

Terminology

as a Tool for Interoperability

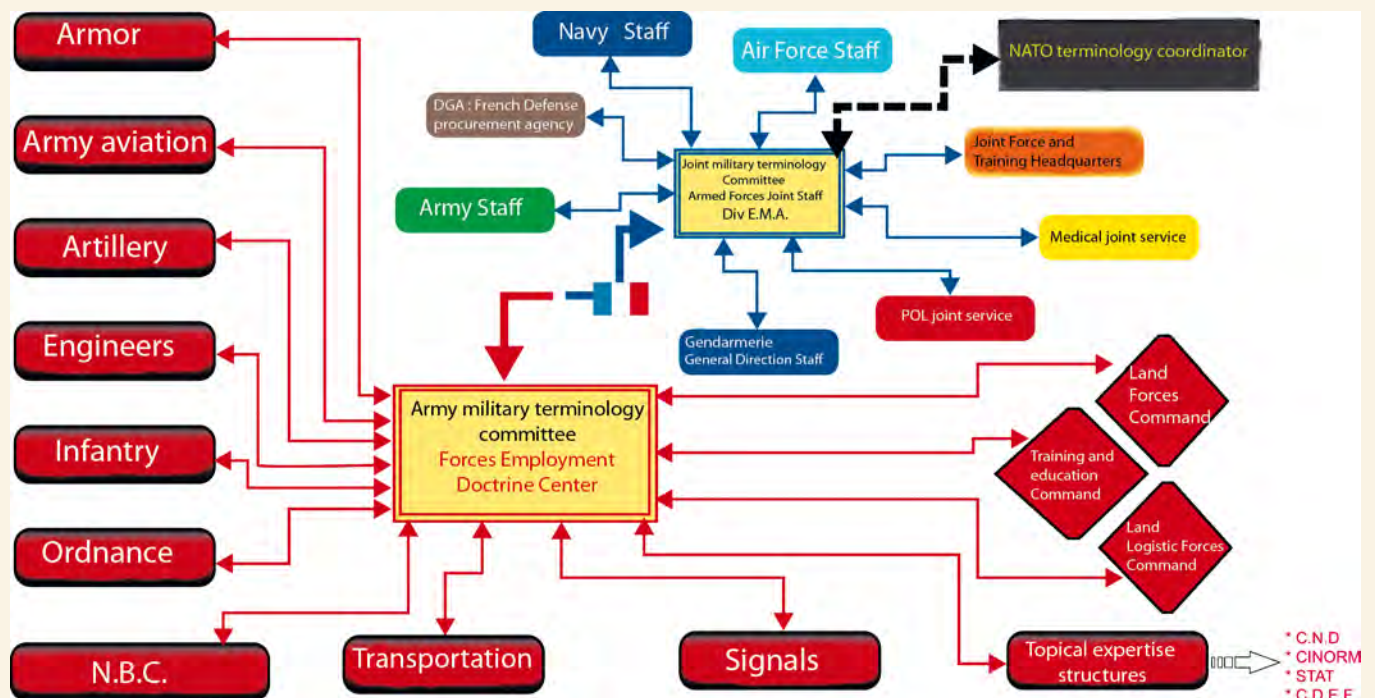
Interoperability has been defined by the Armed forces joint staff as “the capability for several systems, units or bodies to operate together thanks to the compatibility of their organizations, doctrines, procedures, equipment and respective relations”. It necessitates even before “working together” to be able to speak together and to understand each other. To speak together is **to use a common language, a terminology**, the latter being defined as “a set of technical words pertaining to a science or an art, to a researcher or a group of researchers”. This terminology must match a vocabulary specific to the military and defense activities. It clarifies the exact meaning to be given to each term or expression. It is thus **the indispensable tool for any conceptual or doctrinal thinking** between the Branches and the Services in a national framework or within alliances or international organizations such as NATO, the UNO or still the EU.

BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL RAMUNTCHO GARDERES, CDEF/DEO¹

The need for terminological coherence within our Army has been taken into account in 1999 and resulted in the creation of an **Army military terminology committee** within the Doctrine and Higher military education Command. Initially created to update a manual for the use of terms and expressions of the

Army military vocabulary it progressively imposed its participation to the military terminology authorities at national as well as international level. A **joint military terminology committee** ensures the same coherence at joint level with an international dimension notably with NATO. As early as 1959, France decided

to create an Atlantic Alliance joint military terminology committee in order to perform “in liaison with our French speaking allies and for the sake of interoperability the realization and harmonization of the definitions and translations proposed by the Standardization military office”.



