# Psychological Operations and Influence-Focused Symbology

**August 2021**

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**HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**

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# Iconography and Symbols

Icons are fundamental to creating visual representations of the operational environment in the form of symbols; icons and other information combine to make symbols. Rather than being a difficult, confusing process to create a symbol for use on a map or overlay, the steps are simple once the system is understood. A properly composed symbol contains key information that shows at a glance types of military units, their location, activities, and much more.

The entire point of using symbols and icons is to graphically depict "…a unit, equipment, installation,activity, control measure, or tactical task relevant to military operations that is used for planning or to represent the common operational picture on a map, display, or overlay." (FM 1-02.2) Icons and symbols represent the reality on the ground in terms of anything that can be directly observed, touched, heard, and so on, and depict on a map or other display what occurs in the physical world.

*Note:* Military iconography and symbols are not applicable to activities, actions, and so on, executed in non-physical realms such as cyberspace because they do not represent anything tangible in the operational environment. The development of icons and symbols addressed the need to depict aspects of the physical world on a map.

For ease of use in all conditions, display systems, and common understanding, symbol-building must adhere to joint and Army rules. The primary references for Department of Defense (DOD) icons and other symbology are MIL-STD-2525D (as of June 2014) for joint operations and FM 1-02.1 for Army operations.

*Note:* For further information on military symbols, refer to FM 1-02.2. (ADP 1-02 is an obsolete publication, which provides reference and is listed in the Obsolete Publications section of the references for this GTA.)

## The Basics

All symbols begin with an icon, which is an abstract picture or alphanumeric designation of units, equipment, installations, or activities. An icon, combined with other key information, forms a symbol. Combined with metadata[1] (modifiers and amplifiers), the resulting detailed symbol provides key information a commander and staff can view and understand at a glance. Figure 1-1 illustrates a piece of foreign military equipment—a Russian Krasukha mobile, ground-based, electronic warfare (EW) system.
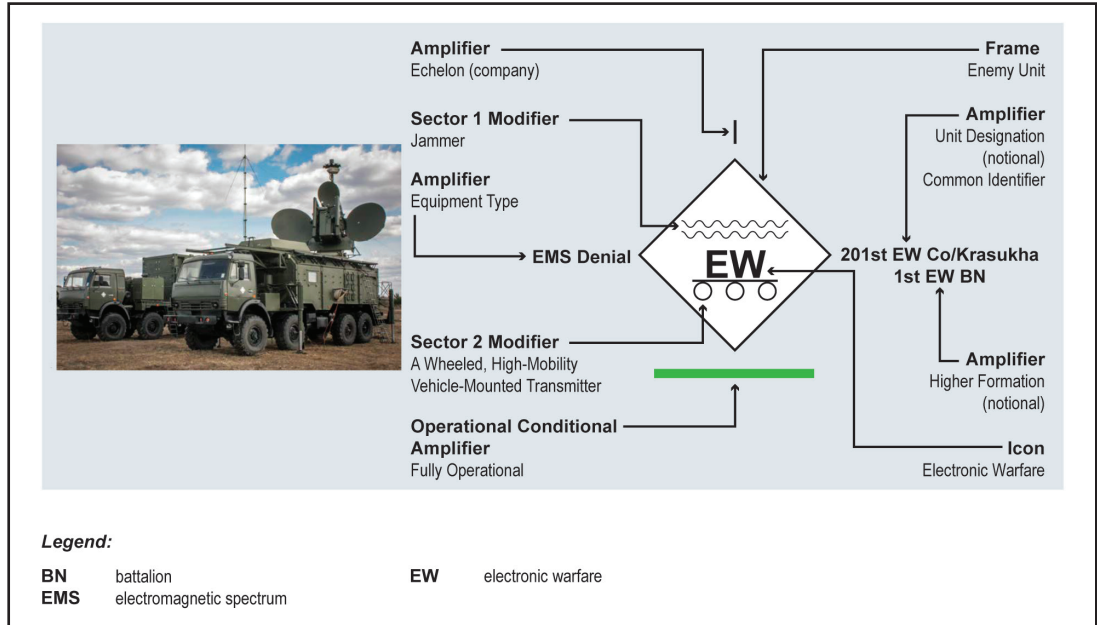


**Figure 1-1. Example equipment and associated symbol with elements**

[1] Metadata: data that provides information about other data. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019)
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/metadata

In terms of incorporating symbology into a map, figure 1-2 depicts a notional city with possible demonstrations, a selected target (a hostile group), a specific message, and the delivery platform employed to get the message to the target.

As in figure 1-2, the map symbols on a notional map depict several bits of key information. First, the map shows likely demonstration areas, known locations of a hostile group, as well as improvised explosive device incidents. Overlaid on the previous information are the location of nearby cell phone towers and their broadcast footprints (coverage areas), as well as the location of a specific enemy target audience (TA) and the message (WR denotes



**Known Enemy Locations**

XX 12 A 02 ab WR 0231

**Previous IED Incidents**

**Likely Demonstration Areas**

*Notes:*
XX 12 A 02 ab WR 0231 is the unique number for a specific message delivered via cell phone text message.

*Legend:*

selected target audience

broadcast footprint of cell phone transmission towers used to reach target audience

cellular telephone transmission tower
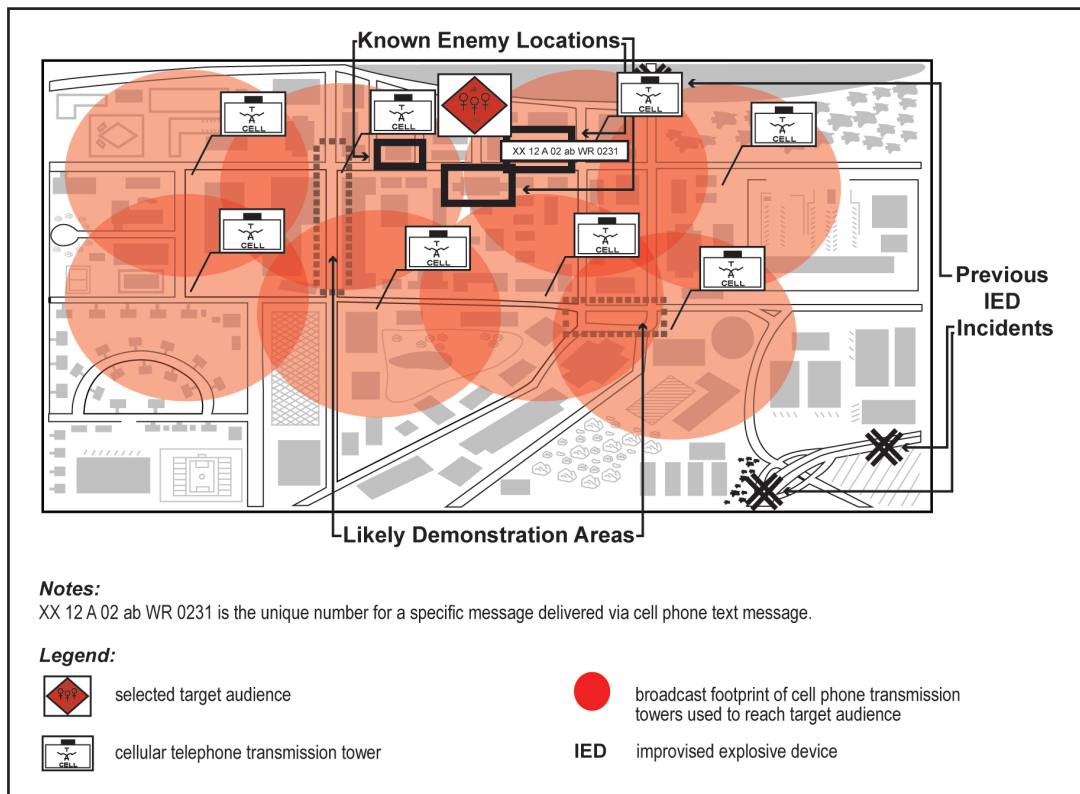
IED    improvised explosive device

**Figure 1-2. Example target audience and message symbol usage on a map overlay**

a "wireless message," more specifically a text message). The map and symbology provide details using standardized symbols that a viewer can read at a glance. Planners and decisionmakers rely on such depictions to plan, execute, and assess the effectiveness of operations. Symbols allow the rapid updating of information to depict the most current status of the operational environment for situational understanding and further planning.

## Key Icons and Symbols

For Psychological Operations (PSYOP) forces, the basic icon denoting units, forces, equipment, and facilities is the loudspeaker. While the speaker depicts an activity that constitutes only a small portion of the operations and activities of PSYOP forces, it has the benefit of wide recognition. Most experienced land forces instantly associate the speaker with PSYOP forces. In lieu of a newer, better icon, the speaker will likely remain the PSYOP branch icon for the foreseeable future. Figure 1-3 depicts the speaker icon in both unfilled and filled types. Which one is applicable depends on the format for use, such as on a map overlay or computer.
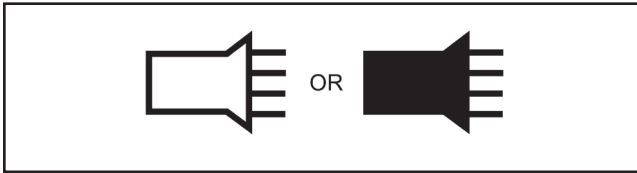


**Figure 1-3. Psychological Operations speaker icon**

Aside from the PSYOP speaker icon, other capabilities and forces have their own icons. Figure 1-4, page 5, depicts examples of different icons used in symbol-building that are also frequently applicable to the activities of PSYOP forces.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unmanned Aircraft<br>Unmanned Aerial Vehicle<br>Unmanned Aircraft System | Civil Affairs | Army Aviation<br>Aviation Rotary Wing | Electronic<br>Warfare |
| Individual<br>(Civilian) | Group or Organization<br>(Civilian) | Armor Protected<br>Vehicle | Safe House |
| Graffiti | Improvised Explosive Device<br>Suicide Bomber | Demonstration<br>Civil Disturbance | Polling Place<br>Election |

**Figure 1-4. Example icons with explanation**

## Framing

Icons are only the start of a symbol. A frame typically encompasses an icon, and the specific type of frame shows whether the symbol depicted is a person, place, thing, or activity. Computer-based maps will also use colors to more clearly differentiate whatever frame shape is being depicted. Specific colors mean the following:

- Blue—friendly or assumed friend.

- Green—neutral.

- Red—hostile or suspect.

- Yellow—unknown or pending.

Furthermore, the specific shape and orientation shows the icon status as either friendly, hostile, neutral, or unknown. However, an icon may be unframed, so color may be the only means to determine identity (friend or foe). Figure 1-5, page 7, provides a comprehensive list of frame shapes and their corresponding meanings.

| Standard Identity | Unit | Land Equipment | Installation | Activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friendly | | | | |
| Assumed Friend | | | | |
| Hostile | | | | |
| Suspect | | | | |
| Neutral | | | | |
| Unknown | | | | |
| Pending | | | | |



**Figure. 1-5. Frame shapes for standard identities (from ADP 1-02)**

When frames are used, icons are placed inside using a graphic tool called an octagon. The octagon provides reference points for precise placement and helps ensure consistency and clarity for the graphics, but is not part of the final symbol. Figure 1-6 depicts the PSYOP icon within an octagon to show placement.

Additional information goes in specific locations so readers can consistently glean the same types of data in all types of symbols. This additional information consists of modifiers and amplifiers.
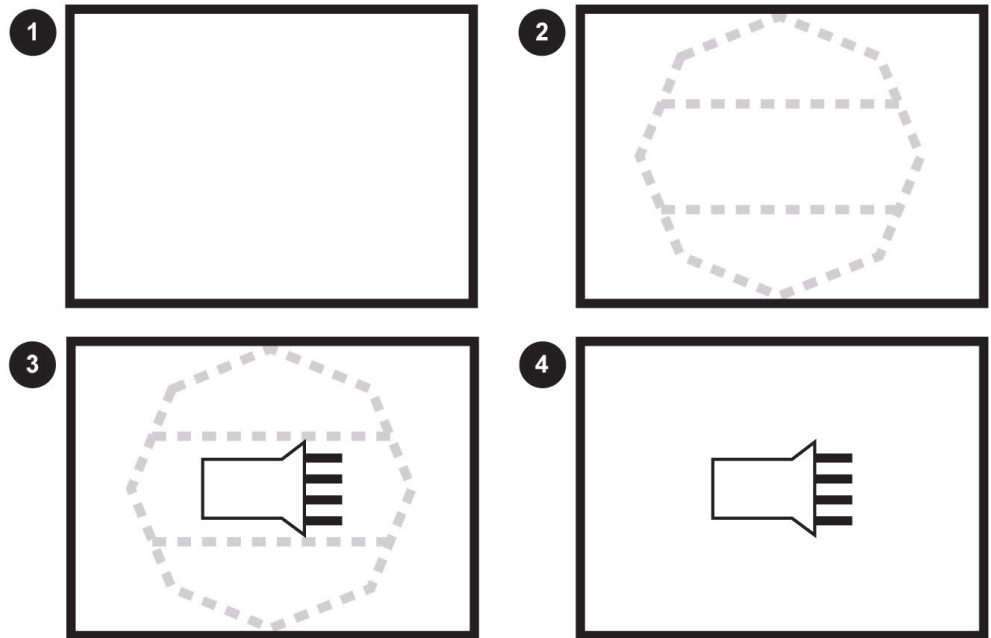


**Figure 1-6. Psychological Operations icon and frame within an octagon**

## Modifiers and Amplifiers

Aside from the icon and the frame, there is alphanumeric data and supporting symbology that provides additional detail to the overall symbol. Modifiers and amplifiers provide that detail and have specific places both within and outside the frame.

### Modifiers

Modifiers consist of either an abstract picture or alphanumeric designation placed above or below the main icon within the frame. Modifiers located above the icon are modifiers 1; those below are modifiers 2. Figure 1-7 (pages 9–10) depicts the octagon with icon and corresponding locations of modifiers.

*Note:* Many modifiers may be placed in either the one or two position. For example, the maintenance symbol (wrench) can be in position 1 to indicate maintenance or in position 2 to indicate recovery.



