole word instead of the password. The guard then answers, “Archer.”

9-5

APPENDIX A

REFERENCES

AR 190-2

AR 190-4

AR 210-10

AR 220-45

AR 220-90

AR 310-25

AR 600-25

AR 635-212

AR 840-10

Installation Confinement Facilities.

Uniform Treatment of Military Prisoners.
Administration.

Duty Rosters.

Army Bands.

Dictionary of United States Army
Terms.

Salutes, Honors, and Visits of
Courtesy.

Discharge-Unfitness and
Unsuitability.

Description and Use of Flags, Guidons,
Tabards, and Automobile Plates.

The Military Policeman.

Confinement and Correctional
Treatment of Military Prisoners.

Drill and Ceremonies.

Uniform Code of Military Justice; Articles—
Apprehension.

Imposition of Restraint.

Reports and Receiving of Prisoners.

Releasing Prisoner Without Proper
Authority.

Unlawful Detention of Another.

Improper Use of Countersign.

Misbehavior of Sentinel on Lookout.

FM 19-5

FM 19-60

FM 22-5

7.

9.

11.

96.

97.

101.

113.

A-