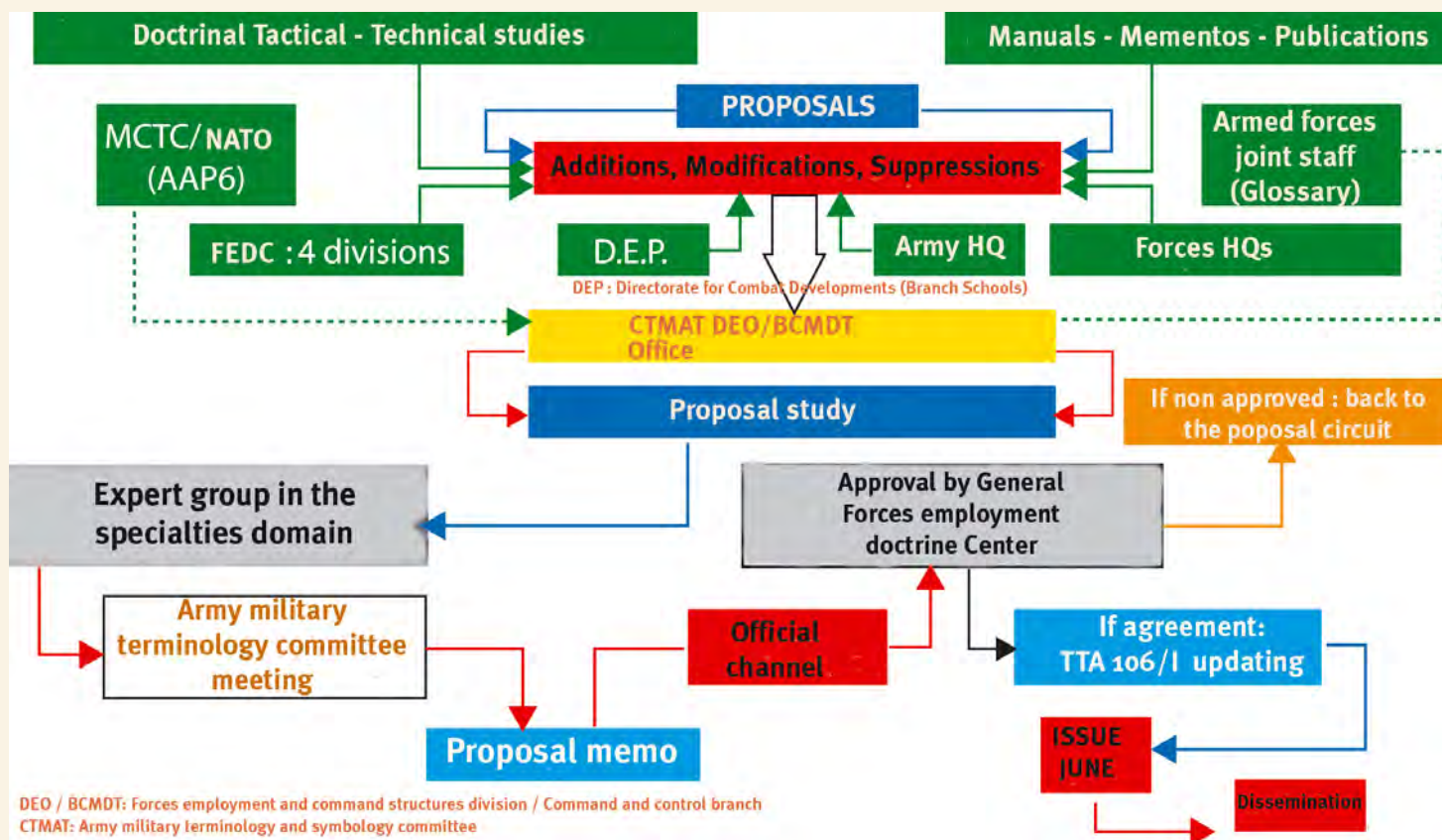
CND: Defense National Council
CDEF: Forces employment doctrine center

CINORM : Standardization joint committee
DCCAT: Army Quartermaster central direction

STAT: Army division of the French Defense procurement agency

Army - Services terminological liaison chain

lessons learned



Operation of the Army terminological internal liaison chain

Within the two national committees, the harmonization procedures between the Branches at the level of the Army military terminology Committee and between the Services at the level of the Armed forces Joint terminology Committee are similar to ensure a large coherence between the Army terminology and that of the other Services. A national reference document in the terminology domain, **the manual for the use of military terms and conventional acronyms ("TTA 106")** is issued each year. A second part to this same manual more specifically deals with the whole military tactical symbol science.