**Figure 1-7. Example land unit icons inside octagons with modifiers 1 and 2**

Examples

| | |
|---|---|
| Modifier 2 | Airborne |
| | Wheeled Vehicle |
| | Light/Medium (L/M) |
| | Preventive Maintenance (PM) |
| | Equipment (E) |

Examples

| | |
|---|---|
| Main Icon | PSYOP |
| | Combat (CBT) |
| | Army Aviation/ Aviation Rotary Wing |
| | Transportation |
| | Sensor |
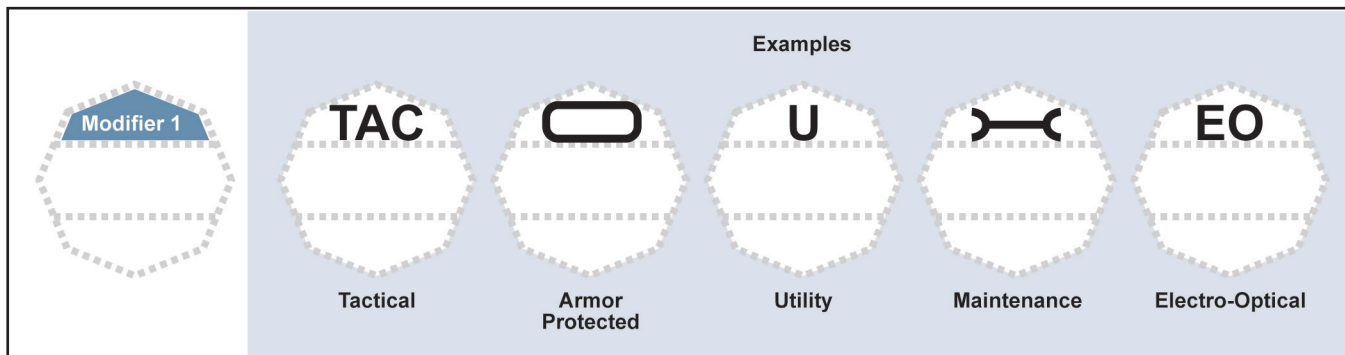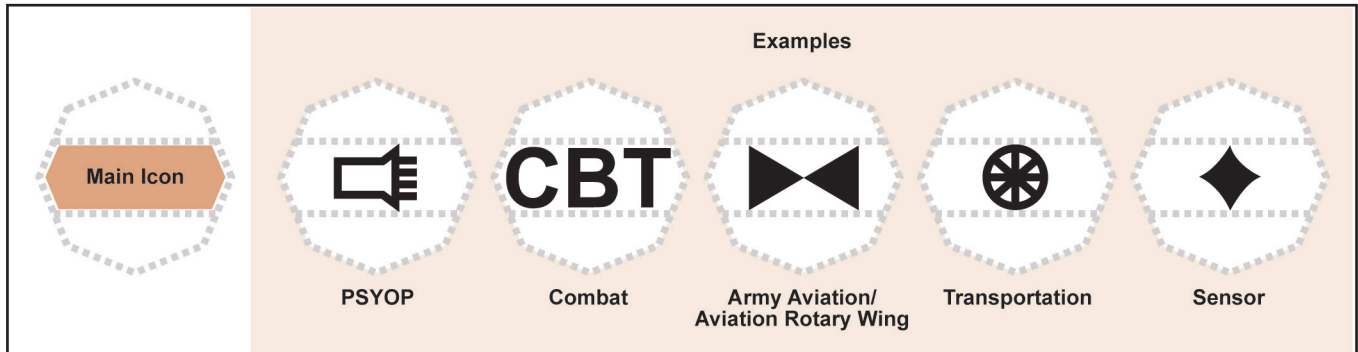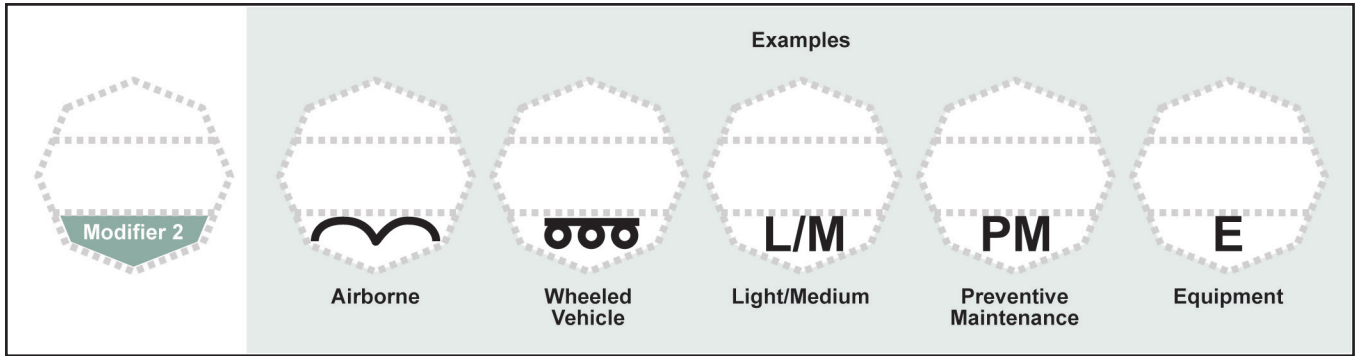
**Figure 1-7. Example land unit icons inside octagons with icons only (continued)**

**Amplifiers**

An amplifier complements and augments the information modifiers provide about a tactical symbol, and is always external to the frame. Use the following minimum mandatory guidelines for adding amplifiers:

- Left amplifiers are right aligned; right amplifiers are left aligned.
- Top and bottom amplifiers are centered.

To ensure full compliance with DOD and Army symbol-building guidance, refer to the cited references.

*Note:* To avoid cluttering the symbol with too much information, only add the most relevant, necessary data possible. Simplicity is a virtue when building symbols.

For most symbol-building, the majority of the amplifier locations will go unfilled. However, it is beneficial to be familiar with what they are and what they mean. This skill is helpful when in places such as a tactical operations center or similar location, and allows for a rapid update of the operational environment. Figure 1-8, page 12, depicts an octagon with accompanying locations of amplifiers surrounding it. The amplifiers in the blue boxes are the one most often relevant to PSYOP forces.
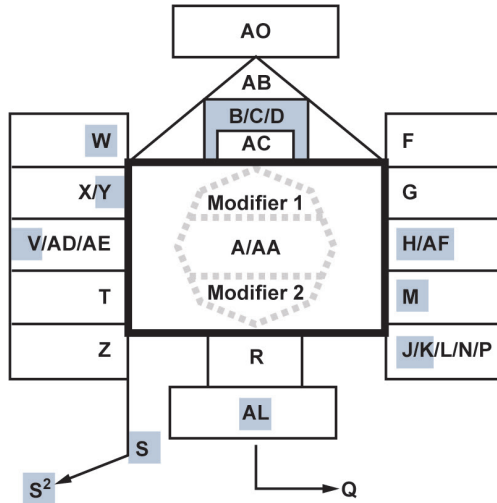
**Legend (continued):**

| | |
|---|---|
| A | main icon |
| AA | special command and control headquarters |
| AB | feint/dummy indicator |
| AC | installation |
| AD | platform type |
| AE | equipment teardown time |
| AF | common identifier (HMMWV, MRAP) |
| AL | operational condition |
| AO | engagement bar |
| B | echelon (ranges from a team to theater command) |
| C | number of equipment pieces |
| D | task force identification or activity-based task force (example: Psychological Operations Task Force [NATO]) |
| F | reinforced or reduced |
| G | staff comments |
| H | unique alphanumeric designation for the unit displayed in the symbol (Tactical PSYOP Teams B911 and 1034) |
| J | evaluation rating |
| K | combat effectiveness |
| L | signature equipment |
| M | higher formation |
| N | hostile (enemy) |
| P | identification friend or foe/selective identification feature |
| Q | direction of movement indicator |
| R | mobility indicator |
| S | headquarters staff indicator |
| $S^2$ | offset location indicator |
| T | unique designation (track number) |
| V | type |
| W | date-time group |
| X | altitude/depth |
| Y | location |
| Z | speed |

**Legend:**

☐ amplifier most often relevant to PSYOP forces

**Figure 1-8. Additional symbol information in relation to an octagon**

Aside from the icon and modifiers within the octagon, there are 14 amplifiers of interest to PSYOP forces:

- B—Echelon (ranges from a team to theater command).
- C—Number of equipment pieces.
- D—Task force identification or activity-based task force (example, Psychological Operations Task Force [NATO]).
- H—Unique alphanumeric designation for the unit displayed in the symbol (TPTs B911 and 1034).
- AF—Common identifier (HMMWV, MRAP).
- M—Higher formation or echelon.
- J—Reliability and credibility rating for units, equipment, and installations.
- K—Combat effectiveness.
- W—Date-time group.
- Y—Location.
- V—Type of equipment.
- S—Headquarters staff indicator.
- S²—Offset location indicator.
- Operational condition.

Once all of the fundamentals are understood, the acquired knowledge allows for the development of clear and concise symbols. Chapter 2 addresses symbol-building in detail to meet the operational requirements of PSYOP forces.

# Chapter 2

# Symbol Building

This chapter describes the procedures and steps for creating symbols specific to PSYOP forces and influence activities. The key focus is on describing the process and using only the minimum essential data for ease of use and simplicity.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of what constitutes a symbol and its components. That information provides a foundational understanding that enables development of the skills necessary to create useful and practical symbols. What follows is a step-by-step tutorial from the influence perspective for building symbols.

## Building Symbols

Manual symbol-building is made easy using a simple regular octagon, which just means that all of the eight facets are equal in length, and the angles at the joints are the same as well. The bounding octagon derives from the regular octagon, which provides a consistent, accurate scale for placing icons within the frame shapes described in chapter 1. Figure 2-1, page 15, depicts a regular octagon with angles, a regular octagon with lengths between opposing corners, and a final bounding octagon with modifier zones placed and sized to proper scale.
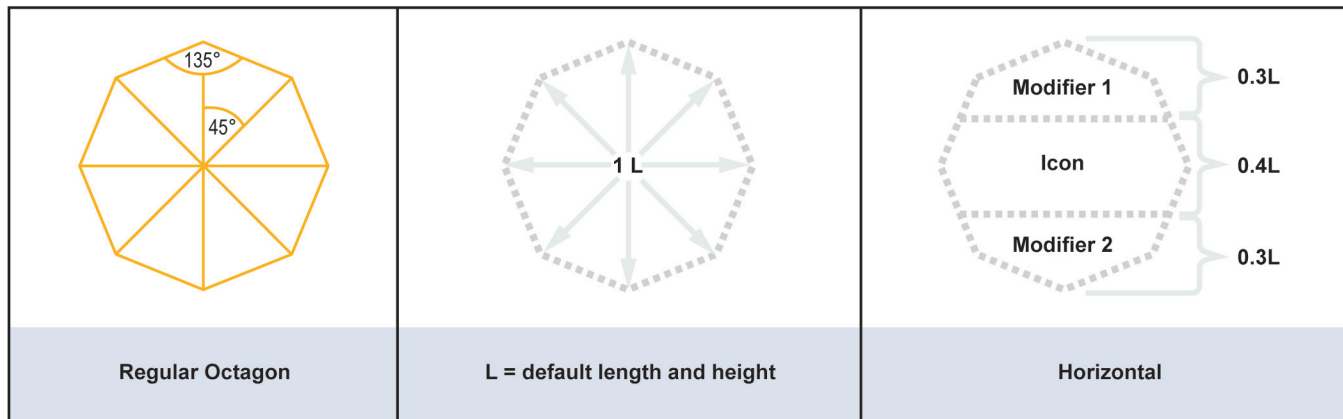
**Figure 2-1. Bounding octagon angles, dimensions, and scale**

*Note:* DOD-sourced software used in digital map displays provides a means to create and place icons, and automatically color codes the resulting symbols based on user input. However, even commonly-used programs, such as Microsoft's PowerPoint, can be utilized for symbol creation in austere environments or at home station prior to deployment. PowerPoint is simple for this purpose once the user is familiar with the interface.

Figure 2-2 depicts the various types of frames Army PSYOP forces typically use as well as their proportions in relation to the length between opposite points on the bounding octagon. There are others not shown, but for the purposes of this instruction, the provided frames will cover most symbols Soldiers create.
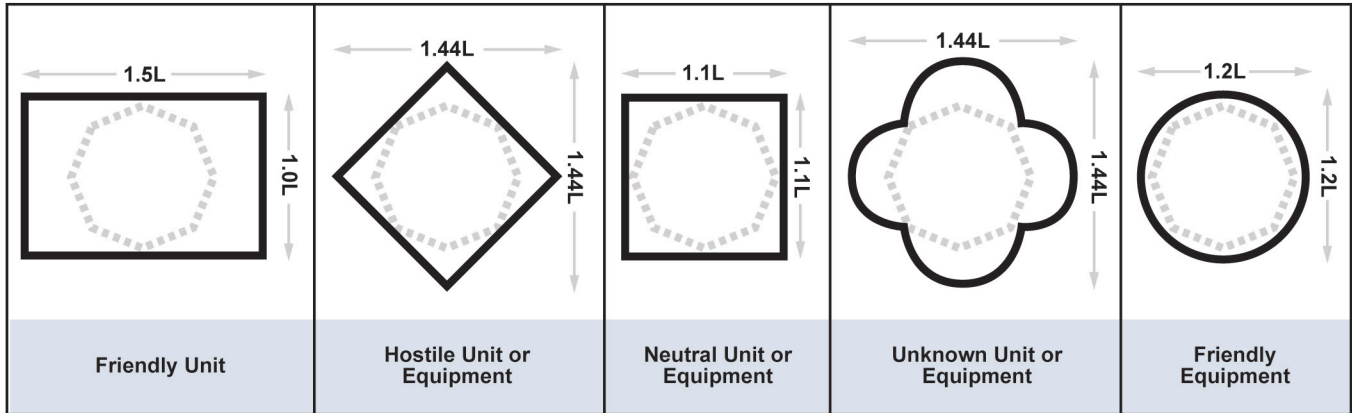


**Figure 2-2. Example frame shapes to scale with embedded octagon**

## PSYOP Unit Symbols

For this first example instruction, the most basic element will be the focus—an airborne tactical Psychological Operations team (or TPT) in a multinational airborne operation.

