

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1-1. General

Visual signals are any means of communication that require sight and can be used to transmit prearranged messages rapidly over short distances. This includes the devices and means used for the recognition and identification of friendly forces.

1-2. Types of Visual Signals

The most common types of visual signals are arm-and-hand, flag, pyrotechnic, and ground-to-air signals. However, soldiers are not limited to the types of signals discussed and may use what is available. Chemical light sticks, flashlights, and other items can be used provided their use is standardized within a unit and understood by soldiers and units working in the area. The only limit is the soldier's initiative and imagination.

1-3. Limitations

Visual signals have certain limitations

- a. The range and reliability of visual communications are significantly reduced during periods of poor visibility and when terrain restricts observation.
- b. They may be misunderstood.
- c. They are vulnerable to enemy interception and may be used for deception purposes.