



## DEFENCE UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE WEBSITE ORDNANCE INFORMATION SHEET

**ALL UXO MAY BE HAZARDOUS IF DISTURBED  
DO NOT TOUCH – TAKE A PHOTO – MARK THE LOCATION – CALL THE POLICE**

### SIGNAL FLARES (HAND-FIRED/RIFLE-PROJECTED)

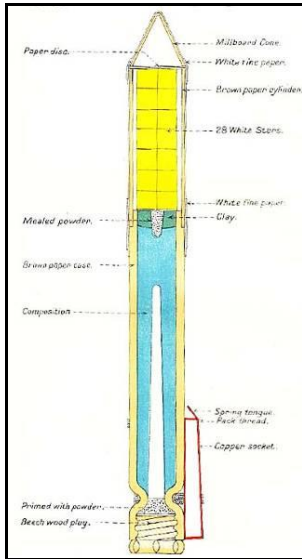
#### Description

- Hand-held and rifle-projected signal flares are a pyrotechnic that produce a brilliant light (without an explosion) and are typically used for signalling or illumination. They have been widely used by both military forces and civilians in Australia for well over 100 years. Modern hand-held flares are typically projected into the air by a small explosive charge and can rise to a height of 180 to 250m. Many other types of flares (e.g. ground trip-flares used by soldiers and defensive flares deployed by aircraft) have been employed in Australia but are not described in this sheet.
- A wide variety of UK, US and Australian hand-held flares have been used in Australia from WWI to the present day by various military forces as well as government agencies (e.g. Police), commercial companies and individuals. Some of the common types include the following:
  - **Pre-WWII UK Signal Flares** – c. WWI until approx. 1920; made of tinned plate case and fired from a flare gun or a special adapter cup for rifles.
  - **WWII UK Signal Flares** – Usually one or more coloured or white stars; often parachute-suspended flares or ‘*star-bursts*’ comprising a rolled paper cylinder and fired from a 2½ inch rifle discharger ‘cup’ using ballistite cartridges. Other variants included hand-fired signal rockets that rose to some 300m before bursting (e.g. Signal Rockets, ½ lb and 1 lb).
  - **WWII & Later US Signal Flares** - Usually one or more coloured or white stars; often parachute-suspended flares or ‘*5 star cluster*’ types. Typically rifle-projected, fired by pyrotechnic pistols or hand-held/fired. Hand-held/fired variants have been widely used by Australian forces after WWII, during Korean and Vietnam Wars until recent times.
  - **Distress Signals/Flares** – a wide variety of hand-held/fired flares have been used by various nations training in Australia as well as the Australian Navy, Army and Air Force.
- Used throughout Australia by military forces involved in training or manoeuvres. May also be found washed ashore on beaches.

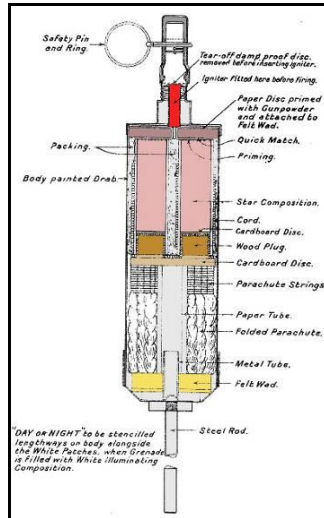
#### Technical Data

- Length : Varies depending on type – approx. 200-300 mm
- Diameter : Varies depending on type – approx 30-60 mm
- Weight : Varies depending on type – approx 300-600 grams
- Fuse/Burster : Typically contain a fuze and explosive propelling charge.
- Filling : Various explosive charges and pyrotechnic fillings.
- Identification :
  - The body is typically a cylindrical canister of metal, cardboard or plastic (red, white or silver).
  - Various coloured bands or lettering may be visible (red, yellow, blue); colours often designate the colour of the signal (green, red, amber, white).
  - Other colours may have been used or colours may have faded over time. It can be difficult to distinguish between dangerous and safe items - **treat all found munitions as dangerous.**

**Images**



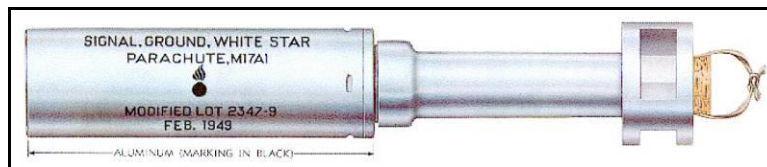
**Figure 1 – UK Signal Rocket, 1 lb**



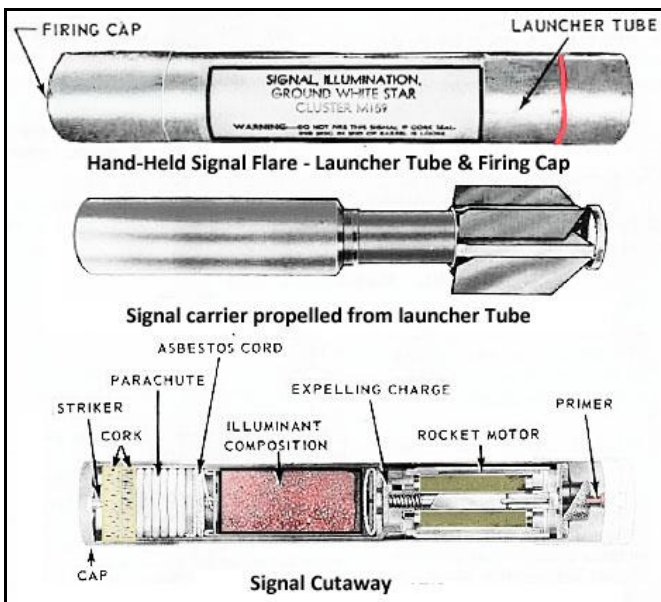
**Figure 2 - Pre-WWII UK rifle-projected signal grenade No 32, Mk III**



**Figure 3 - Signal carrier found in the field**



**Figure 4 - Typical US rifle-projected signal flare**



**Figure 5 - Typical US/Australian hand-held/fired signal flare**



**Figure 6 - - US M185 distress/signal flare kit**



**Figure 7 - - Military personnel using hand-held distress/signal flare (M185)**