First, determine the required frame for what will be depicted. Figure 2-3 provides the various types typically used by Army PSYOP forces. The first frame, the rectangle, denotes a friendly unit, so it is the correct one to use.
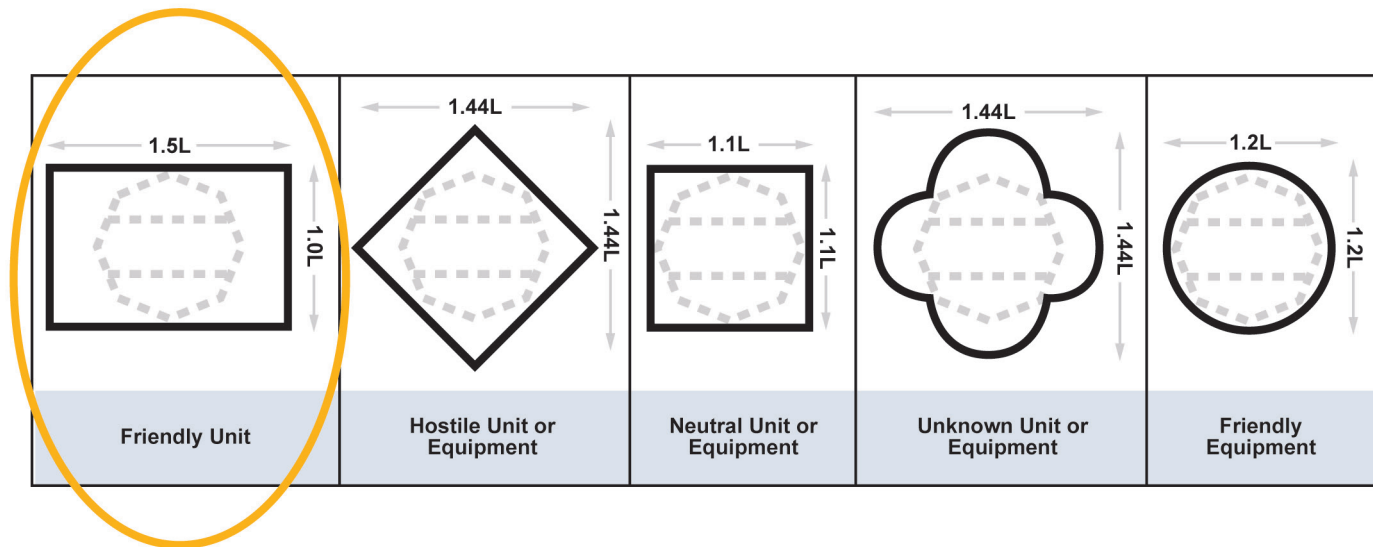


**Figure 2-3. Example frame shapes with friendly unit circled**

Second, choose the appropriate icon and combine it with the frame to create the basic symbol, using the bounding octagon to maintain correct placement and scale. Figure 2-4 depicts the creation of the basic PSYOP symbol for this example.
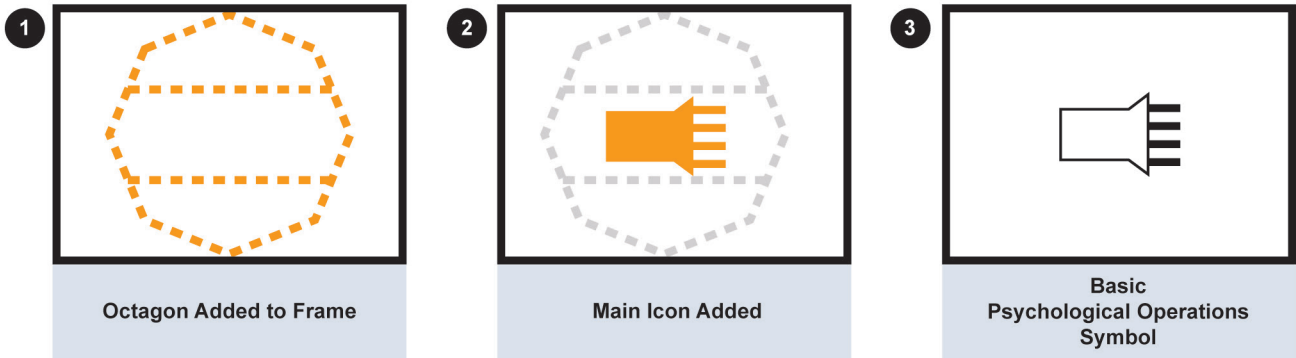


**Figure 2-4. Creating the basic Psychological Operations Symbol**

Next, choose the appropriate sector 1 modifier for the TPT. Figure 2-5 depicts the basic symbol with the sector 1 modifier in place.
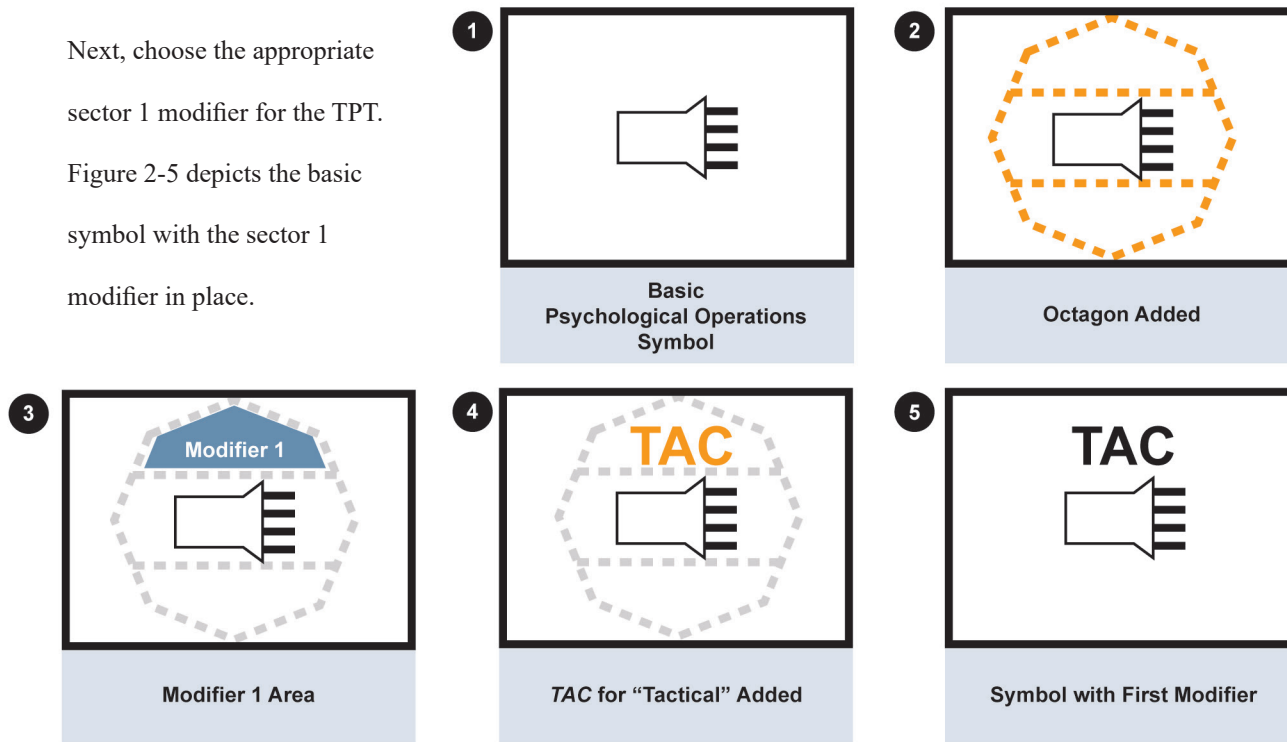


**Figure 2-5. Creating Psychological Operations symbol with sector 1 modifier**

After the sector 1 modifier is in place, add the sector 2 modifiers below the icon. Figure 2-6 depicts the addition of the sector 2 modifier.
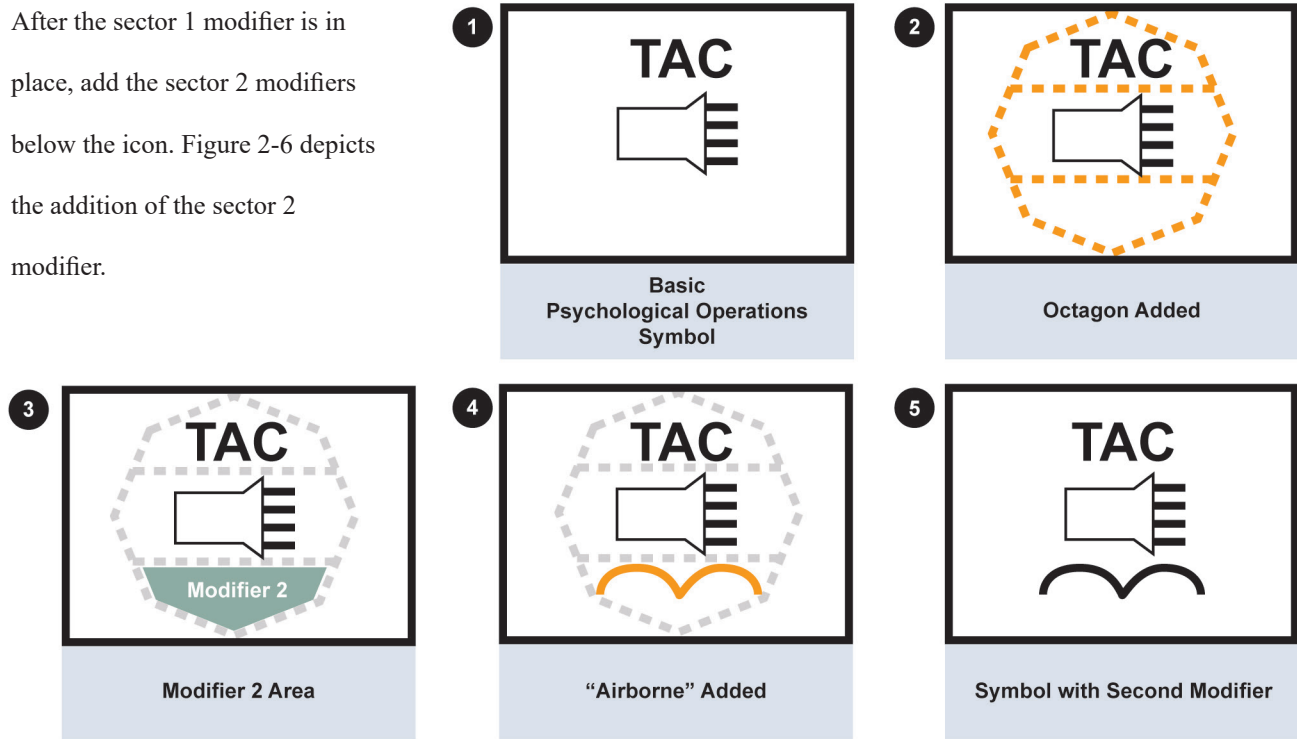


**Figure 2-6. Creating Psychological Operations symbol with sector 2 modifier**

Once both sector 1 and 2 modifiers are in place, add the minimum essential amplifiers to meet the identification or explanatory need. Figure 2-7 depicts the addition of amplifiers.
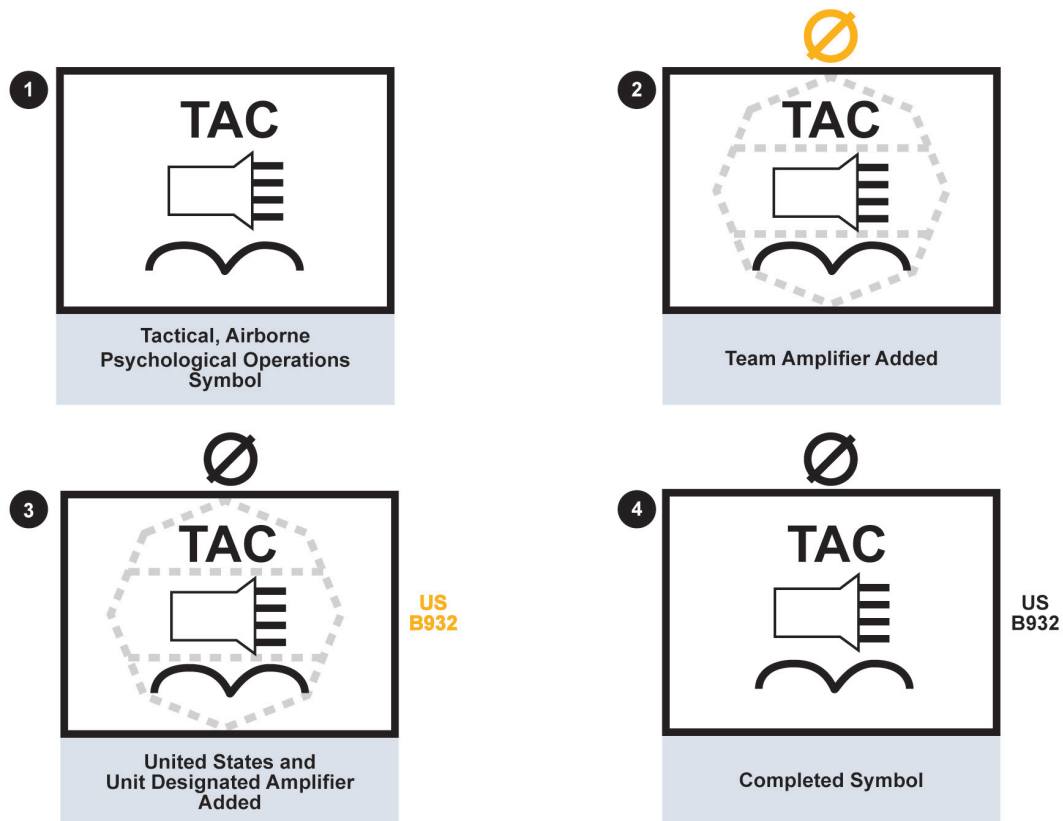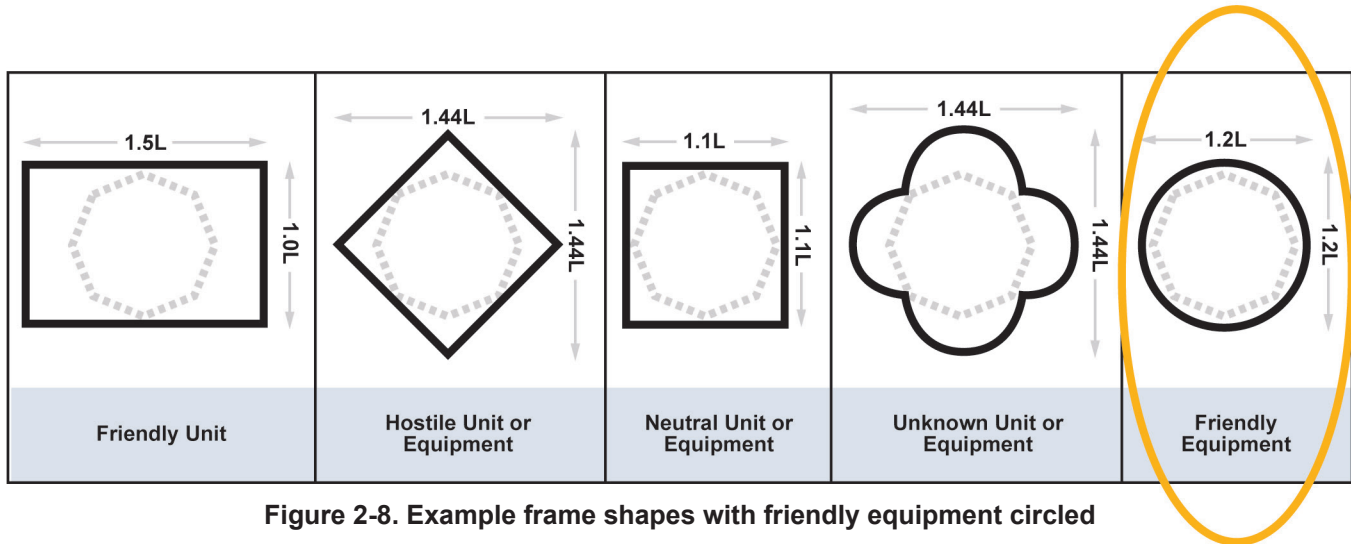


**Figure 2-7. Completing Psychological Operations team symbol**

## PSYOP Equipment Symbols

The main difference between the friendly-unit symbol and the equipment symbol is the frame shape. Figure 2-8 depicts the correct selection of friendly equipment.



**Figure 2-8. Example frame shapes with friendly equipment circled**

Building an equipment symbol follows the same rules and procedures as for a unit, with some small differences in the amplifiers. Figure 2-9, page 23, provides the layout of an equipment symbol with the most commonly relevant amplifiers highlighted in yellow boxes.

