AIR FORCE DOCTRINE PUBLICATION 3-50

PERSONNEL RECOVERY



U.S. AIR FORCE

26 September 2025

Air Force Doctrine Publication 3-50,
Personnel Recovery

Table of Contents

Foreword i
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION 1
ISOLATED PERSONNEL 2
PERSONNEL RECOVERY CAPABILITIES 3
PERSONNEL RECOVERY SYSTEM 7
Chapter 2: COMMAND AND CONTROL 9
PERSONNEL RECOVERY ORGANIZATIONS 9
COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS AND AUTHORITIES 11
Chapter 3: PREPARATION 13
Chapter 4: PLANNING 15
Chapter 5: EXECUTION 21
RECOVERY FORCES 23
DYNAMIC RESCUE 26
References 28

FOREWORD

Air Force Doctrine Publication (AFDP) 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*, provides operational level guidance for the preparation, planning, execution, and adaptation of United States Air Force (USAF) personnel recovery (PR) operations across the competition continuum. It underscores the criticality of PR as a USAF mission, highlighting its integral role in safeguarding our personnel.

This document details a proactive and integrated approach to PR due to the evolving nature of modern warfare and the increasingly complex environments. Recognizing this reality, AFDP 3-50 champions the comprehensive PR system encompassing robust preparation, meticulous planning, decisive execution, and continuous adaptation.

From fostering a culture of readiness among individual Airmen to methodically coordinating joint and multinational recovery efforts, this publication provides a framework for ensuring the safe return of isolated personnel (IP). It details the essential roles of designated PR forces, augmenting assets, and the critical support functions contributing to successful recovery operations.

AFDP 3-50 serves as a vital resource for commanders, staff, and operators at all levels, providing clear best practices to enhance the effectiveness and resilience of USAF PR efforts. The best practices in this publication focus on mitigating risks, safeguarding our Airmen, and ultimately, ensuring mission success.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Joint Publication (JP) 3-50 defines personnel recovery (PR) as "the sum of military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to prepare for and execute the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel (IP)." PR responsibilities to prevent, plan for, and coordinate a response to isolating events include all United States Government (USG) departments and agencies.

Code of the Air Rescueman

It is my duty, as a member of the Air Rescue Service, to save life and aid the injured. I will be prepared at all times to perform my assigned duties quickly and efficiently, placing these duties before personal desires and comforts. These things I do, THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE.

–Brig Gen Richard T. Knight
Commander, Air Rescue Service
1 December 1946-8 July 1952

Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5100.01, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components*, also specifies *global personnel recovery* as a function of the United States Air Force (USAF). While PR is common to every military service, the USAF is the only service specifically directed to conduct PR on a global scale.

The USAF maintains trained PR forces to locate and recover IP. Rescue forces should be ready to launch and recover any IP, regardless of Service, any time, any place. Confidence in the air component's ability to recover IP through deliberately trained PR forces adds resiliency and resolve to the joint force and the coalition.

- PR is a key element to sustain the morale, cohesion, and capability of forces.
- Successful recovery of an IP is a force multiplier, allowing personnel returned to friendly control to fight again.
- Rescue is integral to operations and should be considered across the competition continuum.
- PR preserves critical combat resources and denies adversaries the opportunity to exploit the intelligence and propaganda value of captured personnel.

USAF PR consists of: (1) deliberately trained PR forces, (2) leaders who manage PR programs and missions, (3) Airmen trained for potential isolation and recovery.[1] This doctrine focuses on USAF personnel planning and executing the military option. However, the air component may also be tasked to support diplomatic and civil PR options.

Both combatants and noncombatants are at risk of isolating events. Terrorists, insurgents, criminal networks, pirates, or other non-state actors can be embedded in urban areas or less well-defined battlefields and seek to exploit IP. Areas previously thought relatively safe are becoming increasingly dangerous, making diplomatic and civil recovery options more difficult and USAF PR options more complex and riskier.

[1] See JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*, for additional information.

The USAF conducts global PR operations, including theater-wide combat and civil search and rescue (SAR), in coordination with the other military Services, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and Department of Defense (DoD) components. The USAF conducts PR using the fastest and most effective means to recover IP. USAF PR forces deploy to recover personnel or equipment with specially outfitted aircraft and vehicles, trained aircrews, and ground recovery teams (RT) with PR support personnel and capabilities supporting combatant commander (CCDR) operations.[2] USAF special operations forces (AFSOF) maintain comparable PR capabilities that complement and support USAF PR operations as required. AFSOF PR primarily supports USSOCOM PR, under the requirements of their component's personnel recovery coordination cell (PRCC).

CCDRs establish theater entry requirements to ensure all personnel receive rules of engagement (ROE), training, and resources commensurate with the assessed risk, including the potential for isolation. Entry requirements for USAF personnel are typically outlined in the Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG).[3] To aid CCDRs in managing their PR programs, USAF Guardian Angel (GA) operational support activities ensure consistent PR management. Combat Rescue Officer (CROs) and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) specialists coordinate with commanders, staff personnel, and C2 nodes to ensure an intact PR system during preparation, planning, execution, and adaptation. CROs and SERE specialists ensure education and training are performed, conduct risk assessments, and assess PR processes at each command level while monitoring plans and communicating with recovery forces. Essentially, GA operational support activities provide commanders with PR assessments to mitigate the risk of isolation.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE JOINT FUNCTIONS AND DOD DIRECTED FUNCTIONS

The joint functions are related capabilities and activities grouped to help joint force commanders (JFCs) integrate, synchronize, and direct joint operations. These joint functions include command and control (C2), information, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, and sustainment.[4] The USAF plays a critical role in executing joint functions, and PR directly contributes to the accomplishment of the joint function of protection. Protection encompasses all efforts to secure and defend the effectiveness and survivability of mission-related military and nonmilitary personnel, equipment, facilities, information, and infrastructure deployed or located within or outside the boundaries of a given operational area (OA) to maintain mission effectiveness. Successful PR mission execution is enabled by the functions of C2, information, intelligence, movement and maneuver, and fires.

ISOLATED PERSONNEL

The central element of PR is the IP. The capabilities and limitations of IP significantly influence the recovery effort and can affect the amount of time recovery forces remain exposed in hostile environments. As risk increases, efforts to prepare IP should increase

[2] For additional information on command relationships, see JP 1, Vol 2, *The Joint Force.*
[3] See the DoD *Foreign Clearance Guide* website, for additional information.
[4] For additional information on USAF and joint functions, see JP 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations.*

to match the situation. In locations where no dedicated PR forces exist, IP preparation measures may be the most proactive measure available. Preparation for potential IP includes formalized SERE training and detailed mission planning through intelligence briefings and OA analysis.

Isolated Persons are:
US Military, DoD civilians, contracted personnel, and others designated by the President or SecDef.

Who are:
Separated from their unit or agency, as an individual or group.

While:
Participating in a US-sponsored military activity or mission and are, or maybe, in a situation where they must survive, evade, resist, or escape.

Includes:
Members on leave status and contractors authorized to accompany the force based on what benefits are provided to their employees.

–JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*

PERSONNEL RECOVERY CAPABILITIES

Individual. IP are expected to survive, evade, resist, and escape or otherwise assist in their recovery for as long as possible, which may enable other PR capabilities and occasionally result in a self-recovery. The individual capability is exercised whenever an isolating event occurs and lasts until the return to friendly control and reintegration. The USAF provides Airmen with specialized training that may assist individual capability. Select personnel identified as being at high risk of isolation receive specialized training to aid their ability to survive, evade, resist, and escape to ultimately return to friendly control. Irregular warfare operations place additional non-trained personnel at risk, resulting in a diverse pool of potential IP. Commanders should evaluate assigned missions to determine risk to their personnel and advocate accordingly for training.