This **document has been totally bilingual (French and English languages) for more than three years.** It regularly takes into account the last doctrinal evolutions likely to favor the combined, joint interoperability and the cooperation between France and its partners in the Alliance in the domains of drafting doctrines, implementing operational functions, executing and

conducting operations (peace keeping operations as well as crises response operations), combined exercises and training, information and communication systems, etc. The choice of the login is made depending upon their importance and their usage frequency. Every year the joint terminological base and more especially the one dealing with the doctrinal, tactical and logistic domains is adapted to the evolutions.

The second part of this national document more specifically deals with the **joint tactical symbology** and proposes a particularly comprehensive data base about the missions, the units, the equipment, the assets and installations of the French armed forces. The whole symbology has been integrated in the tree diagram defined by the NATO document [STANAG 2019/ App-6(B)]. Through generated alphanumerical codes the latter permits multiple possibilities of tactical and logistical exchanges via information

and communication systems between allies (NATO, PFP or coalition). In the middle term these links should permit **thanks to the CISs to ensure a perfect interoperability with the European Union.**

The Army military terminology committee is a proposal, combined arms coordination and dialogue medium. It is responsible for the coherence between the different positions expressed by each Branch and for establishing a synthesis aiming at avoiding confusions or language mistakes and then to issue a combined arms terminology this "language common to all the Branches". Since it has to ensure within the Army the terminological and symbological coherence and because it is aware of the need "to be heard and understood" by the other Services, the **Army military terminology committee inserted itself as a mandatory link in the terminology and symbology chain of the armed forces.**

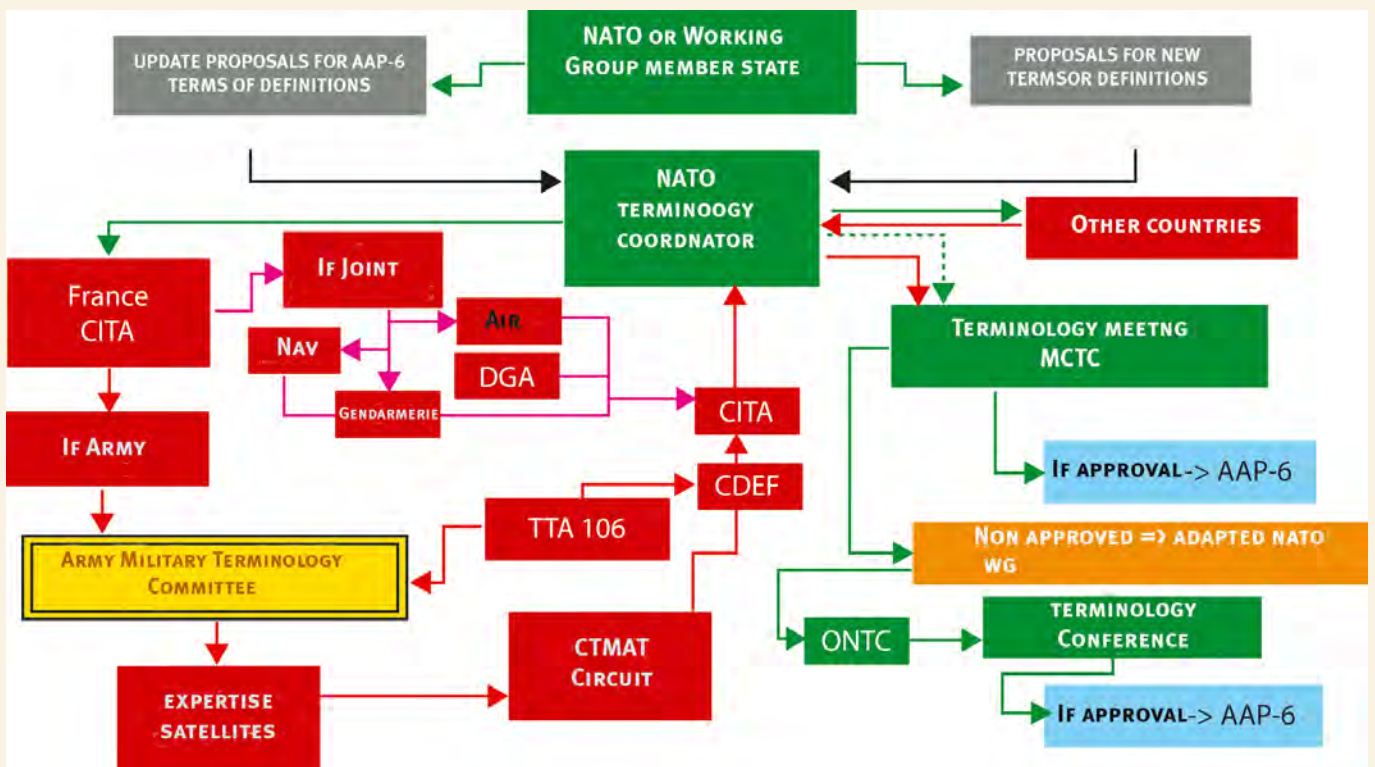
Starting from the same needs but expressed at **joint level the joint military terminology committee** issued a **joint glossary about operational terminology**. This glossary is the result of studies conducted in the domain of the joint and multinational operations with the participation of various actors involved in recent actions. It takes into account the most recent evolutions notably in the works in progress within the different international organizations (NATO, EU, UNO, ECSO, bi or multinational working groups, national think-tank joint groups). It has been drafted in coordination with the works of the national and international terminology authorities. It responds to the need to have a **standardized operational military vocabulary, adapted to the new national and international realities**. This set of terms and definitions is a tool of interoperability with our allies and partners. It is meant to facilitate the understanding of the French concepts when they are presented during international meetings. It is similar to the glossary of the Land forces proposed in the English language.