**22**
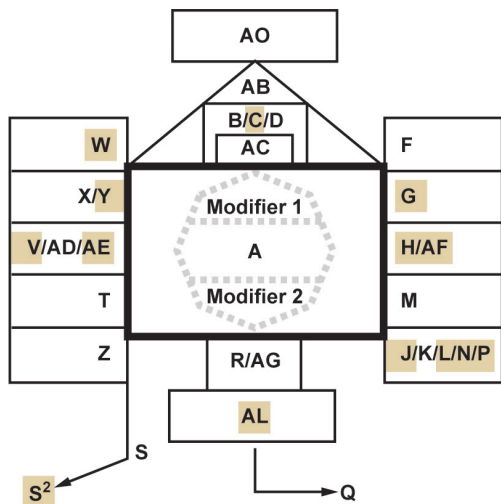
Legend (continued):

| | |
|---|---|
| A | main icon |
| AB | feint/dummy indicator |
| AC | installation |
| AD | platform type |
| AE | equipment teardown time |
| AF | common identifier (HMMWV, MRAP) |
| AG | auxiliary equipment |
| AL | operational condition |
| AO | engagement bar |
| B | echelon (ranges from a team to theater command) |
| C | quantity |
| D | task force identification or activity-based task force (example: Psychological Operations Task Force [NATO]) |
| F | reinforced or reduced |
| G | staff comments |
| H | additional information |
| J | evaluation rating (reliability or credibility) |
| K | combat effectiveness |
| L | signature equipment |
| M | higher formation |
| N | hostile (enemy) |
| P | identification, friend or foe |
| Q | direction of movement indicator |
| R | mobility indicator |
| S | headquarters staff indicator |
| $S^2$ | offset location indicator |
| T | unique designation (track number) |
| V | type - type of equipment |
| W | date-time group |
| X | altitude/depth |
| Y | location |
| Z | speed |

Legend:

amplifier most often relevant to PSYOP forces

**Figure 2-9. Equipment symbol information with bounding octagon**

The process for creating a PSYOP equipment symbol is similar as for the unit. The example equipment will be the older, towed AN/TSQ-171, 5-kilowatt Transportable Television Transmitter, as shown in figure 2-10.



**Figure 2-10. The AN/TSQ-171**

The focus is on the equipment, so the central icon depicts what the equipment does—transmits a broadcast signal. However, since the equipment is unique to a specific force, then the central icon is modified to also designate it as specific to PSYOP forces. In this example, the PSYOP icon will be the filled type to illustrate how it can be used instead of the unfilled type used in previous examples. Figure 2-11 depicts how to build the basic icon for a PSYOP mobile transmitter.
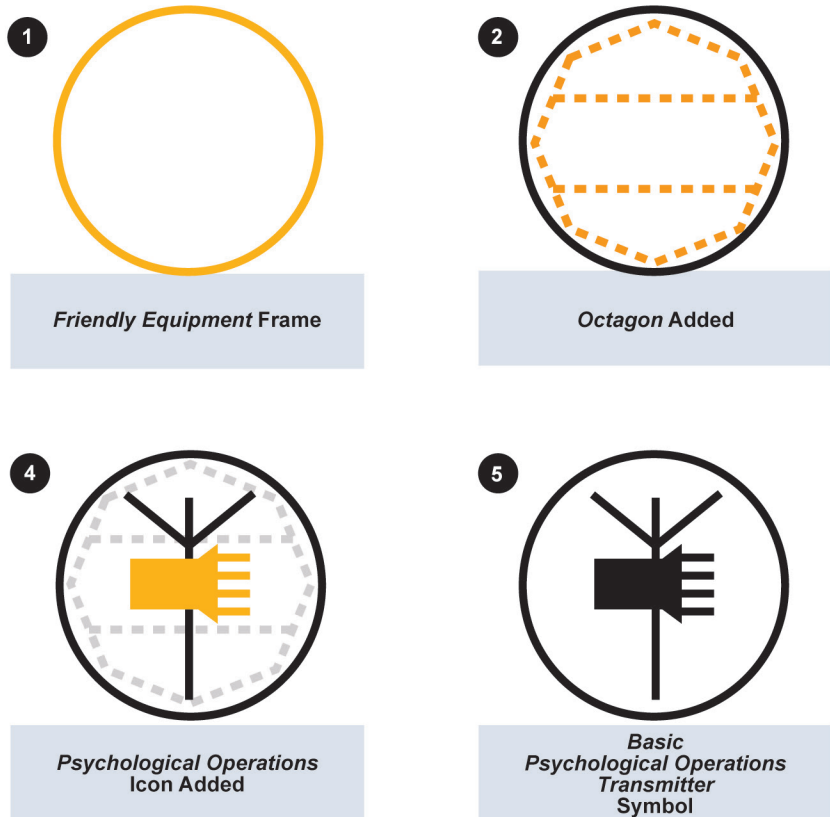


*Friendly Equipment* **Frame**

*Octagon* **Added**

*Broadcast Transmitter Antennae*
**Icon Added**

*Psychological Operations*
**Icon Added**

*Basic*
*Psychological Operations*
*Transmitter*
**Symbol**

**Figure 2-11. Building steps for basic Psychological Operations transmitter symbol**

From the basic equipment symbol the amplifier gives further detail about specific aspects of the equipment shown in figure 2-12. The amplifiers enhance and clarify such data as nationality, location, and other pertinent information.
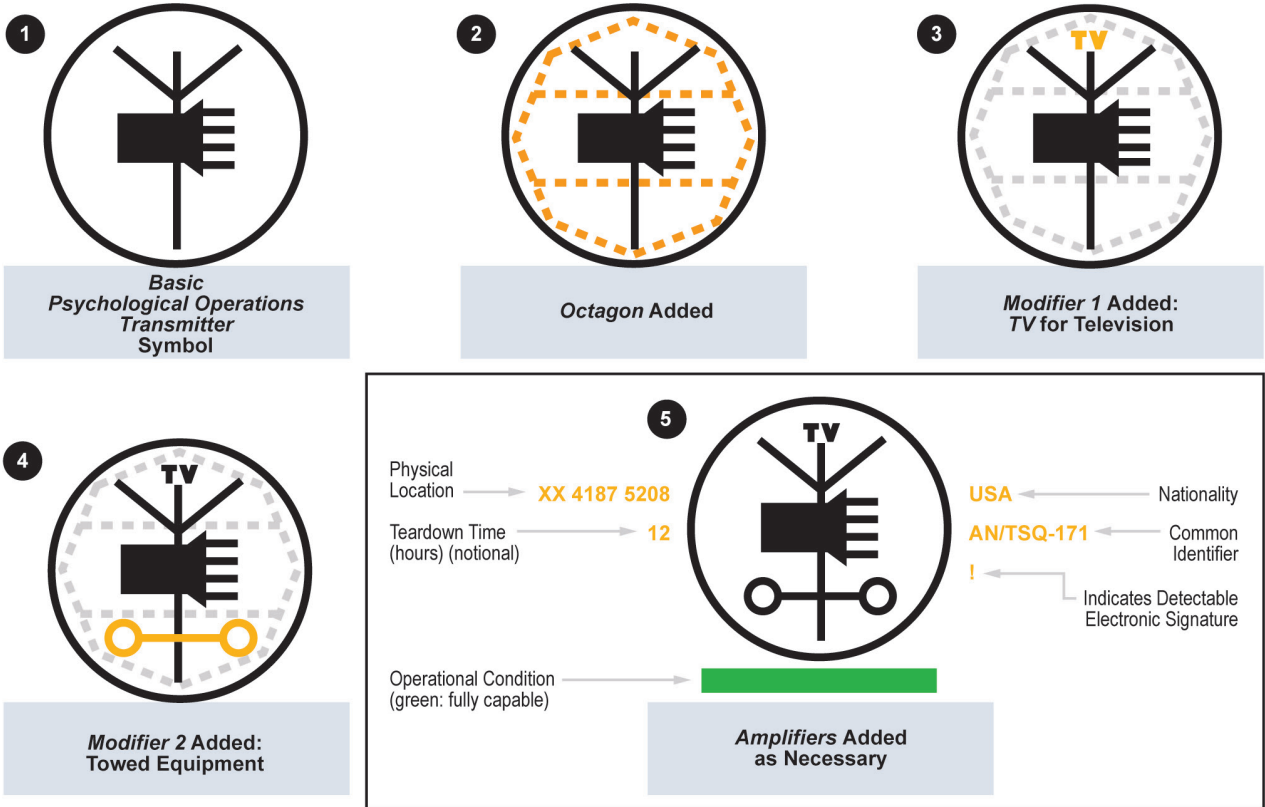


**1**
*Basic Psychological Operations Transmitter* **Symbol**

**2**
*Octagon* Added

**3**
**Modifier 1** Added:
*TV* for Television

**4**
*Modifier 2* Added:
**Towed Equipment**

**5**

Physical Location → **XX 4187 5208**

Teardown Time (hours) (notional) → **12**

Operational Condition (green: fully capable) →

**USA** ← Nationality

**AN/TSQ-171** ← Common Identifier

**!** ← Indicates Detectable Electronic Signature

*Amplifiers* **Added as Necessary**

**Figure 2-12. Psychological Operations equipment symbol with example amplifier explanations** **26**

The amount of information that users can incorporate into a symbol is substantial, but should be limited to what is necessary for staff requirements. For example, a map in an Infantry tactical operations center (TOC) would probably only show the towed PSYOP TV transmitter symbol, possibly with the grid location. That would be all of the necessary information for the gaining unit that addresses what the capability is and where it is located. However, in a PSYOP force-based task force that tracks the location and movement of all forces and capabilities in a given area, the level of required detail would likely be much greater.

## Installation Symbols

In addition to units and equipment, symbols also reflect buildings and other structures, referred to as installations. The installation frame is a modified unit frame that has the addition of a black, filled square at the top. Figure 2-13, page 28, depicts unit frames in comparison to installation frames.
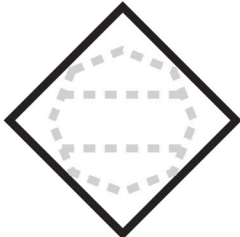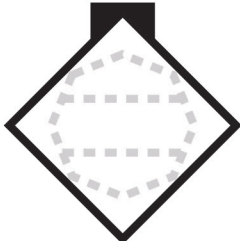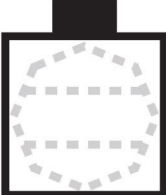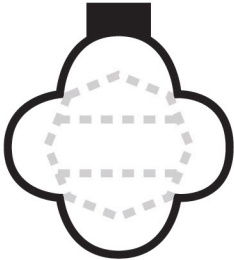
**Figure 2-13. Unit versus installation frame shapes**

The frame choice for a U.S. PSYOP installation or facility would be similar as choosing the unit frame. The steps for creating an example PSYOP print production facility then occur sequentially in figure 2-14 in the same manner as for other symbols.
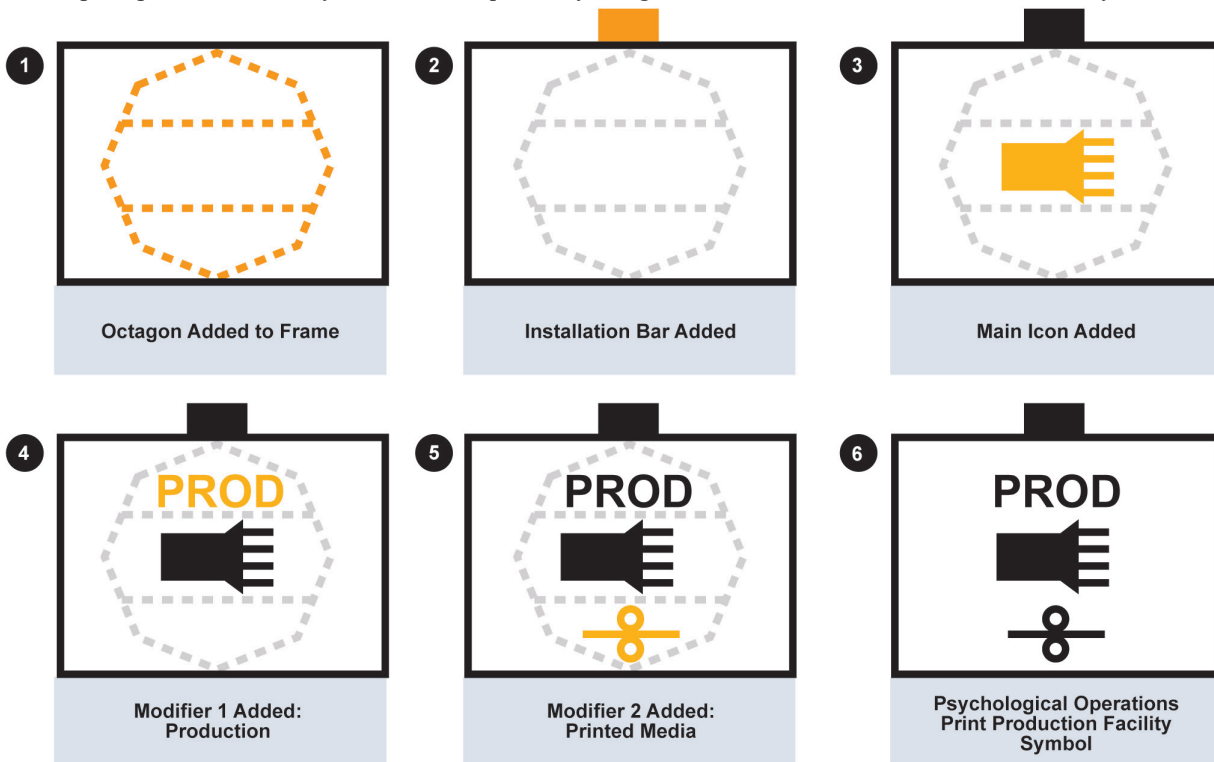