Component. Component commanders are expected to plan for and execute PR in support of their operations. Components exercise unique PR capabilities to suit the needs of the missions and environments in which they operate, as discussed in detail in JP 3-50. The air component utilizes combat search and rescue (CSAR) as its primary PR method. **CSAR is defined as the tactics, techniques, and procedures performed by forces to affect the recovery of isolated personnel during combat.** CSAR is characterized by using conventional or special operations military forces to conduct the five PR execution tasks in a contested environment.[5]

[5] For additional information on component PR capabilities, see JP 3-50, *Joint Personnel Recovery*, Appendix H.

Component PR methods include:

- **Search and Rescue (SAR)** uses equipment and specialized rescue teams to search for and rescue distressed persons on land or at sea in permissive environments.
- **Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP)** is a Marine Corps PR method using a combination of air, land, and waterborne assets to recover personnel and equipment in contested environments. The TRAP mission differs from CSAR in that it usually does not involve extended visual search procedures to locate IP, particularly in a medium or high-air threat environment. TRAP assets may also be employed in the conduct of other non-recovery missions and called upon to perform recovery, as necessary.
- **Retasking Maneuver Forces** can include the use of nearby friendly forces who may or may not be trained and equipped as a rescue force to locate, support, and recover IP. A quick reaction force (QRF) is a common method used by the Army and Marine Corps to respond to multiple mission types adapting quickly to the situation at hand and provide timely response to a PR event.
- **Nonconventional Assisted Recovery (NAR)** is PR conducted by surrogates who are trained, supported, and controlled by special operations forces (SOF) or other government agency personnel who have been specifically directed to establish and operate human and physical infrastructures.
- **Unconventional Assisted Recovery (UAR)** are PR operations controlled by resistance forces and could be in conjunction with or facilitated by SOF.
- **Hostage Rescue** is a PR method used to recover IP who are specifically designated as hostages.

Joint. Although each component has unique capabilities, joint-level planners utilize all the component capabilities to develop an integrated plan for a joint operations area that provides broad PR coverage. Air component CSAR is nearly always integrated into joint PR operations.

PR Operations Against Anti-Access, Area-Denial (A2AD) Capabilities

Advancements in enemy anti-access, area denial capabilities greatly expand the range and lethality of adversary kill chains, which limits friendly freedom of action and raises risk to mission while making achievement of the joint force commander's objectives more difficult. Enemy A2AD systems employed in Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) increase the probability of a friendly force isolating event and significantly increase the difficulty of conducting CSAR operations to recover IP. Enemy A2AD impedes friendly force ability to mass assets for CSAR missions and will force CSAR forces to cover great distances of contested airspace to conduct their missions. PR planners should consider the operating area, acceptable level of risk, and air component commander guidance when determining how to recover IP in areas contested by A2AD systems.

Several solutions are possible:

- Use long-range fires capabilities to suppress enemy A2AD systems to create a window of time in which to conduct a CSAR operation.
- Request support through joint personnel recovery center (JPRC) for another component (such as the maritime component) to conduct recoveries with land or maritime assets.
- Establish and employ nonconventional and unconventional recovery methods. This solution requires significant preparation and coordination with Theater Special Operation Commands (TSOC) and other government agencies.

Multinational. Multinational partners may not have the same PR capabilities as United States (US) forces. Incorporating multinational partners for permissive PR or civil SAR capabilities is often useful. Host Nation (HN) law enforcement, intelligence, and security forces often have the best human intelligence in the OA, which can be obtained through the proper use of counterintelligence and force protection (FP) activities. HN PR support frees up low-density, high-demand USAF PR assets to focus on CSAR. Using multinational forces requires close coordination for security, communications, equipment interoperability, and to overcome language and cultural barriers.

Other Government Agencies (OGAs). Due to their participation in overseas operations, many OGAs (such as the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation) have developed varying degrees of recovery capabilities. These capabilities may be available to the air component through the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC), which has direct liaison authorized (DIRLAUTH) through the Department of State (DOS).

Personnel Recovery in Large Scale Combat Operations

In future conflicts, Airmen may face extended rescue timelines after isolating events because of sheer distance or when adversaries mass air defenses that threaten rescue assets. Commanders at all levels should set realistic expectations and prepare Airmen for non-standard rescue.

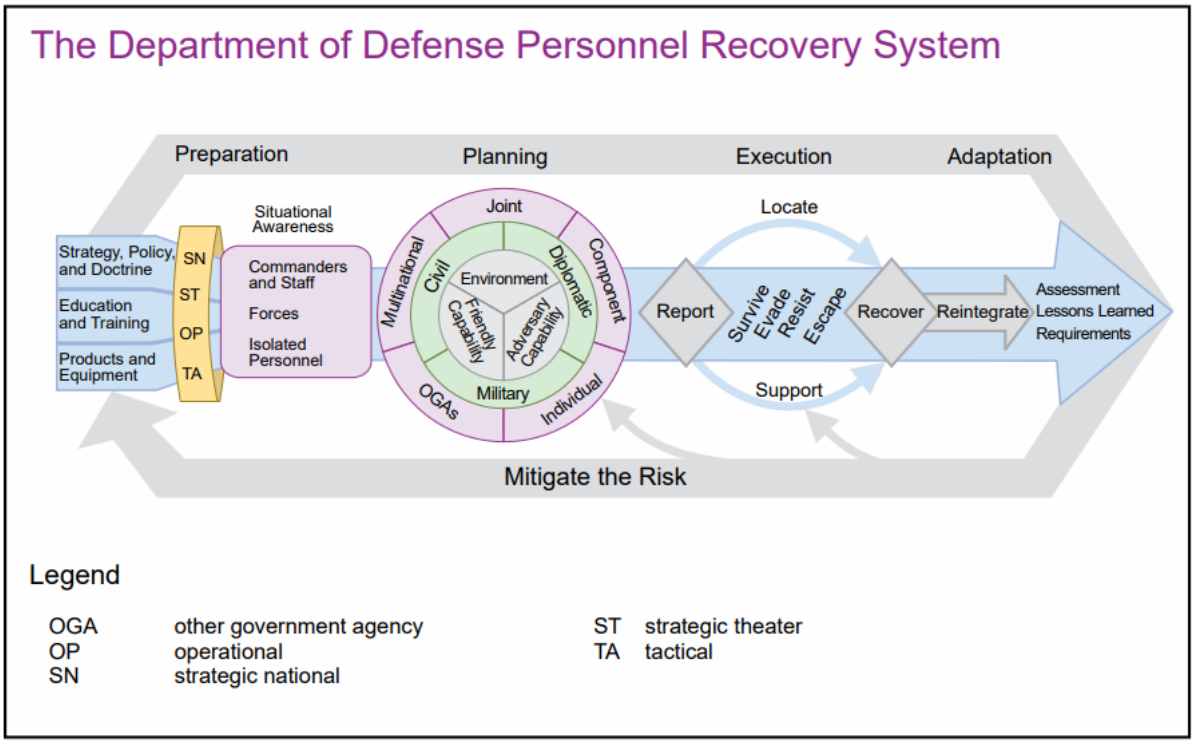
On 21 March 2011, F-15Es executed a long-range strike mission in the opening days of Operation ODYSSEY DAWN. The crew of BOLAR34 experienced an aircraft malfunction, and lost control of the jet, which forced both members to eject roughly 30 miles east of Benghazi.

US-sympathetic Libyan rebels found and took in Capt Stark. The rebels, now accompanying Capt Stark, unknowingly approached the location of the other downed aircrew, but an F-16 mistakenly identified them as an enemy convoy and strafed their vehicles, wounding some of the rebels. Capt Stark quickly deescalated the situation. The rebels then brought him to meet with local elders, where he negotiated for a driver to take him to Benghazi. There, he received basic medical care for his injuries. Capt Stark negotiated with the rebels for access to a computer with internet and a satellite phone, and then attempted to contact the US State Department, but was unsuccessful. He successfully called his parents and later obtained a phone number for a US embassy employee from his driver, contacting and authenticating himself with the employee. The rebels and later US government personnel escorted Capt Stark, acting as walking cargo, first to one Italian naval frigate then a carrier, and then to Catania, Italy, where he flew to Rome. In Rome, US attachés transferred him once before driving to Naples, then to Naval Air Station Sigonella, and finally to Naval Station Rota, for reintegration.