For the last four years the Army has been conducting on the authority of the Chief of Staff of the armed forces the studies and works for the Joint military terminology committee. It is a proposal, coordination and dialogue medium. It is responsible for the coherence between the different positions expressed by each Service. It establishes a synthesis aiming at avoiding confusions or language mistakes and then it issues a joint terminology. In the framework of the **interdepartmental terminological interoperability** it also contributes to the drafting of ministerial decrees dealing with the French language in the military application domains of defense.

Among the international terminology organizations the joint committee, through the **general commission for terminology** and the **general delegation for the French language** and the languages in France, has numerous contacts and exchanges with the terminology services of the Swiss Confederation, the Belgium royal academy and the terminology services of the Quebec province.

But it is essentially with the terminology services of the **Alliance standardization agency** that the Joint and Army terminology committees perform a large part of the needs for coordination and harmonization of the military and defense terminology between France, NATO and its different member states. Indeed since the recognition on an equal footing in 1949 of English and French as the two official languages of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the need to bring them closer and to harmonize the military terms they use stood out as an evidence. From that time the different standardization and terminology works devoted to this goal must enable the French speaking and English speaking persons a mutual understanding and the drafting for the NATO member states of bilingual reference texts.

The diagram hereunder shows in a simplified way the organization and the operation of the **relations between the French committees** for the harmonization and standardization of the Army **and joint terminology and the committee of the NATO standardization Agency**.