**1** Octagon Added to Frame

**2** Installation Bar Added

**3** Main Icon Added

**4** Modifier 1 Added: Production

**5** Modifier 2 Added: Printed Media

**6** Psychological Operations Print Production Facility Symbol

**Figure 2-14. Creating Psychological Operations print production facility symbol**

## Activity Symbols

Of all of the symbols, activities are the most difficult to build, yet arguably the most in demand during operations. There are a finite number of PSYOP units, equipment, and facilities to depict, but potentially a vast number of activities to portray and track. Not only do PSYOP unit activities require tracking, but there are also spontaneous events, enemy activities, weather conditions affecting ongoing and future operations, and so much more, all under the umbrella term activities. The sheer number of potentially relevant people, things, and events can be overwhelming. For specific activities PSYOP execute, symbols allow for easy tracking. The key is to portray only what activities are required for tracking, situational understanding, and other priorities. The most noticeable defining feature of many activity symbols is the use of small, black squares to set them apart from symbols depicting units, equipment, or installations. Figure 2-15, page 31, depicts activity frames in comparison to unit frames.
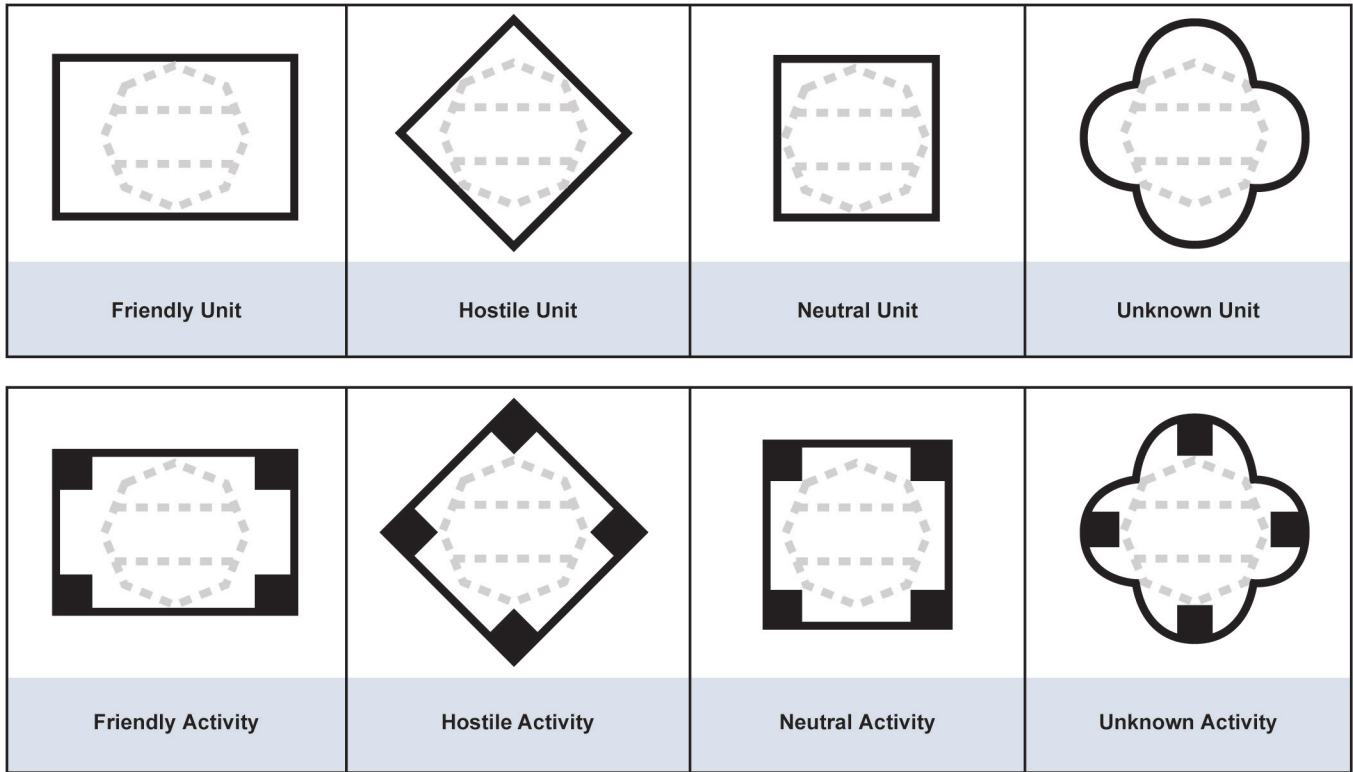
**Figure 2-15. Activity frames compared to unit frames**

In contrast to the other types of symbols, activity symbols require the least number of amplifiers of all. However, what information does appear is vital. Figure 2-16 depicts activity symbol layout with the few amplifiers used to convey information.
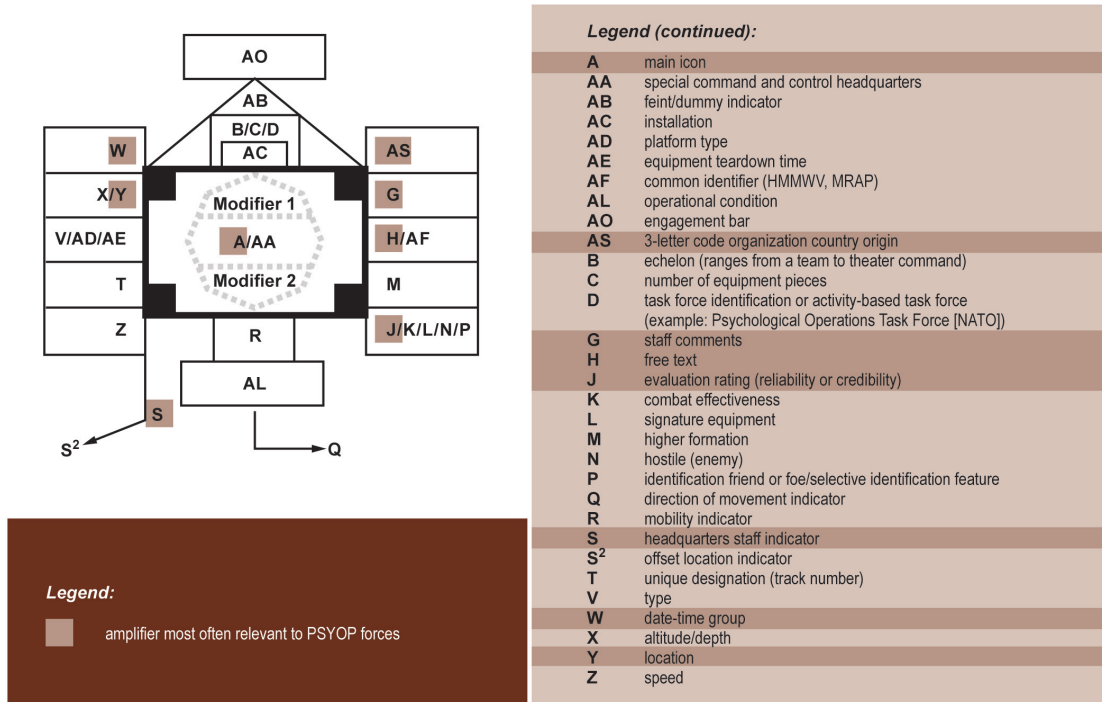


**Figure 2-16. Activity symbol layout**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Legend (continued):* | | |
| **A** | main icon | |
| **AA** | special command and control headquarters | |
| **AB** | feint/dummy indicator | |
| **AC** | installation | |
| **AD** | platform type | |
| **AE** | equipment teardown time | |
| **AF** | common identifier (HMMWV, MRAP) | |
| **AL** | operational condition | |
| **AO** | engagement bar | |
| **AS** | 3-letter code organization country origin | |
| **B** | echelon (ranges from a team to theater command) | |
| **C** | number of equipment pieces | |
| **D** | task force identification or activity-based task force (example: Psychological Operations Task Force [NATO]) | |
| **G** | staff comments | |
| **H** | free text | |
| **J** | evaluation rating (reliability or credibility) | |
| **K** | combat effectiveness | |
| **L** | signature equipment | |
| **M** | higher formation | |
| **N** | hostile (enemy) | |
| **P** | identification friend or foe/selective identification feature | |
| **Q** | direction of movement indicator | |
| **R** | mobility indicator | |
| **S** | headquarters staff indicator | |
| **S²** | offset location indicator | |
| **T** | unique designation (track number) | |
| **V** | type | |
| **W** | date-time group | |
| **X** | altitude/depth | |
| **Y** | location | |
| **Z** | speed | |

*Legend:*

amplifier most often relevant to PSYOP forces

*Note:* The icon that specifically identifies the activity is critical for reader comprehension and to convey the urgency or gravity of what is depicted.

Also, in contrast to other types of icons, many symbols for neutral or unknown activities may not have the frame, but merely an icon. The modifiers and amplifiers will still apply to provide more specific information. Figure 2-17 depicts examples of activity icons and symbols.

| Friendly Activity | Hostile Activity | Neutral Activity | Unknown Activity |
|---|---|---|---|
| MASS | RIOT | | MTG |
| Demonstration (Planned) | Riot | Foraging/Searching | Meeting |
| VOTE | | | SPK |
| Election/Voting | Graffiti | Volcanic Eruption | Speaker |
| | BOMB | | |
| Emergency Food Distribution | Bombing | Microbial Infestation | Civil Disturbance |

**Figure 2-17. Example activity symbols and icons**

When depicting an infestation, there are a number of ways to do so without using the generic INFS icon. More specific icons are applicable, depending on the type of infestation. For example, locust swarms in the Middle East and Africa would have an insect icon that actually depicts a locust. In a reptile infestation, such as green iguanas in Florida, a reptile (lizard) icon depicts the event. Figure 2-18 provides several examples of symbols that can substitute for the general INFS icon.
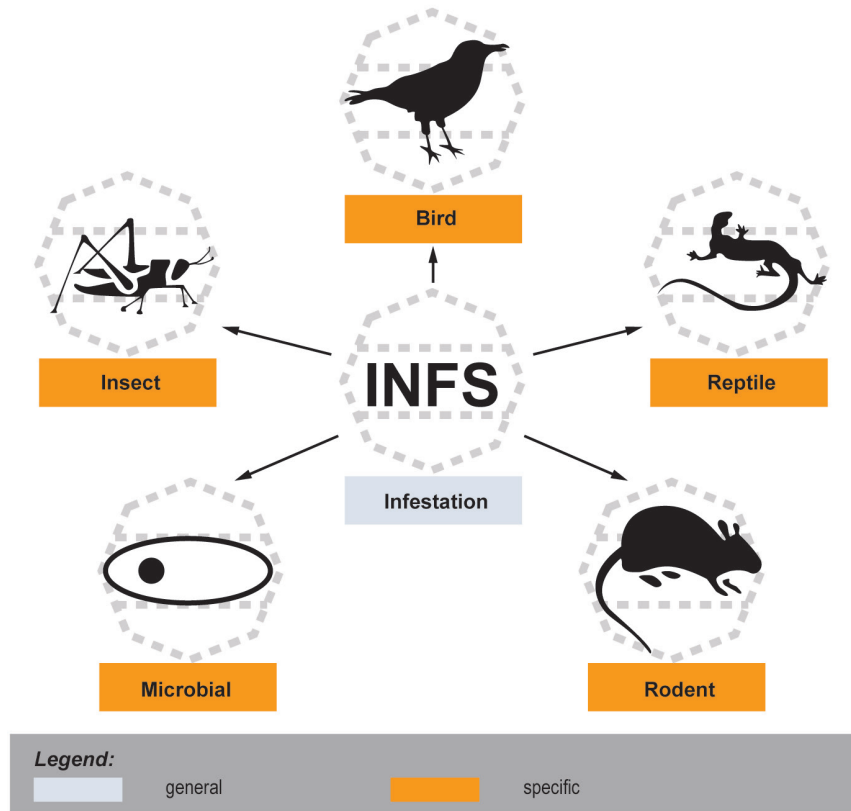


**Figure 2-18. General symbol compared to specific symbols**     **34**

Another advantage with activity symbols is, as stated, there is not necessarily an associated frame. In that case, symbol building consists of the icon and the minimum necessary modifiers and amplifiers, if any. In many cases, the icon and location amplifier will suffice until more information is known. As more information becomes available, additional amplifiers can be added as needed.

The procedures for building an activity symbol are similar to other types. Figure 2-19 provides two examples of building a symbol for an adversary's use of a mock riot to draw friendly force attention away from a real objective.



Figure 2-19. Building adversary fake activity symbol

As figure 2-19 shows, there are two ways of building the symbol. The first one uses the modifier 1 FAL for false, which merely shows the riot is false. The second example is more explicit, in that the three in-line sideways triangles specifically denote the riot is a deliberate hoax or a decoy to provide cover for something else.

To depict PSYOP Soldier activities to track execution of psychological actions (PSYACTs) and other influence efforts, symbol-building is simple. Figure 2-20 (example 1) illustrates how to portray the act of face-to-face (F2F) communication.
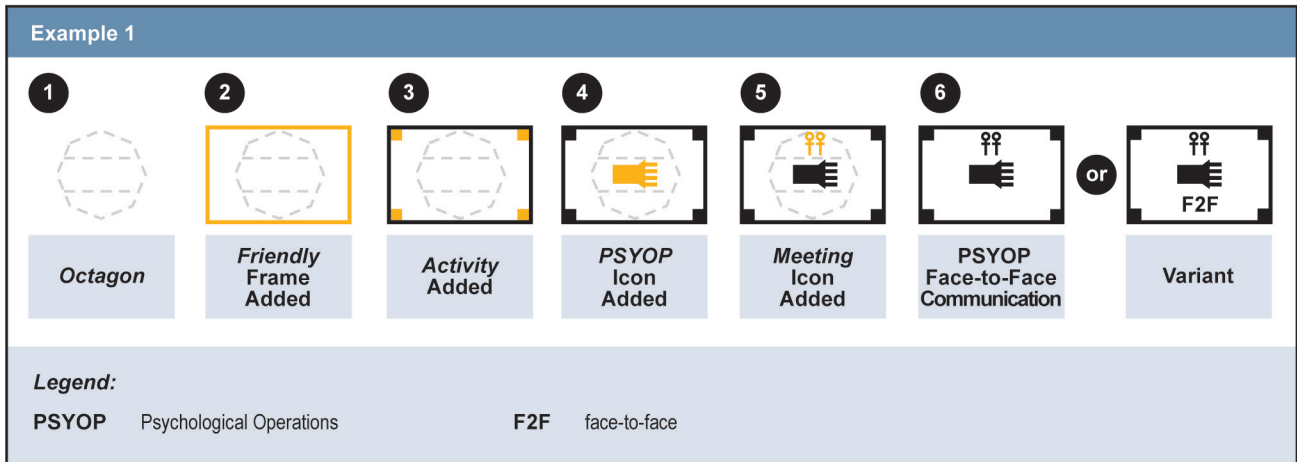


**Figure 2-20. Examples of how to build face-to-face communication symbols (example 1)**
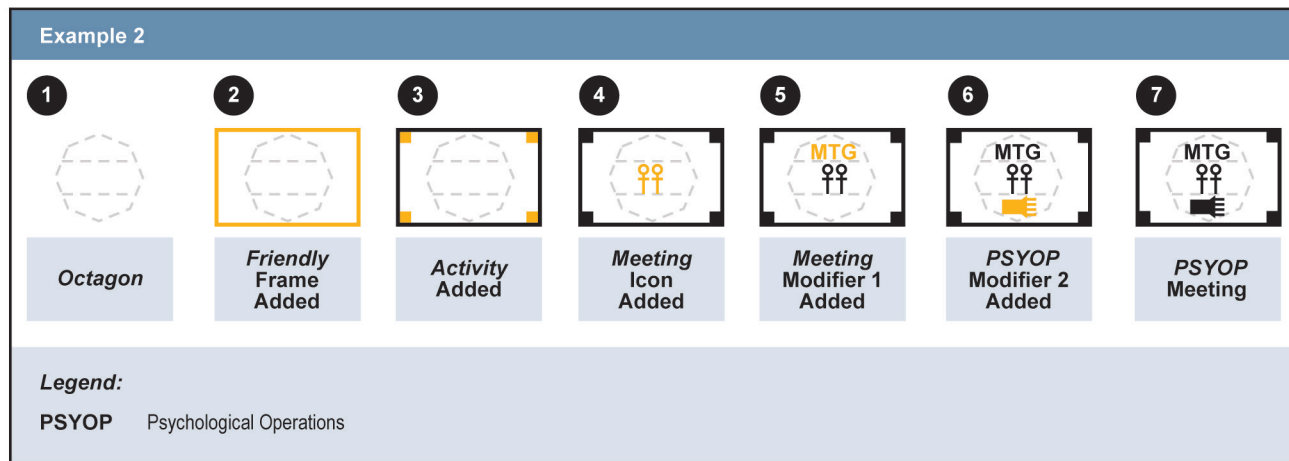
**Figure 2-21. Examples of how to build face-to-face communication symbols (example 2)**

In figure 2-20, page 36, notice there is more than one way to portray this activity. In addition, the PSYOP-unique F2F acronym for face-to-face communication went in the modifier 2 position. While the F2F modifier is not in DOD or Army symbology, it has been the shorthand of PSYOP forces for decades, and this particular symbol would likely be used only for internal tracking purposes, rather than in a gaining unit command post.