Capt Stark was on the ground for roughly 36 hours. In that time he worked with, and was transported by, multiple US government agencies, allies, partners, and sympathetic rebel forces, all working together to get him safely back into US custody. His two big lessons learned from the experience are that the DoD and US government will work extremely hard to bring an IP home, including using non-DoD assets; secondly, even though that is the case, “there is no one who wants to get home more than you, so you have to stay positive and keep working the problem,” to affect that rescue regardless of the situation.

–Derived from interview with Lt Col Tyler “Mask” Stark, Bolar34 WSO

PERSONNEL RECOVERY SYSTEM



"The Department of Defense Personnel Recovery System," from JP 3-50.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 3270.01C, *Personnel Recovery*, establishes three primary PR responsibilities: prevent, plan for, and respond to isolating events.[6] The DoD PR system, depicted above, is designed to fulfill the CJCSI directed responsibilities. The DoD PR system enables a complete and coordinated effort to recover US military, DoD civilians, and contractor personnel, and other personnel directed by the President or Secretary of Defense (SecDef). USAF capabilities, tactics, techniques, and procedures represent an integral part of the joint PR system which consists of the **preparation, planning, execution, and adaptation functions.** Although the activities within these functions can happen consecutively, they generally occur concurrently or, at a minimum, overlap in implementation. FP and focused PR planning, including evasion plans of action (EPAs) during combat operations, development of EPAs, detailed area studies, and review of DOS EPAs, are essential during operations outside declared theaters of active armed conflict. Finally, the USAF PR system and the DoD PR system are centered on five essential tasks: report, locate, support, recover, and reintegrate.

[6] See CJCSI 3270.01C, *Personnel Recovery*, and JP 3-50, *Joint Personnel Recovery*, for additional information.

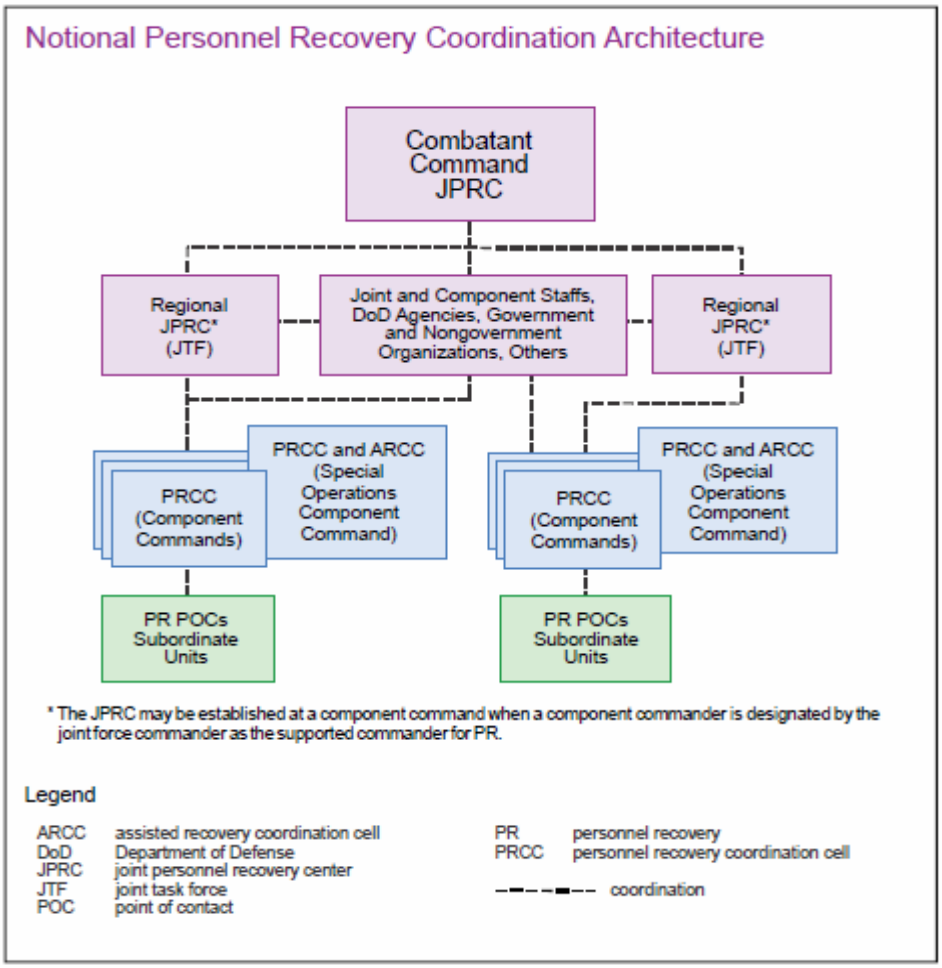
Adaptation

Adaptation is a PR function that continually assesses the entire DoD PR system to identify and mitigate PR gaps to alleviate risk and save lives on the battlefield. It is a joint effort of continuous assessment, innovation, and implementation throughout each step of the PR process to gather data from all services and develop best practices for all US forces to use. The goal of adaptation is to operationalize corrective actions and best practices through the improvement of capabilities and/or performance during operations and planning by using the Joint Lessons Learned Program (JLLP), the joint planning process (JPP), the joint planning process for air (JPPA), assessments, Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) and Air Force Lessons Learned (AFLL). Sharing PR information via proper dissemination at the appropriate level is essential to the overall success of adaptation and the continued success of returning IP safely to US control.

The USAF contributes CSAR lessons learned to the joint force processes, which capture inputs and provide outputs from all services via systems and processes such as JLLP, JPP, JPPA, Joint Risk Assessment Methodology, JCIDS, and AFLL.

CHAPTER 2: COMMAND AND CONTROL

Understanding command relationships and PR coordination authorities is critical to the successful implementation of PR activities within an area of responsibility (AOR). Each service component is responsible for organizing, training, and equipping to conduct PR of their forces and assist with the recovery of other IP within their area of operations (AO). The PRCC is the primary joint force component organization responsible for coordinating and controlling component PR missions. Additionally, the JFC establishes a JPRC as the primary joint force organization responsible for planning and coordinating PR within the assigned OA. The JFC may designate a component commander to coordinate joint PR. In this case, the component's PRCC may also function as the JPRC.



Notional Personnel Recovery Architecture" from JP 3-50

PERSONNEL RECOVERY ORGANIZATIONS

Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC). When employed as part of a joint task force, JFCs stand up a JPRC within their own joint operations centers. The JPRC coordinates PR resources in support of PR operations between component PRCC whose organic capabilities may be exceeded by a PR mission. Having DIRLAUTH with outside agencies (DOS, national intelligence organizations), the JPRC is a valuable source of additional

resources and information that the component PRCCs may require to execute their missions. JPRCs have no command authority. They are the coordinating node for the CCDR to task the individual component PRCCs and their parent component to respond to or support the response to incidents.

Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA). The JPRA leads DoD PR by providing strategic direction, oversight, operational support, analysis, capability development, training, and education to improve PR interoperability, enabling DoD, interagency, and multinational partners to prevent, prepare for, and respond to isolated events. JPRA provides operational planning, mission analysis, and staff assistance to DoD Components and interagency partners, to satisfy PR requirements and to meet a commander's FP requirement.

Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell (PRCC). [7] In preparation for executing PR in support of USAF operations, the commander of Air Force Forces (COMAFFOR) stands up a PRCC. The COMAFFOR exercises operational control over USAF PR forces through the PRCC. The dynamic nature of CSAR creates a need to fully integrate PR operations into the master air attack plan to ensure flexibility and responsiveness of PR forces on the Air Tasking Order (ATO).[8] PR is coordinated with the Air Operations Center (AOC) and component liaisons, including the Battlefield Coordination Detachment (BCD), Naval and Amphibious Liaison Element (NALE), Special Operations Forces Liaison Element (SOFLE), and Marine liaison element. USAF units report all isolating incidents to the PRCC. If the air component commander is designated the supported commander for PR, the JPRC and PRCC can be combined and the air component PRCC positions can become dual-hatted with JPRC positions. However, this can cause command relationship issues with other service PRCCs and manning and funding issues within the AOC. Regardless, as the dual-hatted JPRC, the air component PRCC makes recommendations to the JFC, where the authority ultimately resides to direct the execution of joint PR operations. The air component commander should maintain a PRCC capability to fulfill service PR responsibilities. PRCC responsibilities include the following:

- Perform PR mission coordinator duties.
- Conduct PR planning.
- Lead PR mission execution including, the integration, coordination, synchronization, and deconfliction of all PR assets and enablers available to the JFACC.
- Task and coordinate mission requirements with subordinate PR-capable units.
- Coordinate, establish, and publish PR communications and emission control plans in ATOs.
- Document PR events.
- Execute PR checklists.

[7] For additional information on standard PRCC duty positions, see AFI10-3005, *Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell Organization and Training.*
[8] For additional information on the master air attack plan, see JP 3-30, *Joint Air Operations*.

- Maintain real-time intelligence information on systems posing threats to PR forces.
- Designate isolated personnel report (ISOPREP) control points.
- Obtain ISOPREP data and EPAs from units.
- Coordinate tasking among PR-capable forces.
- Inform the JPRC if rescue forces can execute the mission.
- Request additional recovery forces through the JPRC if rescue forces are unable to execute the PR mission unilaterally.
- Coordinate PR activities with the JPRC, supporting agencies, medical personnel, other government and non-government agencies, and the requesting unit.
- Distribute PR SPINS to subordinate units. Note: The PRCC remains responsible for coordinating PR SPINS with other component commands and the JPRC.
- Maintain a database of known crash locations within their OA.
- Review PR appendices to Annex C (Operations) for air component JAOPs, concept plans, operation plans (OPLANS), and operation orders.
- Integrate JFACC information activities and cyberspace enablers into PR planning and execution.
- PRCCs should be prepared to coordinate diplomatic and civil options in times when Title 10 authorities are not being exercised.

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS AND AUTHORITIES

The COMAFFOR usually retains OPCON of USAF PR forces and exercises PR authorities through the AOC and PRCC. The COMAFFOR may choose to delegate certain PR authorities, such as the authority to launch PR forces, to the PRCC or to subordinate PR forces to maintain flexibility and expedite response to PR events. The COMAFFOR should delegate coordination authorities for planning and consultation between the component PRCC and other commands, government agencies, multinational organizations, and medical personnel. When the air component independently initiates a PR mission, it is required to notify the JPRC through its PRCC to help ensure rapid and effective coordination and deconfliction.

If the PRCC cannot conduct a PR mission unilaterally, the PRCC requests support from the JPRC. If two or more components are involved, the JPRC coordinates the augmentation of forces and recommends PR mission-specific command relationships to the JFC or designated supported commander for PR. Respective component commanders normally retain OPCON of their forces. For the PR mission, the JFC, designated as the supported commander for PR, or the component commander conducting the mission, normally has tactical control of participating forces.

Personnel Recovery C2 Lessons Learned from Operation DESERT STORM

In the years leading up to Operation DESERT STORM, the USAF consolidated most of its rotary wing SAR and special operations platforms into the organization that became Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC). Every service component had helicopter assets in theater that could be used for recovery missions *except the USAF*. During DESERT STORM, USAF rotary wing assets were assigned to Special Operations Command-Central (SOCCENT) while most other USAF combat assets were assigned to Central Air Forces (CENTAF). However, the OPLAN for DESERT STORM designated the CENTAF commander as the overall supported commander for PR in the theater. Since USAF rotary wing assets were assigned to SOCCENT, SOCCENT maintained operational control of USAF helicopters, including launch authority. Furthermore, the rotary wing assets in SOCCENT had little ability to conduct the "search" portion of CSAR but could not task CENTAF to support search operations in support of a recovery mission.

Making CENTAF responsible for CSAR and then withholding operational control of the combat recovery assets violated the principle of unity of command. Additionally, a misunderstanding of the authorities and requirements needed to conduct a PR mission degraded the joint force's ability to integrate CSAR assets.

–Derived from *Combat Search and Rescue in Desert Storm*
Col (Ret) Darrel D. Whitcomb, AU Press

In situations where a PR event occurs within another component's AO, the PRCC coordinates with the JPRC to conduct a recovery. This coordination is essential to prevent duplication of PR efforts, facilitate efficient exchange of PR information, coordinate and deconflict airspace and fires in the affected AO to facilitate recovery, and establish the appropriate supporting/supported relationships to conduct the recovery operation.

CHAPTER 3: PREPARATION

PR is fraught with variables and complexities that are difficult to predict. CSAR should be executed quickly to increase the likelihood of success. While PR events do not lend themselves to extensive, prior planning, preparation can be done long before a PR event to shorten the decision and execution processes.

PR preparation takes place in three areas: policy and doctrine, education and training, and equipment. These are focused on preparing three groups: commanders and staffs, recovery forces, and individuals at risk of isolation–through tasks spanning the entirety of the competition continuum. In PR, as in all missions, success is far more likely if everyone involved is organized, trained, equipped, and employed to gain and maintain the ability to process relevant information and take appropriate action.

Preparation is an ongoing element of PR both in times of peace and conflict. Reading policy and doctrine documents is part of the preparation process, as is PR exercise participation, necessary training (e.g., SERE and Code of Conduct training), and organizing, training, and equipping PR forces (e.g., rescue squadrons) and others who may be called upon to participate in a PR mission. Proper preparation is crucial for providing a rapid and tailored response.

Agile Combat Employment (ACE) and Preparation for PR

While ACE movement and maneuver enable the air component to operate at a high tempo and preserve combat capability, it exposes Airmen to an increased risk of an isolating event. Traditionally, Airmen have remained “inside the wire." ACE operations dictate Airmen that have remained “inside the wire” at main operating bases must now move between forward operating sites and contingency locations more frequently. Isolating events occurring during movements between or at contingency locations are more likely to occur in land or maritime areas that are more permissive, but Airmen in these situations are still considered IP if they must survive, evade, resist, or escape. Airmen with duties that increase their risk of isolating events receive in-depth PR preparation including SERE school, ISOPREP, and review of EPAs. However, this level of preparation is not normally afforded to all Airmen supporting the ACE scheme of maneuver.

Commanders, staffs, forces, and IP should be organized, trained, and equipped to perform their responsibilities and work together to prevent or respond to an isolating event.

Commanders and Staffs. DoD policy requires commanders to link FP programs and PR as a means of preserving the force. At the highest levels, commanders need to be prepared to manage and synchronize PR. Lower-level commanders should be prepared to coordinate and execute PR. Failure to prepare for PR can create the perception the US is incapable of protecting its people or allies. The resultant risk erodes political and public support while diminishing US credibility, influence, and access. In an environment dominated by information, perceptions aggressively shape national will and subsequent political decisions.

Forces. PR preparation for forces refers mainly to the forces that may be assigned to execute PR tasks. Some units are specifically organized, trained, and equipped to conduct PR. Other units may not be dedicated to performing PR as their primary mission, but because their capabilities can be applied to effect or support recovery, they may be tasked or designated to support, or recover, personnel as a primary or additional mission. Finally, there may be units that, while not primarily organized, trained, or equipped for PR, have a recognized capability to recover personnel.

Isolated Personnel. DoD policy requires military commanders and, ultimately, Military Department Secretaries to account for all assigned US military and DoD civilian personnel who are declared missing. Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 2310.05, Accounting for Missing Persons-Boards of Inquiry, discusses all potential missing personnel categories, such as missing in action, interned or detained (in a foreign country), captured, beleaguered, and besieged against a person's will. These categories lay the foundation for why IP can range in scale from one person to an entire organized unit. These categories also bring in other crisis management situations like hostage taking, kidnapping, or abduction. While services define and identify personnel who may be at a higher risk of isolation and require additional preparation, all personnel have the potential to become isolated and should be prepared for such.

