

## Chapter 1

# AirLand and Marine Air-Ground Task Force Operations

### 1-1. Introduction

Visual information (VI) is an integral part of signal information management support in AirLand Operations working with communications, automation, records management, and printing and publications. For the Marine Corps, VI is a critical part of Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) operations providing combat camera (COMCAM) imagery acquisition, imagery processing and duplication, and imagery retrieval and distribution. Beginning with preparation for AirLand Operations, all levels of command must be kept informed on the conditions and actions in the combat zone leading up to war. Battlefield commanders and strategic planners need accurate images of conditions and events before, during, and immediately after tactical operations. Commanders and staffs who are aware of critical events can react quickly and decisively to counter enemy strengths and exploit weaknesses. Visual imagery will assist commanders at all levels to make informed decisions about effective use of combat, combat support, and combat service support assets on the battlefield.

### 1-2. Definitions

VI is the use of one or more visual media, with or without sound, to communicate information. This includes conventional still photography, digital still video (DSV), motion video recording, conventional motion picture, manual and computer-generated illustrations, visual mono- and multimedia presentation services, and audio recordings.

**NOTE:** The terms VI, tactical VI, and COMCAM are used interchangeably by the Marine Corps throughout this manual.

a. Tactical VI is documentation of military operations — the processing, transmitting, reproducing, and distributing of visual imagery, graphics production, and the operation of video teleconferencing (VTC) and multimedia presentation services within the theater or tactical environment. Tactical VI includes COMCAM and functional VI services performed in a tactical environment. (See Chapter 5.)

(1) COMCAM is the visual documentation of ground, sea, and air actions of United States (US), allied, and hostile armed forces in combat and combat support operations, and in related peacetime training activities such as exercises, war games, and operations.

(2) The functional user establishes, installs, operates, and performs operational maintenance of organic VI systems and equipment for the functional commander.

b. Joint operations are military operations involving one or more of the military services when tasked through the Joint Operation Planning System (JOPS) by direction of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

### 1-3. Mission

Tactical VI provides commanders and staffs with visual products and services in support of all functional areas including operations, command and control, logistics, military intelligence (MI), engineers, public affairs (PA), personnel, medical, military police (MP), Special Forces (including Marine Special Operations Capable [SOC] units), psychological operations (PSYOP), civil affairs, and military history (including Marine Corps command chronology and historical report requirements).

#### 1-4. Exclusions

The following functions are excluded from provisions of this manual in accordance with Army Regulation (AR) 25-1 and Marine Corps Order (MCO) 5290.4:

- Photomechanical reproduction, cartography, x-ray, and microfilm or microfiche production.
- Command and control information displayed on or imbedded in weapons systems.
- Imagery collected exclusively for surveillance, reconnaissance, or intelligence, and VI equipment integrated in reconnaissance-collecting vehicles.
- Images used in cryptological operations.
- American Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) facilities, services, and associated products.
- Visual images from self-processing (diffusion transfer process) still camera equipment used for generating identification or security badges.

#### 1-5. The Threat

a. The threat to VI systems will be both physical and electronic. As new systems such as DSV are perfected, the electronic threat will increase.

(1) Automated systems could be damaged or destroyed by electromagnetic pulse (EMP). VI will also assume the vulnerabilities of the communications

system used to transmit information. Potential adversaries possess various weapons systems that can interfere with or destroy friendly VI support systems. Threat forces use conventional; nuclear, biological, chemical; or directed energy weapons to physically damage, destroy, or disrupt COMCAM soldiers, VI operations, and communication systems. Signal information support systems are susceptible to electronic degradation by EMP.

(2) The chemical threat can be neutralized through—

- Avoidance—the most important and effective measure.
- Collective protective overpressure systems (built into newer systems and facilities) or protective measures that protect soldiers and equipment.
- Decontamination—a process which can do more damage to the VI equipment than the chemicals they are designed to neutralize.

b. The threat response to VI capability is expected to be slight and then indirect. Since images will be transmitted using existing signal tactical communications systems, the threat of interception at that point is the same as the threat of interception of any tactical communication. The threat would have to possess the proper transponder in order to intercept satellite transmissions of images. Images can be converted to digital form, encrypted, and transmitted with the required security classification. Analog image signals can be transmitted through secure telephone units using available technology.