Figure 2-21 (example 2) would be a more generic symbol with the modification of the people icon from three to two, to denote a one-on-one meeting and the addition of a PSYOP speaker in the modifier 2 position. In any case, the symbols are readily understandable to users familiar with military symbology.

A final example of symbol building that follows also provides a bridge to the practical application and usage of symbols addressed in chapter 3. This addresses control measures that direct and guide the activities of subordinate PSYOP units and elements.

In combat operations where a tactical company is subordinate to a PSYOP-based task force, there is a relationship unlike many other operational units. For example, in the Infantry branch, an Army corps has subordinate divisions, each of which have subordinate brigades, each of which have subordinate battalions, and so forth. The chain is typically explicit in that chain of command is direct for each echelon. Among PSYOP forces, that relationship is different during operations. A PSYOP-based task force has tactical companies theoretically subordinated to it, each of which have subordinate detachments, and subordinate teams under each detachment. However, the task force does not always direct the daily operations of the subordinate companies except in the most general way. The companies and their subordinate detachments are attached to another command (special operations, Armor, Infantry, and so on). Those attached PSYOP units take their direction and guidance from the gaining unit. The task force does provide guidance and direction in so far as they relate to the influence program and supporting influence plan. The companies and below reconcile the requirements stated in the program and the supporting plan with the gaining unit plans and operations.

With respect to PSYOP forces and mapping their operations and activities, control measures typically apply to units of action, not the higher echelons, such as a task force. At the company and detachment echelons, there is a use for symbols to track activities as the units are directly involved in operations. For example, a tactical product development detachment (TPDD) that conducts leaflet drops over enemy troop formations has a need to track the locations and areas or enemy forces the drops cover. In another use of symbology, a gaining unit employs a tactical team to conduct sonic deception using its organic vehicle-mounted loudspeaker to canalize, fix, or disrupt an enemy formation. Figure 2-22, page 39, depicts three examples of how to portray the team's sonic deception activities against an enemy formation.
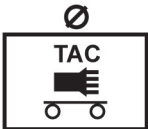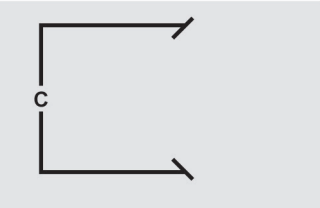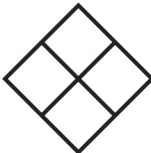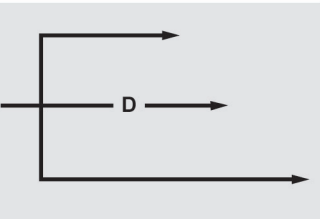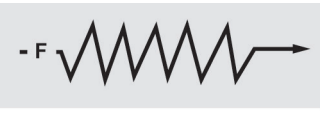
**Figure 2-22. Examples of tactical team control measures for sonic deception**

In the preceding symbols, the team symbol conveys it is a vehicle-mounted, tactical team. The other unit symbol depicts a hostile Infantry element (no size given). Finally, the control measures themselves are very specific for the actions canalize, disrupt, and fix. For greater clarity and specificity, amplifiers can depict which team conducted the action, the vehicle used, location of the sonic deception, and possibly even a specific loudspeaker recording used (if numbered and not ad hoc).

In conclusion, the symbol-building procedures outlined in this chapter provide the foundation for the practical application on maps and overlays. For specific information about using maps and overlays, refer to FM 1-02.2 and MIL-STD-2525D. Appendix A provides numerous examples of completed symbols, but the listing is not all inclusive, and many more are required for specific missions and activities.

# Chapter 3

# Practical Application

Being able to build symbols is only half of the required skill for depicting activities. Soldiers also require the knowledge and training to practically apply symbology procedures to clearly and accurately portray units, facilities, and activities on maps and overlays. This chapter provides a discussion of how to utilize symbols on maps to depict operations.

In isolation, PSYOP forces' symbols positioned on a map provide limited utility. Only when they are combined with other symbols, control measures, and other information do they begin to portray the reality of the operational environment or planned operations and activities. With the necessary detail, commanders and staffs can more accurately assess conditions, increase situational understanding, and plan more effective operations. What follows is an overview of the practical application of symbology to accurately portray the operational environment from an influence perspective. The principles described apply to all map formats from simple strip maps to detailed military topographic maps.

## The Map

Maps provide a representation of reality. Military maps, in particular, are more detailed than civilian maps to better enable the accurate visualization of the operational environment and more precise navigation. The higher the detail, the greater the correlation with reality. To maintain the same level of detail, symbols frequently provide equivalent detail as the map. Figure 3-1 depicts a section of a military map.
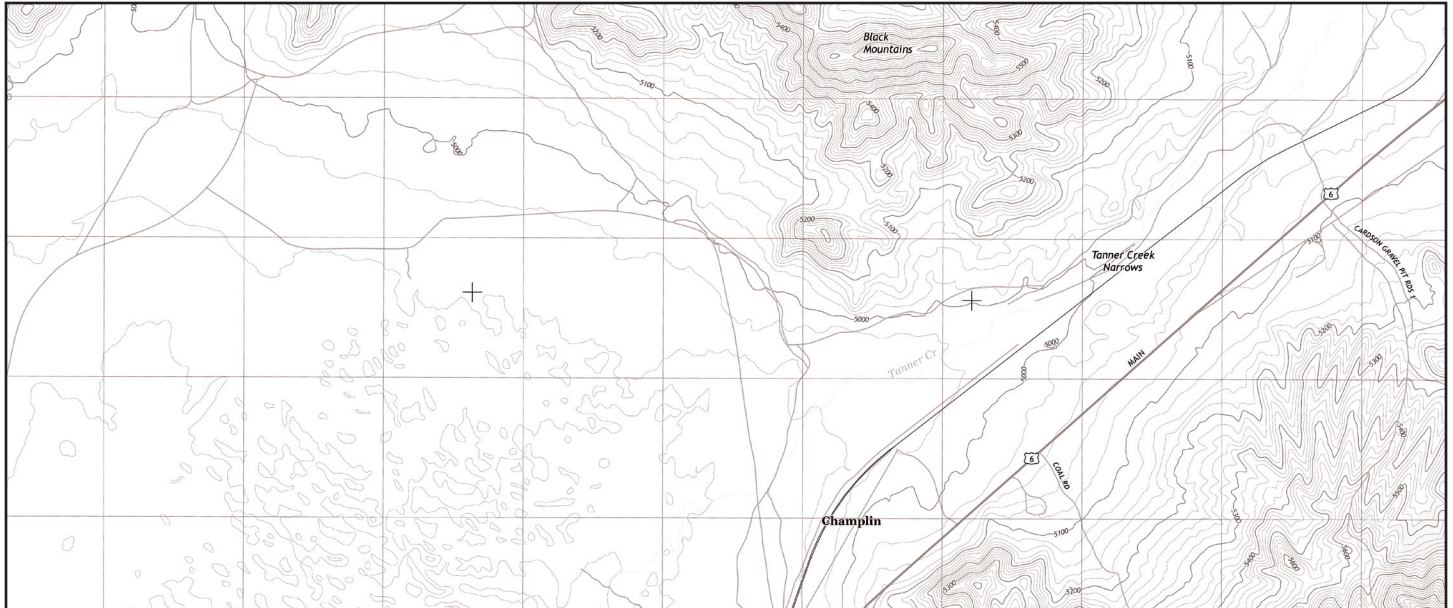


**Figure 3-1. Example section of map including Tanner Creek, Utah** 42

On electronic displays that provide three-dimensional (3-D) images of maps, symbols can be "billboarded" with offset location indicators to show precisely where the icon subject is located. Figure 3-2 depicts an example of such a 3-D map with symbols.
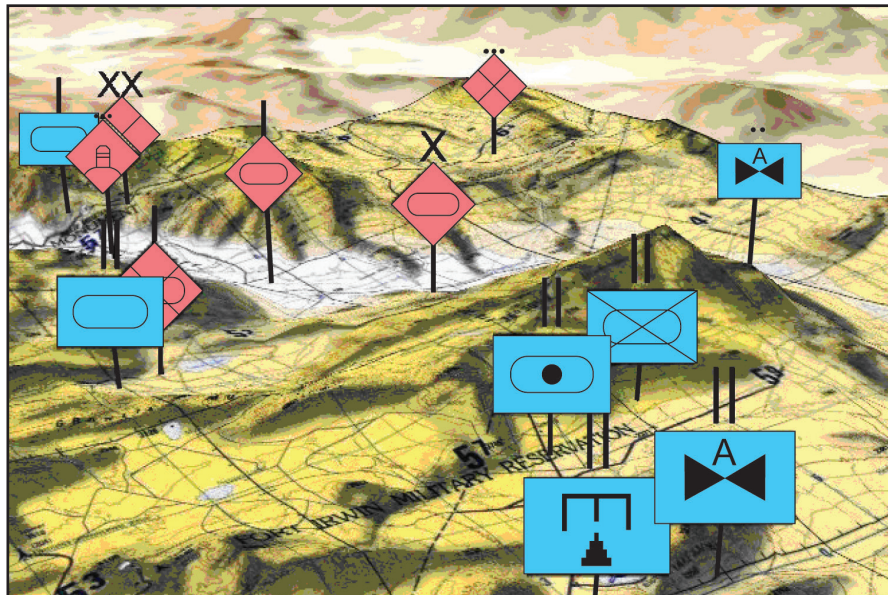


**Figure 3-2. Example billboarding of icons (adapted from MIL-STD-2525D)**

## Combining Maps and Symbols

The careful and logical combining of symbols on a map provides key details for readers. For planners who track the movement or location of equipment for accountability and employment, map information can aid in determining what capability is available for a given operation or mission. In another example, for a maintenance team tasked with flying to a remote forward operating base to repair a piece of PSYOP equipment, knowing the location is basic to coordinating transportation of personnel, equipment, and replacement parts to return the equipment to fully operational status or replace it.

**CAUTION**

**In multinational tactical operations centers and other comparable locations, be very cautious about placing the location of units, equipment, friendly local nationals, and other sensitive information on maps, especially with grid coordinates. If compromised local nationals or infiltrators have access to the information, they may endanger the people and capabilities shown.**

The use of offset location indicators aids in precise placement of symbols as well as the inclusion of grid coordinates. Figure 3-3, page 45, depicts a notional map with the locations of a company headquarters, a tactical product development detachment, a tactical detachment, and lower echelon teams. In addition, locators also show the coordinates of radio station and retransmission equipment.

**Figure 3-3. Notional map with locator symbols and coordinates for units**

Legend content:

**Frames:**
- friendly unit
- headquarters element
- friendly land equipment

**Echelons:**
- I — company echelon
- ●●● — platoon echelon
- Ø — team echelon

**Icons:**
- infantry
- PSYOP
- broadcast transmitter antennae
- graveyard or cemetery

**Modifiers:**
- vehicle mounted
- **RAD** radio
- **RTNS** retransmission
- **TAC** tactical
- **TPDD** tactical product development detachment
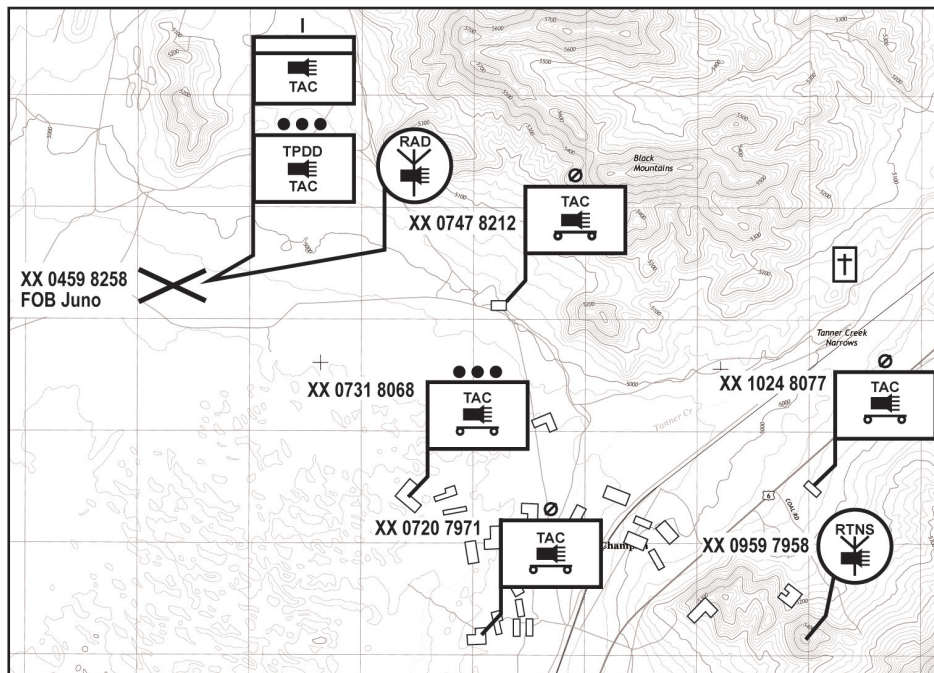
**Amplifiers:**
XX 0459 8258, XX 0747 8212, XX 0731 8068, XX 0720 7971, XX 1024 8077 and XX 0959 7958 are text amplifiers for grid coordinates.

**FOB** forward operating base

Map labels:
- XX 0459 8258 FOB Juno
- XX 0747 8212
- XX 0731 8068
- XX 0720 7971
- XX 1024 8077
- XX 0959 7958
- Black Mountains
- Tanner Creek Narrows

Depicting activities is also a simple task. In figure 3-4, page 47, several colored symbols depict a number of notional significant actions, known as SIGACTs, as well as their eight-digit coordinates.

In figure 3-4, the first symbol (XX 0746 8218) depicts graffiti by an unknown perpetrator. The second symbol (XX 0745 8137) depicts a destroyed local national, heavy print facility (note the red bar indicating destroyed). Associated with the print facility is a bombing incident at the same location. Due south of the print facility are symbols for a hoax or decoy riot (XX 0771 8013) just above a symbol for an improvised explosive device detonation (XX 0791 7936). Finally, to the right (east) there are symbols for the location of a friendly religious leader (XX 0897 8049) and a PSYOP-sponsored meeting (XX 0983 8002).

Aside from using symbols to plot the current location of units, equipment, events, activities, and other items of interest to commanders and staff, symbols are vital in depicting planned actions or orders. The use of control measures gives further information about what the symbols depict and what planners intend for them.