Adaptation in Preparation

During the preparation phase, lessons learned from past exercises and operational PR events contribute to building the skills and knowledge base that lays the foundation for the follow-on planning and execution phases. The PR lessons learned that are saved in the JLLIS and validated via PR events, debriefings, joint operations, education and training events, exercises, wargames, and other activities. Historical data are vital to the continuous improvement of preparing USAF forces. An example of a USAF exercise focusing on PR that prepares USAF, joint and coalition forces would be Red Flag Rescue.

CHAPTER 4: PLANNING

PR planning is part of contingency and crisis planning.[9] USAF planning uses the joint planning process for air (JPPA) with specific outcomes based on commander's intent. It entails detailed PR mission analysis, course of action development, and wargaming based on the plan's mission goals and tasks developed for the PR appendix (Appendix 5 to Annex C) of a JFC's campaign plan, or the air component's joint air operations plan (JAOP). A completed PR mission analysis is the foundation for the PR operational concept and can be used in developing the PR appendix of the basic plan. Planning options may be diplomatic, civil, or military. While there is little the military can do to prepare diplomatic and civil plans, PR planners may be called upon to support those two options. Overall, the bulk of PR planning is focused on executing the military option.

The information required for pre-mission planning and execution or launch authority includes the location of IP, authentication, threat, weather, terrain assessment, evaluation of safe passage corridors, and air refueling (AR) capabilities. To improve mission planning effectiveness, it is best to co-locate all planning activities dedicated to PR. Furthermore, direct communication with the AOC, JPRC, PRCC, and wing operations centers is essential. This direct communication is vital when combat conditions dictate the formation of a combat search and rescue task force (CSARTF).

Additionally, the air component commander should consider the capabilities of the HN, other Service or functional components, and multinational forces during PR mission planning. PR should be integrated into contingency or crisis planning, and the resulting Appendix 5 to Annex C of the JAOP should be updated accordingly.[10] Additional considerations for air component PR operational contract support requirements should be outlined in JOAP's Annex W.

As part of the planning process, USAF personnel conducting and supporting PRs should be thoroughly familiar with the law of war and applicable ROE. This is particularly important when addressing issues of the use of force during CSAR operations (including self-defense considerations), as well as the treatment and release of persons captured or detained. Law of war application may be complicated by organizational structures, responsibilities, and the status of potential adversaries. PR forces should attempt to influence the ROE development process as early as possible to gain maximum flexibility in recovering IP.

PR PLANNING ACROSS THE COMPETITION CONTINUUM

The competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. Operations and activities are planned throughout the competition continuum and at all levels of warfare (strategic, operational, and tactical). PR planners should understand the competition continuum to identify and project limitations, threats, and additional PR

[9] For additional information on planning, see JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*.
[10] For additional information on Appendix 5, see CJCS Manual 3135.01, *Joint Planning and Execution System Reporting Structure Governance.*

capabilities (e.g., Partner Nations) during the planning process.

At the lower end of the competition continuum, PR operations support military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence activities by providing concepts for FP and recovery capability to operations conducted in a chief of mission (COM) environment.[11] As operations escalate into conflict, PR planners have much clearer Title 10, USC, authorities, where DoD has the lead and the authority to conduct operations. PR planners identify the authorities and forces and translate or link strategy and tactics to the established operational objectives to achieve the military and strategic objectives. Sequencing tactical actions to achieve objectives, the PR planner works within the commander's operational approach to develop strategies to organize and employ military forces to recover IP.

PR FORCE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The primary purpose of force planning at any level is to identify the forces needed to accomplish the mission and effectively phase the forces into the OA. Commanders and their staffs should know the types and characteristics of resources that can be used in a recovery operation. Planners identify the PR resources, delivery date, and employment location required for a particular operation and ensure these requirements are supported by the time-phased force and deployment data (TPFDD). Proper PR force planning allows the identification of capabilities to be selected for planning and included in the supported commander's concept of operations (CONOPS) by operational phase, mission, and mission priority. Commanders should ensure the force flow includes sufficient recovery forces commensurate with the risk to force and risk of isolation. To mitigate these risks, PR forces may be assigned designation coding (dedicated, designated, or capable) on the TPFDD to enable the extraction of data for comparison to the flow of other forces and scheduling recovery force deployments to properly support the plan.

A PR designation identifies which assets are available to the planner and the level of PR capability these assets should have at their disposal. PR planners seek to use the forces selected by the JFC as their dedicated theater PR forces and designated PR forces as their primary recovery assets. Since these are typically low-density/high-demand assets, planners then look to see if PR capable assets are available that could be tasked to provide their own or additional coverage. The following PR force designations apply and are recognized by the joint force.[12]

[11] For additional information on PR planning in a COM environment, see JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*.
[12] For additional information on PR designation coding, see JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery.*

USAF PR designation coding changes

USAF policy changed the way it presents forces to the JFC. Department of the Air Force Policy Document (DAFPD) 10-30, *Personnel Recovery* outlines the Secretary of the Air Force's plans to change how the USAF uses PR force designation coding. This policy document directs the USAF to "provide a designated capability…," which is a change from the past when the USAF provided dedicated PR forces. The JFC may still select which component PR forces are tasked as dedicated or designated PR forces.

- **Dedicated Forces.** Forces that are specifically organized, trained, and equipped for PR and identified to the JFC by the air component commander as the primary apportioned PR force.
- **Designated Forces.** Forces that are not dedicated to performing PR as their primary mission, but because of their capabilities can be applied to effect or support recovery, have been designated to the JFC by the air component commander to support or recover personnel as a primary or additional mission.
- **Capable Forces.** Forces that are not primarily organized, trained, or equipped for PR but have a recognized ability to recover personnel. These forces have not been identified by the air component commander during the planning process.

GENERAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS[13]

Communications. Communications should be reliable, secure, rehearsed, and redundant among all participants to maximize PR mission effectiveness. Emission control should be used where appropriate to protect PR missions.

Intelligence. Successful PR requires timely and accurate intelligence support. As such, intelligence specialists should be assigned to and deployed with PRCCs and operational rescue units.

Counterintelligence Support to Force Protection (CISFP). Using CISFP methodologies and leveraging HN law enforcement and security relationships allows US forces to engage indigenous resources to gather information on IP and assist in the formulation of an FP plan.

Operations Security. An effective operations security program is vital. Failure to implement one could result in mission compromise and loss of personnel and resources.

Information activities. Information activities amplify the effects of traditional military operations. PR can influence the planning of information activities in several ways. First, PR operations can influence the course of national and international politics by denying adversaries opportunities to exploit the intelligence and propaganda value of captured

[13] For additional information on intelligence, planning, operations security, combat support, and medical, see Air Force Doctrine Publications (AFDPs) 2-0, *Intelligence*, 3-0, *Operations and Planning*, 3-13, *Information in Air Force Operations*, 4-0, *Combat Support*, and 4-02, *Health Services*.

personnel. In addition, the presence of viable CSAR forces, when combined with public affairs activities, increases morale, and increases operational performance. Finally, PR contributes to information activities by countering adversary deception and propaganda efforts. For example, if enemy forces have already captured IP, they may attempt to deceive PR forces to lure them into an ambush. Even if IP have not been captured, the enemy may try to provide false data to PR forces while moving additional air defense assets into the area to ambush the recovery force. While friendly force communications discipline and adherence to PR standard operating procedures may counter enemy deception operations, PR operations' success or failure can impact the JFC's information activities significantly.[14]

Medical. Medical personnel should be integrated into the planning and support of PR. The PRCC is the focal point for PR coordination with medical personnel to provide advice beyond the expertise of the PR team.

