

## Chapter II—Signals

### GENERAL

**PURPOSE.** Signals are used for transmitting essential commands and warnings under conditions rendering verbal commands or warnings inadequate.

**KINDS.** The kinds of signals ordinarily used are sound and visual. Touch signals may also be used, as in tanks, or during night operations.

Sound signals include signals by bugles, whistles, sirens, vehicle horns, or other sound devices such as fire alarms, gas alarms, or the firing of weapons. Special sound signals may be used on night patrols as prescribed by the patrol leader or higher authority.

Visual signals include signals made by using the arms and hands, flags, lights, panels, and pyrotechnics. Pyrotechnic signals are usually prescribed in operation orders. Tanks may use flag signals. Military police use arm-and-hand and light signals to direct traffic. Motor vehicle operators use signals in motor marches or drills with vehicles. Additional signals may be improvised and used appropriately. Visual signals, in the restricted sense used in this chapter, do not include semaphore flag codes, blinker light codes, and panel codes.

**GENERAL RULES.** Subordinate commanders repeat signals or give commands to their units whenever necessary to insure prompt and correct execution.

Unless the signal is preparatory, execution of the movement indicated commences as soon as the signal is completed and understood.

**AIR OR TANK WARNING.** The following signals are used by observers of all arms and services in transmitting warning of the approach or presence of enemy aircraft, parachute troops, or mechanized vehicles:

Three long blasts of a whistle, vehicular horn, klaxon, or siren repeated several times; three equally spaced shots with rifle or pistol;\* or three short bursts of fire from machine gun or other automatic weapon.

In daylight, the individual giving the signal points in the direction of the danger; at night, the signal is supplemented by voice warning to indicate the direction of danger.

### WHISTLE SIGNALS

**GENERAL.** Whistle signals are confined to ATTENTION TO ORDERS, CEASE

\* Also alarm in case of fire. Sentinel fires three shots in rapid succession.

FIRING, and AIR OR TANK WARNING. Whistles are sparingly used, and with due regard to the possibility that they may convey a warning to the enemy.

**ATTENTION.** Sound a short blast of the whistle. The signal is used to fix the attention of troops or of their commanders and leaders preparatory to giving commands, orders, or other signals.

**CEASE FIRING.** Sound a long blast of the whistle. This signal is verified at once by an arm-and-hand signal or by other means.

**AIR OR TANK WARNING.** Three long blasts, repeated several times.

### GENERAL ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS

**GENERAL.** If a movement is to be executed by a particular subordinate unit or units of a command, a signal designating the unit or units is given before the signal for the movements. Unless otherwise indicated, when giving the signal, face the unit or persons for whom the signal is intended.

**ATTENTION.** Move hand above head rapidly from side to side. (See Plate 11, Figure 1.)

**READY? REPORT WHEN READY: I AM READY: PREPARE TO MOVE.** Extend the arm toward the leader or individual for whom the signal is intended, hand raised, fingers extended and joined, palm toward the leader. (See Plate 11, Figure 2.)

**FORWARD: TO THE RIGHT (LEFT): TO THE REAR.** Face and move in the desired direction of march; at the same time, extend the hand vertically to the full extent of the arm, palm to the front, and lower the arm and hand in the direction of movement until horizontal. (See Plate 11, Figure 3.)

**HALT.** Thrust the hand upward vertically to the full extent of the arm and hold it in that position until the signal is understood. (See Plate 11, Figure 4.)

**DOWN; TAKE COVER.** Turn toward the unit or group and raise the hand, palm down, in front of the elbow, forearm horizontal; thrust the hand and forearm downward about 12 inches and return to original position. (See Plate 11, Figure 5.)

**DOUBLE TIME; INCREASE SPEED; RUSH.** Carry the hand to the shoulder, fist closed; rapidly thrust the fist upward vertically to the full extent of the arm and back to the shoulder several times. (See Plate 11, Figure 6.)

**QUICK TIME; DECREASE SPEED; WALK (if already at a faster gait).** Raise the elbow to a position above and to the right (left) of the shoulder and extend the forearm to the left (right), hand above the head, palm to the front. (See Plate 11, Figure 7.)

**CHANGE DIRECTION; SHIFT FIRE.** Carry the hand that is on the side toward the new direction across the body to the opposite shoulder and, with the palm turned in the direction of shift, swing the forearm in a horizontal arc, extending the arm and hand to point in the new direction. (See Plate 11, Figure 8.)

**ACTION, ASSAULT FIRE.** Thrust the fist several times in the direction toward which it is desired to go into action. (See Plate 11, Figure 9.)

**OUT OF ACTION.** Strike the closed fist of one hand rapidly several times against the open palm of the other. (See Plate 11, Figure 10.)

**JOIN ME; FOLLOW ME.** Point toward the person(s) desired, and beckon them to you. (See Plate 11, Figure 11.)

**COVER OUR ADVANCE.** Repeatedly strike top of helmet with open hand. (See Plate 11, Figure 12.)

**SQUAD.** Extend one arm toward the squad leader, palm of the hand down; distinctly move the hand up and down several times, holding the arm steady. (See Plate 11, Figure 13.)

**SECTION.** Extend one arm toward the section leader, palm of the hand down, and describe large vertical circles. (See Plate 11, Figure 14.)