**Frames:**

| | |
|---|---|
| (yellow cloverleaf) | unknown activity |
| (green rectangle) | neutral land installation |
| (red rectangle) | destroyed operational condition |
| (green rectangle) | neutral unit |
| (red diamond) | hostile activity |
| (blue rectangle) | friendly activity |

**Icons:**

| | |
|---|---|
| (graffiti symbol) | graffitti |
| (printed media symbol) | printed media |
| BOMB | bomb |
| (explosion symbol) | explosion |
| RIOT | civil rioting |
| (individual symbol) | individual |
| IED | improvised explosive device |
| (PSYOP symbol) | PSYOP |

**Text Amplifiers:**

XX 0746 8218, XX 0745 8137, XX 0771 8013, XX 0897 8049, XX 0791 7936 and XX 0983 8002 are text amplifiers for grid coordinates.

**Modifiers:**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ◄◄◄ | hoax or decoy | CIV | civilian | MTG | meeting |
| (cross symbol) | graveyard or cemetery | H | heavy | REL | religious |
| | | LDR | leader | | |

**Figure 3-4. Notional map with colored locator symbols and coordinates for activities**

47

## Symbols and Control Measures

According to MIL-STD-2525D, control measures are "directives given to assign responsibilities, coordinate fires and maneuver and control operations… [and] can be displayed as points, lines, areas, or tactical mission tasks." Control measures translate orders into graphic representations of what units will do under those orders. Figure 3-5 depicts a simple picture of a PSYOP detachment and its three subordinate teams along with the control measures in the shape of arrows that means follow and support. The arrows lead from the teams to mechanized Infantry units with whom they will be operating. Since the graphic is more complex, the attached legend enhances understanding of the combined symbols for units and control measures. However, a legend would be unavailable in a real scenario and it would be the reader's responsibility to know the symbols.

Figure 3-4, page 47, depicted many different units in a complex operation, but in simplified form, to illustrate how orders for the teams would be displayed in pictorial form. In figure 3-5, page 49, the order depicted is simply to follow and support, which is a general instruction. Depiction of orders can be further refined to be even more specific as to what an element or unit will do in sequence of actions. Figure 3-6, page 50, depicts a two-part sequence for tasking a tactical team.
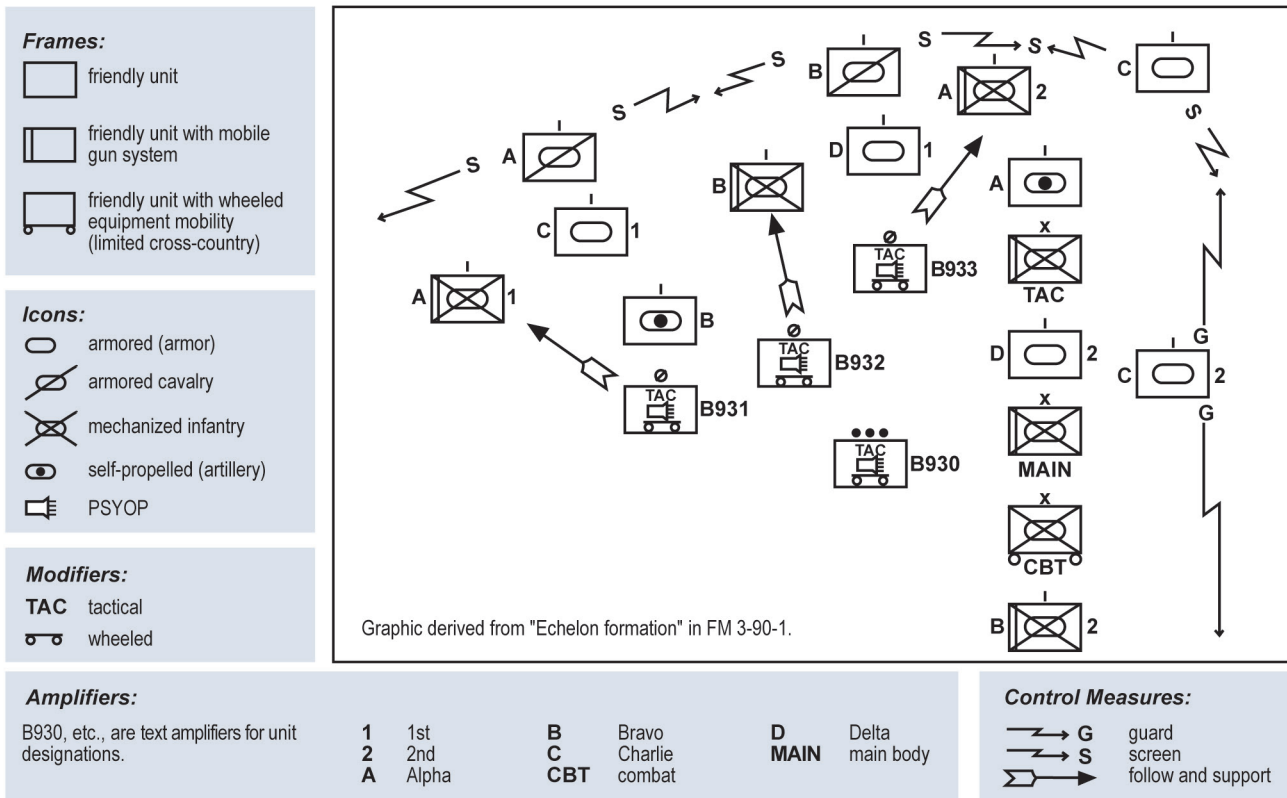
**Figure 3-5. Notional unit symbols and control measures**

**Frames:**
- friendly unit
- planned friendly unit activity

**Icons:**
- PSYOP

**Modifiers:**
- TAC — tactical
- LS — loudspeaker
- wheeled

**Echelons:**
- Ø — team

TAC

111830ZOCT19
XX 0687 8191

LS

LY19A01abLS5802

**Text Amplifiers:**

| | |
|---|---|
| 111830ZOCT19 | date-time group |
| XX 0687 8191 | location grid coordinates |
| LY19A01abLS5802 | loudspeaker broadcast (unique message identification number) |

**Control Measures:**
- axis of advance
- support by fire position

**Figure 3-6. Notional map with control measures for a tactical PSYOP team**

In figure 3-6, page 50, the first part of the control measure consists of a wide arrow that depicts the orders instructing the tactical team to move in a specific direction. Upon reaching a precise location (XX 0687 8191), the team then executes a planned loudspeaker broadcast LY19A01abLS5802 (the dashed line around the broadcast denotes planned) at a specific time.

From the simple to the complex, commanders can direct their attached TPTs in coordination with a variety of other capabilities. Figure 3-7, page 52, depicts how multiple TPTs could operate with Infantry and mechanized and armored Infantry units to fix, block, and canalize enemy Infantry in a notional area. Like figure 3-6, additional information can depict if any loudspeaker messages were to be broadcast or deception activities executed.

In figure 3-7, in the upper left (northwest), a TPT assists two mechanized Infantry units in fixing an enemy Infantry unit in place. How the TPT does that is not specified and would be up to the initiative of the team leader. To the right (east), another team assists two other mechanized Infantry units in blocking two enemy Infantry units. Finally, at the bottom of the map (south) a TPT assists an armored Infantry unit in canalizing an enemy Infantry unit. Like the TPTs located to the northwest and east, the southern TPT lacks specific direction (much like in figure 3-5, where the control measures merely signified follow and support). The specific manner in which the TPT would assist the unit of attachment is very much METT-TC dependent.

**Frames:**

friendly unit

Stryker unit (infantry in armor protected wheeled vehicles)

hostile infantry unit

**Echelon:**

⦰ team echelon

**Icons:**

mechanized infantry

PSYOP

graveyard or cemetery

**Modifiers:**

vehicle mounted

TAC tactical

**Control Measures:**

—|—B—— block

canalize

F fix
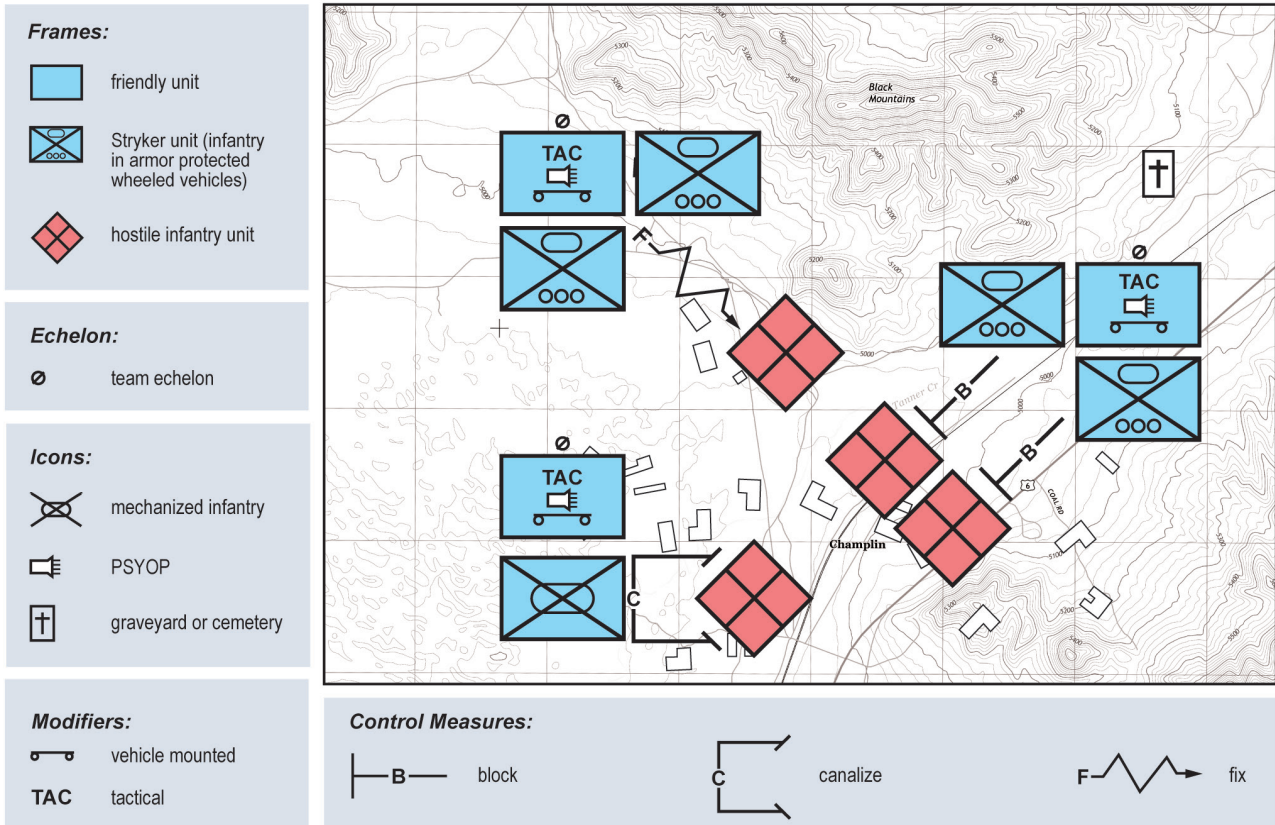
**Figure 3-7. Notional map with control measures for fixing, blocking, and canalization** **52**

All of the previous examples are tactical team-focused. There are a number of other types of missions and operations involving nontactical PSYOP elements and units. The rest of this chapter provides several examples for influence-focused activities and actions.

For ad hoc PSYOP-based organizations like task forces, symbology focuses on facilities, equipment of particular interest, actions, and activities almost exclusively. The first example, figure 3-8, page 54, depicts the location of a mobile radio station and its notional broadcast coverage area.

*Note:* Although broadcast radio station antennas are omnidirectional (in a 360-degree pattern), for illustration purposes, the accompanying control measures depict the broadcast as more focused in the direction of the inhabited areas.
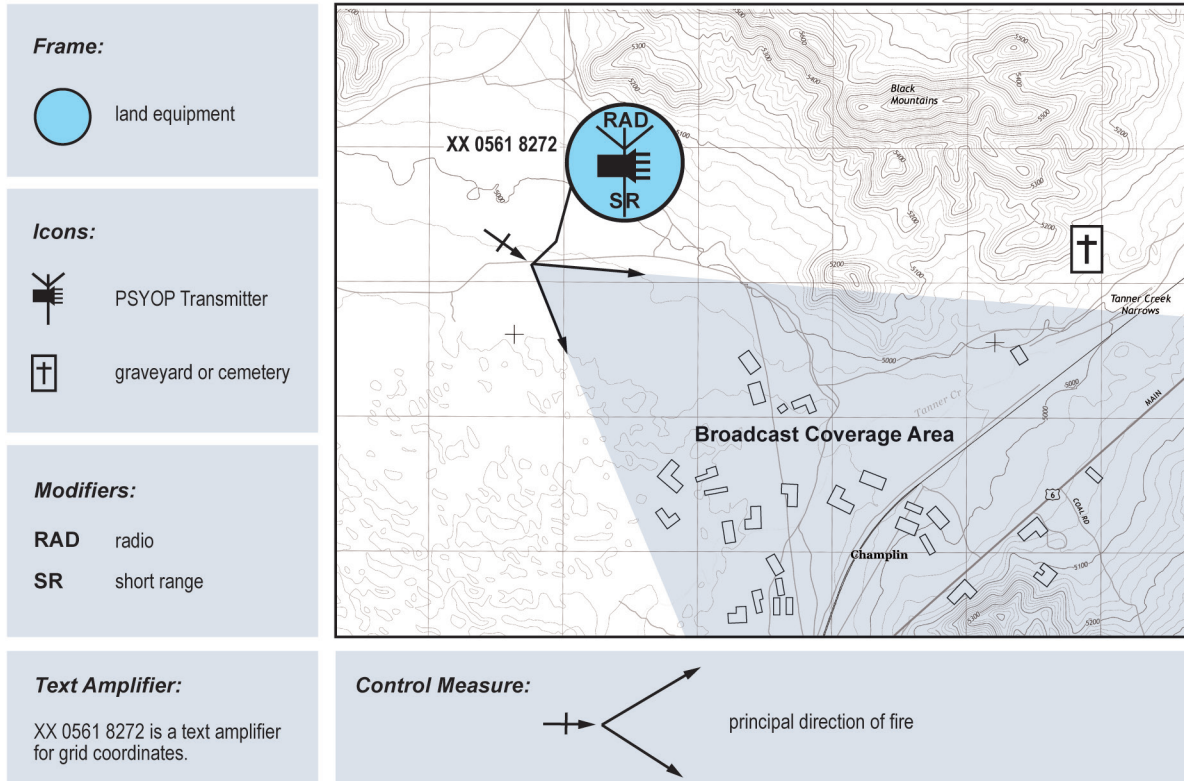
**Figure 3-8. Notional radio broadcast coverage area map**

Another long-standing messaging means is the leaflet drop. Over the years the precision has increased through the use of more accurate calculations and targeting methods. Consequently, the likely dispersion patterns can be graphically displayed to show in what areas the leaflets will probably fall, depending on accurate forecast of weather conditions and drop calculations. For more information on leaflet drop calculations, refer to GTA 33-01-003, *Aerial Delivery Operations*. Figure 3-9 depicts three release points, as well as the probable leaflet dispersion direction and pattern for a leaflet drop over a notional populated area. Rather than show each drop point with a separate symbol, one symbol stands for all three release points, which are individually shown as points with coordinates. If necessary and informative, additional information can be included to show the number of leaflets and other information.
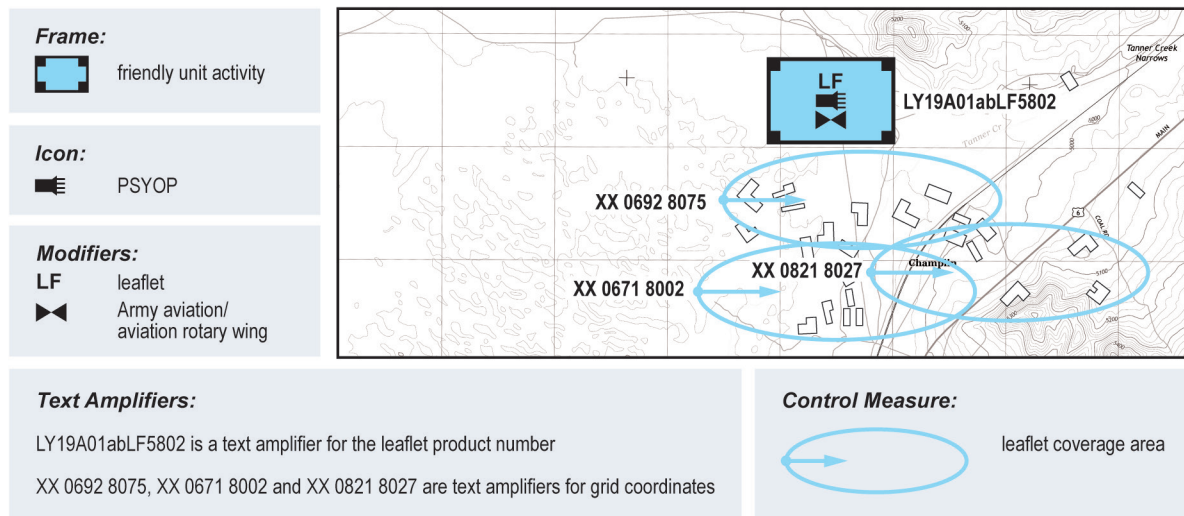


**Figure 3-9. Notional leaflet drop locations and coverage areas**

Leaflet drops are an old technological platform for message delivery—cloth-covered bi-planes dropped leaflets on German troops in World War I. Newer technologies are increasingly supplanting the older methods of message delivery, but symbology retains the flexibility to depict the newer platforms.