Space. PR forces require timely and accurate space products and support during all phases of PR. Space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms are critical to detecting, locating, and maintaining a watch on IP. In concert with ISR platforms, overhead persistent infrared assets also play a key role in battlespace characterization of the objective area and monitoring factor threat systems. Electromagnetic spectrum operations (EMSO) in, from, or to space can assist in suppressing enemy communications prior to and during search and recovery operations, protecting both the IP and CSAR forces. Throughout these operations, the global navigation satellite systems also provide precise navigation and timing signals, and satellite communications provide vital communications between the CSARTF, PR forces, and IP. During the planning process, requests for space products and effects should be submitted to the Joint Force Space Component Command (JFSCC). Space subject matter experts should be integrated early into the planning efforts for operations which may result in PR and CSAR events, as some effects require significant lead time to deliver or optimize. Space support during an active PR or CSAR event should be coordinated in real-time by the combat operations division space chief and collection manager within the AOC's combat operations division.

Environmental Considerations. PR forces require timely and accurate weather support to assess mission risks from environmental hazards and geographic locations that may limit PR. Temperature, barometric pressure, precipitation, humidity, ground, and low-level flight visibility, predicted winds, fog, cloud cover, radio frequency propagation, sensor detection ranges, and other hazards to recovery forces and the IP greatly impact PR planning and execution. Terrain features often determine the type of capabilities required to conduct PR. Additionally, sunrise, sunset, moonrise, moon phase, predicted ambient light, and hydrographic data affect PR significantly. PR forces require additional support and expertise from emergency management and medical personnel when conducting PR in chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological environments or recovering potentially contaminated IP. These conditions play an important role in timing and tempo and should be considered critical planning factors for PRs.

[14] For additional information on activity support to PR, see Appendix C of JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery* and Appendix C of ALSSA MTTP, *Personnel Recovery*.

Host Nation and Multinational Considerations. Military planners should work with interagency and international partners to develop PR coverage across the OA.[15] Gaining knowledge of partner PR capabilities and C2 infrastructure through building partnership capacity is essential to recovery capability. Similarly, an air component commander should consider the capabilities of other Service and functional components and multinational and HN forces during PR mission planning. Where possible, detailed PR planning should consider coalition, partner, and allied nation ROE and agreements to facilitate multinational PR efforts and recognize restraints. HN security forces and emergency response personnel may not always possess the capabilities required to respond effectively to an incident involving US IP. The US may need to partner with a HN to build upon or supplement its capabilities for a given mission. A PR relationship with multinational forces may be the deliberate intent of the JFC, or it may be directed by a higher authority. In most cases, the JFC should consider the PR coordination between US forces and the HN military. Achieving balance and unity of effort among multinational forces is a major challenge that can be mitigated by planning, training, and rehearsing.

Mobility Planning Considerations. Early identification of requirements, inclusion in force enhancement and flexible deterrent option (FE/FDO) planning, appropriate PR priority in the TPFDD flow, and frequent reevaluation are key to sustaining PR support. Historically, PR requirements were often an afterthought rather than a consideration of planning. Similar to ATO planners, PR officers on a JFC's staff and PR officers at the air component commander level should consider PR requirements in conjunction with other operational requirements when developing OPLANs, operations orders, FE/FDO, TPFDD, and other planning products.

Deployment. USAF PR forces should have the ability to execute time-sensitive deployments as planned elements of a Mission Generation Force Element (MGFE) within units of action.[16] PR forces should deploy in the theater prior to the start of hostilities and be prepared to immediately execute the mission with minimal support airlift. Tailored rapid-response deployment packages support the intent of the unit of action structure and follow-on in-theater contingency operations.

Operation ENDURING FREEDOM

The initial deployment of PR forces in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) represents an excellent example of the significant emphasis CCDRs and Service chiefs put on PR. Commanders delayed decisive operations until the JFC established an adequate PR capability. OEF demonstrated the need to have PR forces in place prior to the commencement of combat operations. Based on OEF and other historical examples, PR forces should be listed high on the CCDR's TPFDD.

Enduring and Contingency Locations. USAF planners should determine beddown locations for rescue forces based on factors including response time, operations tempo, FP, and other variables. Best practices reflecting support and deployment concepts

[15] For additional information on working with international partners, see JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*.
[16] For additional information on units of action and MGFEs, see AFDP 3-0, *Operations*.

include the capability to operate from main operating bases (MOB), forward operating sites (FOS), cooperative security locations (CSL), and contingency locations. Planners should tailor logistical support requirements based on the most likely operating location. To decrease response time and improve the chances of a successful recovery, rescue forces should be positioned as far forward as the situation allows. As a planning consideration, the air component commander should have the ability to deploy PR assets to austere locations for up to 14 days with minimal base operating support.

Main Operating Base (MOB). A facility outside the US and its territories with permanently stationed operating forces and robust infrastructure. If the MOB is significantly removed from potential PR objective areas, planners should consider airborne alerts to expedite PR.

Forward Operating Site (FOS). A scalable location outside the US and its territories intended for rotational use by operating forces. Such expandable "warm facilities" may be maintained with a limited US military support presence and possibly prepositioned equipment. Support for FOSs may come from MOBs. A FOS may or may not be an airfield, it may also be a forward arming and refueling point. FOS capability may require organic communication packages to provide the necessary C2 and ISR for successful mission execution. For FOS operations, fuel, ammunition, medical supplies, and other mission essential material may come from MOBs.

Cooperative Security Location (CSL). A facility located outside the US and its territories with little or no permanent US presence, maintained by periodic Service, contractor, or HN support, and may be used for PR support and contribute to the agility of the air component's PR employment.

Contingency Location Operations. When land-based MOBs, FOSs, or CSLs are unavailable, contingency location operations offer an alternative to beddown forces. Although contingency location operations may not require extensive HN coordination, PR planners should consider the environmental conditions or intricacies of shipboard operations on PR.

Adaptation in Planning

Inputs from planning include past lessons learned and best practices from all echelons. Outputs are successes or failures of the JPP or JPPA during the development of operations, plans, and orders, which in turn provide valuable data for input into JLLIS or JCIDS. Adaptation during the planning phase also greatly contributes to improved PR risk assessment, mitigation, and recommendation to inform commanders and staffs of the differences between COAs and ensure commanders understand the full impact of residual risk or risk that cannot be quantified, prior to mission execution.

CHAPTER 5: EXECUTION

USAF CSAR is the primary recovery mechanism the air component employs to accomplish the "recover" task as part of the DoD PR system (see DoD PR system figure in Chapter 1).[17] Several IP recovery options are available, but CSAR is the preferred method. The three CSAR components are C2, recovery forces, and IP. The USAF organizes, trains, and equips specific forces that focus on PR. When PR assets cannot avoid threats, other assets are employed to protect the recovery forces, offering PR the best chance of success. CSAR is the method for PR in both denied and hostile environments, where it is often the only feasible means to facilitate recovery. CSAR is not conducted in non-contested operations such as humanitarian assistance, civil SAR, or casualty evacuation.

USAF PR is centered on five execution tasks and supporting activities that should be accomplished once an isolating event has occurred.

Report. Report begins with the awareness and notification of an isolating event initiating the PR process. Rapid, accurate notification is essential for a successful recovery. Threat conditions permitting, IP should attempt to establish contact with friendly forces in accordance with notification procedures as outlined in the PR SPINS portion of the ATO. Once an actual or potential PR incident or potential isolating event is reported, the PRCC assumes the duties of PR mission coordinator, initiates PR planning, and provides SAR incident reports and SAR situation reports to inform the JPRC. As PR mission coordinator, the PRCC tasks and coordinates mission requirements with subordinate PR-capable units. The JPRC coordinates and tasks PR support requirements when PR missions involve forces from multiple components to conduct PR missions other than NAR missions. When the JPRC receives a request for PR support, it initiates action to locate the IP (if unknown), makes recommendations for, and coordinates tasking forces. When a component independently initiates a PR mission, it is required to notify the JPRC through its PRCC to help ensure effective coordination and deconfliction. Thereafter, the JPRC will monitor the mission and be prepared to support, as required.