**PLATOON.** Extend both arms toward the leader(s) for whom the signal is intended and describe large vertical circles. (See Plate 11, Figure 15.)

**COLUMN.** Extend arm horizontally straight to front, palm down; then drop it smartly to the side. (See Plate 11, Figure 16.)

**SQUAD DIAMOND.** Raise both arms over the head, elbows slightly bent and fingertips touching. (See Plate 11, Figure 17.)

**AS SKIRMISHERS; FORM LINE.** Raise both arms laterally until horizontal, arms and hands extended, palms down. (See Plate 11, Figure 18.)

**AS SKIRMISHERS AR TEAM RIGHT (LEFT).** Raise both arms laterally until horizontal; swing arm, on side toward which AR team is to move, upward until vertical and back immediately to the horizontal position; repeat movement several times; hold the other arm steadily in the horizontal position until signal is completed. (See Plate 11, Figure 19.)

**PLATOON WEDGE.** Extend both arms downward and to the side at an angle of 45° below the horizontal. (See Plate 11, Figure 20.)

**PLATOON VEE.** Extend both arms upward and to the side at an angle of 45° above the horizontal. (See Plate 11, Figure 21.)

**PLATOON ECHELON RIGHT (LEFT).** Extend the arm, on the side toward which the column is to be echeloned downward to the side at an angle of 45° below the horizontal; extend the other arm upward and to the side at an angle of 45° above the horizontal. (See Plate 11, Figure 22.)

**MARCH COLUMN.** Extend both arms horizontally straight to the front, palms down, then let them drop smartly to the sides. (See Plate 11, Figure 23.)

**ASSEMBLE.** Raise the hand vertically to the full extent of the arm, fingers extended and joined, and describe large horizontal circles with the hand and arm. (See Plate 11, Figure 24.)

**ENEMY IN SIGHT.** Hold the rifle horizontal above the head with the arms extended. (See Plate 11, Figure 25.)

**RANGE OR BATTLE SIGHT.** Extend the arm fully toward the leader or men for whom the signal is intended, with the fist closed. This is the signal that the range is to be announced. If no other signal follows, it means that the setting will be battle sight. If a range other than battle sight is desired, open the fist, and expose one finger for each 100 yards of range. (See Plate 11, Figure 26.)

**COMMENCE FIRING.** Extend the arm and hand waist high in front of the body to their full extent, palm of the hand down; move them several times through a wide horizontal arc. (See Plate 11, Figure 27.)

**CHANGE ELEVATION.** Indicate the complete new range.

**ELEVATE; DEPRESS.** Extend one arm toward the gunner(s) concerned, with the palm of the hand toward the ground. Move the hand in a short upward (downward) movement by flexing it at the wrist, exposing one finger for each mil the gun is to be elevated (depressed). (See Plate 11, Figure 28.)

**FIRE ONE ROUND.** Face the gunner for whom the signal is intended, and extend one arm above the head. Cut the arm sharply downward. (See Plate 11, Figure 29.)

**FIRE FASTER.** Execute rapidly the signal COMMENCE FIRING. For machine guns, the signal indicates a change to the next higher rate of fire.

**FIRE SLOWER.** Execute slowly the signal COMMENCE FIRING. For machine guns, the signal indicates a change to the next lower rate of fire.

**CEASE FIRING.** Raise the hand in front of the forehead, palm to the front, and swing it and the forearm up and down several times in front of the face. (See Plate 11, Figure 30.)

**FIX BAYONETS.** Simulate the movement of the right hand in removing a bayonet from its scabbard and fixing it on a rifle. (See Plate 11, Figure 31.)

**MOUNT; LOAD TRUCKS; ON CARTS.** Extend the arm horizontally to the side, palm up, and wave it upward several times. (See Plate 11, Figure 32.)

**DISMOUNT; OFF CARTS; UNLOAD TRUCKS.** Extend the arm horizontally to the side, palm down, and wave it downward several times. (See Plate 11, Figure 33.)



Figure 1. Attention



Figure 2. Ready?  
Report when ready  
I am ready  
Prepare to move



Figure 3. Forward:  
To the right (left)  
To the rear



Figure 4. Halt



Figure 5. Down, take cover



Figure 6. Double time  
Increase speed  
Rush

PLATE II. ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS



Figure 7. Quick time  
Decrease speed  
Walk



Figure 8. Change direction  
Shift fire



Figure 9. Action  
Assault fire



Figure 10. Out of action



Figure 11. Join me  
Follow me



Figure 12. Cover our advance



Figure 13. Squad



Figure 14. Section



Figure 15. Platoon



Figure 16. Squad column or platoon column



Figure 17. Squad diamond



Figure 18. As skirmishers (squad) or platoon line



Figure 19. As skirmishers: AR team  
right (left)  
(In direction of moving arm)

PLATE II. ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS—Continued



Figure 20. Platoon wedge



Figure 21. Platoon vee



Figure 22. Platoon echelon  
right (left)

PLATE II. ARM-AND-HAND SIGNALS—Continued



Figure 23. March column



Figure 24. Assemble



Figure 25. Enemy in sight



Figure 26. Range or battle sight



Figure 27. Commence firing



Figure 28. Elevate depress