For example, many developing countries lack many basic infrastructure services, but have cellular phone providers, at least in urban areas. PSYOP forces can and have used that technology as a messaging platform. Figure 3-10 illustrates how a cell phone text message could be depicted, to include the specific message and the date-time group of execution.

**Frames:**

friendly unit activity

neutral land equipment

hostile unit

**Icons:**

telecommunications

PSYOP

meeting

graveyard or cemetery

**Modifiers:**

| | |
|---|---|
| CM | cellular/mobile |
| FF | foreign fighters |
| T | telephone |
| WR | wireless message |

**Text Amplifiers:**

XX 0800 8209 and XX 0932 7952 are text amplifiers for grid coordinates

091200ZOCT19 is a text amplifier for date-time group of execution

LY19A01abWR5802 is a text amplifier for the specific message delivered

**Figure 3-10. Notional cell phone message delivery to targeted groups**

In figure 3-10, page 56, the map shows the location of the cellular network broadcast towers and their broadcast range or footprint. There is also a symbol for the target group, in this case foreign fighters (general location). Finally, there is a symbol for the wireless (WR) message (text message) sent over the cellular/mobile (CM) network using an activity symbol. Amplifiers for the message symbol provide additional detail as to time of delivery and what specific message went out. If the network supports phone-based social media applications, then specific users can be targeted with more tailored messages.

Commercial telecommunication systems can also allow for triangulation of user location. If PSYOP forces can access that information, recipient locations can be plotted on maps to show additional detail. For example, if targeted users are clustered in a particular area or district when a specific message goes out, the symbols, location, timing, and so on, may provide insights into patterns of life that better enable planning to increase influence effort effectiveness. Figure 3-11, page 58, depicts a notional scenario where a text message goes out and the recipients' phones ping or are identified and located.

**Frames:**

friendly unit activity

neutral land equipment

**Icons:**

telecommunications

PSYOP

graveyard or cemetery

**Modifiers:**

CM    cellular/mobile
T     telephone
WR    wireless message

**Text Amplifiers:**

XX 0800 8209 and XX 0932 7952 are text amplifiers for grid coordinates

091200ZOCT19 is a text amplifier for date-time group of execution

LY19A01abWR5802 is a text amplifier for the specific message delivered

**Figure 3-11. Notional cell phone message delivery and recipient clusters**

When conducting web-based activities, general targeting of an area is possible, much like advertisers do with Internet-based streaming services where advertisements can be tailored to specific locations or areas. In cases where targeting focuses on specific Internet users, a similar methodology applies to depicting Internet activities. Symbology is not intended or easily adapted to depicting virtual activities, but the physical aspects of operations can be displayed in reference to target location(s), platform, date-time group, specific message, and other information.

In conclusion, anything existing or occurring in the physical world can be depicted on a map through symbology. The key is knowing the fundamentals of icons and symbols to ensure what is conveyed adheres to commonly understood formats. Well-constructed symbols instantly convey key information to a viewer and can actually shorten the time otherwise needed to explain what is on display. This chapter provided an overview of the practical application of the fundamentals discussed in previous chapters. For more in-depth symbology to address complex maneuvers and activities, refer to the MIL-STD-2525D and FM 1-02.2.

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# Appendix A

# Icon and Symbol Compilation

This appendix provides basic, but complete symbols which lack amplifier information, such as echelon, location, type, and so on. The examples listed are a start, but users can create new and different types to address the particular requirements of the unit and operations.

This appendix contains a number of influence-focused or related icons, modifiers, and full symbols. Although the examples can be used as they are, operational requirements will likely render this compilation incomplete and insufficient. The intent of this appendix is not to give the user an all-inclusive listing of every symbol that will be used, but to give examples of what properly built symbols look like. It is up to the user to build the required symbols to meet operational needs. The procedures outlined in this publication provide the user with the knowledge and means to build the required symbols.

More in-depth learning on symbology and its usage on maps and overlays come from unit training and formal school instruction. It is incumbent on the student to adhere to the rules and policies outlined in the source publications used to develop this document.

**Figure A-1. Example basic Psychological Operations symbols**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unmanned Aircraft System | TV | RAD | Video Imagery | CYB |
| RTNS | C2 | CCC | FWD | TNG |
| Retransmission | Command and Control | Cross Cultural Communication (NATO) | Forward | Training |
| CRC | CBT | ENH | | |
| Crowd and Riot Control | Combat | Enhanced | Observer | Surveillance |

**Figure A-2. Sector 1 modifiers**
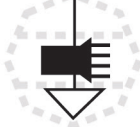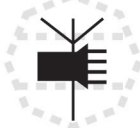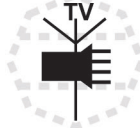
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ◯→◯ | TE | S | OPS | SPT |
| Mobile Adviser and Support | Tactical Exploitation | Smoke (Obstruction) | Operations | Support |
| ◀◀◀ | SOF | ISR | W | FAL |
| Hoax (Decoy) | Special Operations Forces | Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance | Written | False |
| ATT | INC | ASLT | COMP | EA |
| Attempted | Incident | Assault | Composite | Electronic Attack |

**Figure A-2. Sector 1 modifiers (continued)**
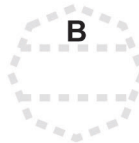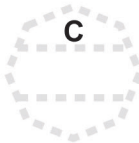
| A | B | C | F | U |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attack | Bomber | Cargo | Fighter | Utility (Aircraft Type) |
| V | P | PR | SUST | MM |
| VSTOL/VTOL | Patrol | Personnel Recovery | Sustainment | Multimission |
| J | | IPW | MN | TA |
| Electronic Combat (EC) Jammer | Fixed Wing | Interrogation | Multinational | Target Acquisition |

**Figure A-2. Sector 1 modifiers (continued)**
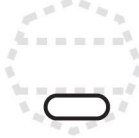
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SEC** | **PM** | **TAC** | ⌄ | ◠◠ |
| Security | Preventive Maintenance | Tactical | Air Mobile/ Air Assault | Airborne |
| **DIG** | **E** | ▭ | **STR** | ⊙⊙⊙ |
| Digital | Equipment | Armor Protected Vehicle | Strategic | Wheeled |
| ○—○ | **SC** | **MC** | ◡ | ⊸—⊂ |
| Towed | Single Channel | Multi-Channel | Riverine | Recovery (Maintenance) |

**Figure A-3. Sector 2 modifiers**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **H** | **M** | **L** | **L/M** | **U** |
| Heavy | Medium | Light | Light and Medium | Utility (Capability) |
| **CR** | **SR** | **MR** | **LR** | **HLA** |
| Close Range | Short Range | Medium Range | Long Range | High to Low Altitude |
| **HA** | **HMA** | **MA** | **MLA** | **LA** |
| High Altitude | High to Medium Altitude | Medium Altitude | Medium to Low Altitude | Low Altitude |

**Figure A-3. Sector 2 modifiers (continued)**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CA** | **IO** |  |  |  |
| Civil Affairs | Information Operations | Video Imagery (Combat Camera) | Aviation Rotary Wing | Aviation Composite |
|  | **EW** | **SF** | **SOF** | **GO** |
| Aviation Fixed Wing | Electronic Warfare | Special Forces | Special Operations Forces | Government Organization |
| **SPK** |  | **MI** | **CIV** | **SAR** |
| Speaker | Nonlethal Weapon | Military Intelligence | Civilian | Search and Rescue |

**Figure A-4. Additional commonly used icons**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Graffiti | Riot | Dead Body | Sabotage | Improvised Explosive Device Event |
| Improvised Explosive Device Suicide Bomber | Civil Disturbance | Demonstration | Meeting | Speaker |
| Foraging/ Searching | Patrolling | Emergency Food Distribution | Microbial Infestation | Volcanic Eruption |

**Figure A-4. Additional commonly used icons (continued)**
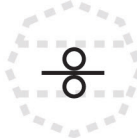
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Individual** | **Organization or Group** | **Bomb** | **Printed Media** | **Safe House** |
| **Natural Event** | **Coerced/ Impressed Recruit** | **Willing Recruit** | **Polling Place/ Election** | **Religious Speaker** |
| **Leader or Leadership** | **Production** | **Service** | **Storage** | **Test** |

**Figure A-4. Additional commonly used icons (continued)**

| CIV | DPRE | FF | LDR | NGO |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civilian | Displaced Person(s), Refugee(s) and Evacuee(s) | Foreign Fighters | Leader or Leadership | Nongovernmental Organization |
| | REL | TGT | TER | R |
| House-to-House | Religious or Religious Organization | Targeted Individual or Organization | Terrorist or Terrorist Organization | Reconnaissance |

**Figure A-5. Sector 1 modifiers for commonly used icons**

| Amplifier | Description |
|:---:|:---:|
| Ø | Team/Crew |
| ● | Squad |
| ● ● | Section |
| ● ● ● | Platoon/Detachment |
| I | Company/Battery/Troop |
| I I | Battalion/Squadron |
| I I I | Regiment/Group |
| X | Brigade |
| X X | Division |
| X X X | Corps |
| X X X X | Army |
| X X X X X | Army Group |
| X X X X X X | Theater |
| ++ | Command |

*Note:* Command is a unit or units, an organization, or an area under the command of one individual. It does not correspond to any of the other echelons.

**Figure B: Echelon amplifiers**

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **3-D** | three dimensional |
| **A** | attack |
| **ADP** | Army doctrine publication |
| **ASLT** | assault |
| **ATT** | attempted |
| **B** | bomber |
| **BOMB** | bomb; bombing |
| **C** | cargo; coerced |
| **C²** | command and control |
| **CA** | Civil Affairs |
| **CBT** | combat |
| **CCC** | cross cultural communication |
| **CIV** | civilian |
| **CM** | cellular/mobile |
| **COMP** | composite |
| **CR** | close range |
| **CRC** | crowd and riot control |
| **CYB** | cyberspace |
| **DIG** | digital |
| **DIST** | distribution |
| **DOD** | Department of Defense |
| **DPRE** | displaced person(s), refugee(s) and evacuee(s) |
| **E** | equipment |
| **EA** | electronic attack |
| **EM** | electromagnetic |
| **ENH** | enhanced |
| **EW** | electronic warfare |
| **F** | fighter |

| | |
|---|---|
| **FAL** | false |
| **F2F** | face-to-face |
| **FF** | foreign fighters |
| **FWD** | forward |
| **GO** | government organization |
| **GTA** | graphic training aid |
| **H** | heavy |
| **HA** | high altitude |
| **HLA** | high to low altitude |
| **HMA** | high to medium altitude |
| **HMMWV** | high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle |
| **IED** | improvised explosive device |
| **INC** | incident |
| **IO** | information operations |
| **IPW** | interrogation |
| **ISR** | intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance |
| **J** | jammer |
| **L** | light |
| **LA** | low altitude |
| **L/M** | light and medium |
| **LDR** | leader or leadership |
| **LR** | long range |
| **M** | medium |
| **MA** | medium altitude |
| **MASS** | demonstration (planned) |
| **MC** | multi-channel |
| **METT-TC** | mission, enemy, terrain and weather, troops and support available, time available and civil considerations |
| **MI** | Military Intelligence |
| **MLA** | medium to low altitude |
| **MM** | multimission |

## Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **MN** | multinational |
| **MR** | medium range |
| **MRAP** | Mine Resistant Ambush Protected |
| **MTG** | meeting |
| **NAT** | natural event |
| **NATO** | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| **NGO** | nongovernmental organization |
| **OPS** | operations |
| **P** | patrol |
| **PM** | preventive maintenance |
| **PR** | personnel recovery |
| **PROD** | production |
| **PSYACT** | psychological action |
| **PSYOP** | Psychological Operations |
| **R** | reconnaissance |
| **RAD** | radio |
| **REL** | religious or religious organization |
| **RIOT** | riot |
| **RTNS** | retransmission |
| **S** | smoke |
| **SAB** | sabotage |
| **SAFE** | safe house |
| **SAR** | search and rescue |
| **SC** | single channel |
| **SEC** | security |
| **SF** | Special Forces |
| **SIGACT** | significant actions |
| **SOF** | special operations forces |
| **SPK** | speaker |
| **SPT** | support |

| | |
|---|---|
| **SR** | short range |
| **STOR** | storage |
| **STR** | strategic |
| **SUST** | sustainment |
| **SVC** | service |
| **TA** | target audience; target acquisition |
| **TAC** | tactical |
| **TE** | tactical exploitation |
| **TER** | terrorist or terrorist organization |
| **TEST** | test |
| **TGT** | targeted individual or organization |
| **TNG** | training |
| **TOC** | tactical operations center |
| **TPDD** | tactical product development detachment |
| **TPT** | tactical psychological operations team |
| **TV** | television |
| **U** | utility |
| **U.S.** | United States |
| **V** | vertical and/or short take-off and landing or vertical takeoff and landing |
| **VOTE** | election/voting |
| **V/STOL** | vertical and/or short take-off and landing |
| **VTOL** | vertical takeoff and landing |
| **W** | written; willing |
| **WR** | wireless message |

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