Locate. Methods used to locate IP may include theater electronic surveillance, reconnaissance, C2 aircraft, space assets, wingman reports, counterintelligence support to FP methodologies, and visual and electronic search by trained PR forces. Even with precise coordinates that pinpoint IP location, PR forces must authenticate IP identity prior to facilitating successful support and recovery operations. An effective authentication system is essential to prevent the compromise of critical information and minimize risk to IP and the recovery force. Rescue assets are extremely vulnerable during the execution phase and need exact and reliable authentication information. Accordingly, IP and rescue forces should take extreme care to avoid compromising authentication information. Some of the ways rescue forces authenticate IP include CSAR code words, letters, numbers, visual signals, and IP report data. Ordinarily, theater or AOR-specific additional procedures are published in appropriate directives, OPLANs, and PR SPINS.

Support. Support is the planned effort necessary to ensure the physical and psychological sustainment of IP. The five objectives in supporting IP are situational

[17] For additional information on CSAR, see JP 3-50 *Personnel Recovery.*

awareness, protection, establishing two-way communications, providing morale-building support, and aerial resupply (including aerial escort to a supply cache or more secure area). Support may also encompass the suppression of enemy threats to IP. This may preclude capture for IP and disruption of the adversary's response to rescue efforts. When possible, CROs, pararescuemen, and equipment may be pre-positioned to support IP until the recovery phase. IP family members may receive physical and psychological assistance during the PR event. Support continues during a captivity scenario, including Missing in Action, until the PR is resolved. Physical and psychological assistance to the IP and families continues during recovery and reintegration.

Recover. This task reflects activities by commanders, staff, recovery forces, and IP to physically recover the IP. CSAR is the USAF's preferred recovery mechanism. As information about a potential PR incident becomes available, the PRCC should assess the situation quickly, determine mission feasibility, and disseminate data to units that may participate in rescue operations. Once mission execution is feasible, units may be tasked to initiate or continue planning or launch from alert. If launched, recovery forces should include all necessary supporting forces required to execute recovery operations. The JFC or designated PR supported commander can issue the "execution order." The JFC's PR CONOPS or SPINS direct specific launch and execution authority as determined by the JFC. The following are recovery responses employed by the USAF:

- **Immediate.** Immediate response missions commence from an ATO-directed ground or airborne alert posture. To decrease flight time to the anticipated recovery area and reduce AR requirements, rescue forces may be located on the ground at a forward location or loitering in anticipation of an execution order. Additionally, these forces may be embedded in existing airborne missions to further reduce response times.

- **Deliberate.** Commanders choose this method when an immediate response may not be possible due to environmental, political, or threat considerations. A deliberate PR response could involve the creation of a recovery task force comprised of assets from a single component, joint or multinational forces, or multi-agency organizations.

- **Hold.** A PR mission is never closed due to risk or inability to locate the IP, however, a mission may be placed on hold for these reasons. Generally, a "hold" status on a mission means the information required to execute does not meet commander's execution criteria (e.g., location, intelligence).

Reintegrate. The purpose of reintegration is to effectively reintroduce the IP back into society and ultimately return the member to service. The reintegrate task allows the DoD to provide medical care and protect the well-being of recovered personnel through decompression while conducting debriefings to gather necessary intelligence and SERE information. This task begins when the recovery force relinquishes physical control of IP to a designated team member or organization in the theater reintegration process. The welfare portion of reintegration may be a long-term (Phase III of reintegration) endeavor with no specific end date and may become a Service responsibility. Ultimately, theater reintegration procedures are supported by the air component commander in two phases in accordance with CCDR guidance. Phase III reintegration may be conducted by the Service if warranted. Non-DoD American citizens who are recovered by DoD PR teams are reintegrated through a DOS process, unless the DoD's specialized or unique

capabilities are specifically required, requested, and approved to support the post-isolation support activities.

RECOVERY FORCES

CSAR recovery forces are comprised of personnel who organize, train, and perform PR operations as well as augmentation forces who assist with PR operations. Combining the proper mix of air and ground PR elements, the USAF is postured to recover IP in any environment.

PR efforts in denied or contested environments are normally combined into a tailored CSARTF structure, a mechanism that has significantly enhanced CSAR operations. The size and complexity of the CSARTF depends on the mission requirements and the threat. The CSARTF typically has two elements: PR assets and augmenting assets. Included among both are designated aircraft, specially trained personnel, and specific positions crucial to the PR mission.

A CSARTF is designed to protect the IP and the recovery force package before, during recovery, and on egress from small arms, surface-to-air, air-to-air, and air-to-ground threats. The assets are tailored to meet specific CSAR requirements. The exact composition of the CSARTF varies with the threats enroute and in the vicinity of the IP. With proper planning, the CSARTF will be able to defeat or degrade the threat to an acceptable level of risk and enable the successful recovery of IP.

Due to changing threats and IP status, the CSARTF may require numerous adjustments and obtain further augmentation during recovery operations. As such, all aircraft under the C2 of the air component commander should be prepared to assist recovery operations. Additionally, the PRCC should be prepared to request augmentation and support from the other Service or functional components through the JPRC.

PERSONNEL RECOVERY FORCES

Vertical Lift Aircraft. Rescue helicopters are used for long-range, low-level, day or night, marginal weather operations into hostile environments to recover distressed or IP. Missions are usually flown as multi-ship formations to provide mutual support but may be executed with a single ship based on threat and other supporting asset availability. Similarly, they may be employed as part of a larger composite force (e.g., a large air strike package) or launched in response to a PR event. Vertical-lift assets may include both helicopters and tilt-rotor aircraft. AFSOF are occasionally tasked to employ tilt-rotor aircraft in support of USSOCOM PR, under the requirements of their component PRCC.

Fixed-Wing Rescue Aircraft. Fixed-wing rescue assets are another key element of PR. Their primary role is to extend the PR umbrella coverage and to employ or extract RT. The depth of the battlespace and IP location may require fixed-wing support to vertical-lift aircraft refueling conducted in a non-permissive environment. In addition, these assets are capable of airdropping or air landing RT and equipment to assist and recover IP. Fixed-wing rescue aircraft also have an expanded communications capability, making them a natural communication relay platform, and extended range allows movement of recovered IP over longer distances. AFSOF fixed-wing aircraft maintain comparable PR

capabilities.

Recovery Teams (RT). USAF RTs are integral to PR operations, providing vital ground support in uncertain, hostile, and denied environments before, during, and after combat. These ground-based, offensively oriented teams play a key role in the JFC's comprehensive PR strategy, focusing on recovering IP and sensitive equipment. Air Force Special Warfare (AFSPECWAR) weapon systems, such as GA and Special Tactics (ST), are the primary contributors to these operations. These systems are human- and equipment-based, specially organized, trained, and equipped to execute PR tasks. GA includes two main components: Tactical Recovery Teams (TRTs), which are specialized teams composed of CROs, Pararescuemen (PJs), and other experts such as Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) specialists, who recover IP and equipment in high-risk environments. These operators function either independently or as part of a task force to penetrate hostile areas and conduct recovery operations, directly assisting in operational airpower functions across the spectrum of conflict. In addition, GA provides operational support for mission planning, coordination, and execution at both tactical and strategic levels, with CROs contributing to assessments and ensuring mission success. ST units, which include Combat Controllers (CCTs), and PJs provide essential airfield control, terminal air control, and ground combat support. The addition of Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) specialists, including JTACs, enhances GA's C2 capabilities, enabling effective coordination between air and ground forces during PR operations. SERE specialists are also critical to PR, operating independently and supporting military, diplomatic, and civil missions through advising with their subject matter expertise. They contribute across all phases of PR operations, from preparation and planning to execution and adaptation, and are trained to gather and assess time-sensitive information crucial for recovering IP. Together, these teams and specialists, integrated within AFSPECWAR, form a comprehensive, adaptable approach to PR, ensuring successful operations across a range of environments and mission scenarios.[18]

Rescue Mission Commander (RMC). The RMC is the individual specifically designated to control recovery efforts and provide protection of the IP from threats in the objective area. Typically, C2 agencies grant execution authority to the designated RMC, based on criteria built in mission planning or established in SPINS. Execution authority is the authority to make the command decision to commit CSAR forces to execute the recovery of an IP within an acceptable level of risk. The RMC's responsibilities include planning, locating, supporting, and recovering IP, including directing maneuver of supporting and maritime assets in the OA. The RMC reports to the air component commander or delegated PR authority and communicates and coordinates the recovery effort.