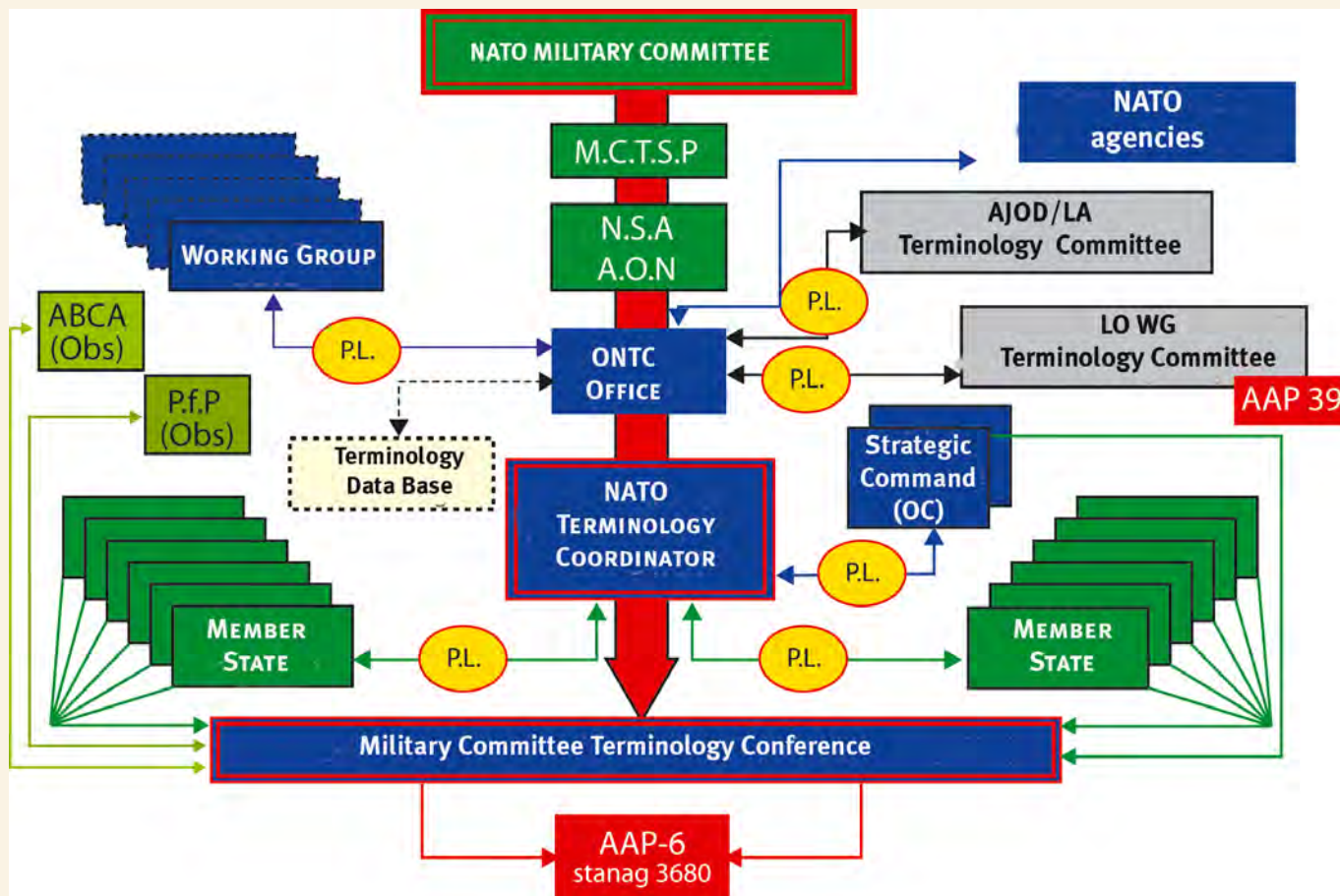
CITA: Atlantic Alliance joint military terminology committee
 DGA: French Defense Procurement Agency

CTMAT: Army military terminology and symbology committee
 CDEF: Forces employment doctrine center

France (combined and joint) and NATO terminological liaison chain

Lessons learned

Today implementing the terminological chain within the Alliance is conducted according to the following diagram:



Implementation of the terminological interoperability among NATO military committee

Implementing and modernizing the “terminology” tool is not only a concern for our country, it has consequences on all the operations in which we are likely to work with other nations.

Indeed terminology permits numerous works to be concluded by **standardization agreements** concerning equipment as well as doctrine, tactics, education, tactical and procedure publications, information exchanges and sharing of lessons learned about training as well as operations.

1 Forces Employment Doctrine Center/Forces Employment and Command Structures division.

2 Comité de terminologie militaire de l'armée de terre (CTMAT).

3 Comité interarmées de terminologie militaire de l'Alliance atlantique (CITA).

Terminology has long been neglected or even ignored. Now it is recognized as **an indispensable tool for any action aiming at interoperability of the armed forces** designed to be committed in a context which from now on is most of the time multinational.

Developing the terminology tool is also contributing to **the influence of the French military thinking**.