Rescue Escort (RESCORT). Based on threats to the IP and the recovery force, RESCORT is an integral part of a CSARTF. RESCORT aircraft provide navigation assistance, route sanitization, and armed escort for the recovery vehicles. In increased threat environments, this assistance significantly improves the chances of a successful recovery. Ideally, RESCORT aircraft should be tactical aircraft capable of operating in the same environment as recovery vehicles. RESCORT formations should be proficient in rendezvous procedures, escort tactics at medium and low altitudes, and defense of

[18] For additional information on the AFSPECWAR weapon systems, see AFTTP 3-3. Guardian Angel.

recovery vehicles during mission execution.

Airborne Mission Coordinator (AMC). An AMC coordinates the flying mission for forces designated to support a specific CSAR operation. The AMC may be designated by component PRCCs or higher authority to coordinate the efforts of several assets. The AMC serves as an airborne communications and data relay between rescue forces and command elements. The AMC also keeps the recovery force elements, the CSARTF commander, and RMC informed of all pertinent information, such as threats, aborts, EMSO information, and coordinates refueling of air recovery assets. The AMC advises the PRTF commander, RMC, and air component commander of mission support requirements, and coordinates the designation and use of appropriate fire support coordinating measures.

Combat Search and Rescue Coordinator (CSAR-C). The CSAR-C is the individual specifically designated and trained to manage the PR 15-Line(s) and coordinate for CSARTF requirements. The CSAR-C is responsible for ensuring effective and efficient CSAR data flow throughout the CSARTF, including retasked assets, using the most appropriate means for data transmission and the correct format. The CSAR-C coordinates with the AMC primarily for threat updates and desired effects. For example, the CSARTF may require direct Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) support to gain access to the terminal area. The CSAR-C coordinates with the JPRC for CSAR data and multi-domain desired effects. The CSAR-C also filters information for the rest of the CSARTF players, ensuring all players are executing on a common operating picture. The CSAR-C analyzes threat updates with leveraged support assets to decide if the CSARTF can execute within acceptable level of risk constraints. The AMC will assume the CSAR-C responsibilities if not specifically designated to another asset.[19]

On-Scene Commander (OSC). The OSC is the individual who initiates rescue efforts in the objective area until rescue forces arrive. Initially, the OSC may be the pilot of any aircraft in the vicinity, including the wingman of a downed aircraft. The OSC's initial actions are to attempt to establish communication, locate and authenticate the IP, and pass essential elements of information to the AMC. The OSC role will be transferred to the RMC or as directed by the RMC or AMC as required. After transferring OSC duties to the RMC, the original OSC may remain on station in a supporting role.

AUGMENTING PERSONNEL RECOVERY FORCES

Forward Air Controller (Airborne) (FAC[A]). The FAC(A) controls air strikes near the IP. A FAC(A) may be able to locate and authenticate the IP before the arrival of other elements of the CSARTF and may function as the OSC until the rescue forces arrive or the RMC arrives on station. The FAC(A) may also provide a current and accurate assessment of enemy activity in and around the objective area.

Air Refueling (AR) Aircraft. Multiple refueling aircraft may be required during prolonged CSAR operations. Sequencing of assets between refueling and marshaling points should be carefully managed to have all rescue elements available at mission execution time. For real-time CSAR execution, refueling support requirements are relayed through the

[19] For additional information on CSAR-C, see AFTTP 3-3. HC-130J.

AMC to the PRCC. The PRCC orchestrates AR support with the tanker coordination cell.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Platforms. ISR platforms support CSAR efforts, especially for detecting and locating IP, as well as monitoring threat systems in the objective area. These assets are also suited to maintaining a listening overwatch on IP and monitoring IP frequencies when an immediate recovery is not possible. Ultimately, these platforms provide commanders and CSAR forces with the situational awareness to make necessary decisions for the successful recovery of IP.

Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD). SEAD forces minimize surface-to-air threat to friendly forces executing PR missions. Integrated and interoperable communications between SEAD forces, rescue forces, and ISR platforms are critical. When assigning SEAD platforms, the threat environment should be defined for all rescue forces.

Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO). EMSO forces help mitigate the surface-to-air and air-to-air threat to friendly forces executing PR missions. Integrated and coordinated EMSO capabilities among rescue forces, SEAD forces, EMSO platforms and forces, and ISR platforms are critical to successful PR missions. The ability to deceive, disrupt, degrade, or defeat enemy radar and communication capabilities should be part of planning considerations.

DYNAMIC RESCUE

Dynamic Rescue is the utilization of the DT process (find, fix, track, target, engage, assess-F2T2EA) to complete the rescue and recovery of IP. Dynamic rescue offers a streamlined approach to the PR process, especially in hostile or time-sensitive situations. Adapting the familiar DT process ensures clear communication and coordination across teams, integrating resources like ISR, C2, and kinetic/non-kinetic capabilities. This mirroring of combat operation procedures, using established terminology and processes, allows for rapid assessment, prioritization, and execution of tasks, crucial when the recovery window is limited.

Recognizing the potential need for significant force reallocation and mission reprioritization in PR, Dynamic Rescue mandates close collaboration between DT and PR teams. This fosters a shared understanding and maximizes the impact of available resources. By employing the well-understood Dynamic Targeting process, commanders can rapidly identify, plan, and direct resources to execute a successful rescue.[20]

Adaptation in Execution

During execution, commanders may adapt and adjust PR operations as required to achieve objectives or attain the desired end state. Adaptation during execution can range from minor adjustments to termination of the operation due to a change in the operating environment significant enough that the operation is no longer viable.

[20] For additional information on dynamic rescue, see ALSSA AFTTP 3-2.90, *Personnel Recovery*, Appendix B, and AFTTP 3-3, *Integrated Planning and Employment*.

REFERENCES

All websites accessed 22 September 2025.

US AIR FORCE DOCTRINE: https://www.doctrine.af.mil/

- AFDP 2-0, *Intelligence*
- AFDP 3-0, *Operations*
- AFDP 3-13, *Information In Air Force Operations*
- AFDP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*
- AFDP 4-0, *Combat Support*
- AFDP 4-02, *Health Services*

JOINT DOCTRINE

- JP 1, Vol 2, *The Joint Force*
- JP 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*
- JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*
- JP 3-30, *Joint Air Operations*
- JP 3-50, *Personnel Recovery*
- JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*

TACTICAL DOCTRINE

ALSSA-Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (MTTPs)

- AFTTP 3-2.90, *Personnel Recovery*

Air Force Weapon System TTPs (AFTTPs):

- AFTTP 3-3.Guardian Angel *Combat Fundamentals Guardian Angel*
- AFTTP 3-3.IPE *Combat Fundamentals Integrated Planning and Employment*
- AFTTP 3-3.HC-130J*, Combat Fundamentals HC-130J*

MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS

- Presidential Policy Directive 30, *Directive on United States Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Effort*
- Executive Order 13698, *Hostage Recovery Activities*
- CJCSI 3270.01C, *Personnel Recovery*
- CJCS Manual 3135.01, *Joint Planning and Execution System Reporting Structure Governance*
- *DoD Foreign Clearance Guide*
- Department of Defense Directive 5100.01, *Functions of the Department of Defense and Its Major Components*
- AFI 10-3005, *Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell Organization and Training*
- DAFPD 10-30, *Personnel Recovery*