

Department of Defense Personnel Recovery Update

January - March 1999

Issue 5



Message from the DASD

Members of the Personnel Recovery Community —

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding efforts of the men and women of the 16th Special Operations Wing at Hurlburt Field, FL. Their brethren (4th SOS, 20th SOS, 23d STS, 55th SOS) executed a flawless rescue of two pilots whose F-15C fighters collided over the Gulf of Mexico. You exemplified the core values of today's military, and we are proud to have you watching over us. Thank you for your vigilance.

Much has happened in the personnel recovery community since our last newsletter. Most importantly, Operation DESERT FOX has placed our servicemen and women in harm's way once again. Though the skill of our pilots and superiority of our equipment has negated the need to execute recovery operations as a part of DESERT FOX, we must remain ready and actively prepare for the worst. Thankfully, as in the past, USCENTCOM has taken the requirement to prepare in advance to heart and prepared extensively in the event of a personnel recovery incident. Their preparations make me confident in their ability to "Keep the Promise" to those they send on dangerous missions.

I am similarly encouraged by several initiatives currently underway in the Community. The merger of the Joint Services SERE Agency (JSSA) and the Joint Combat Rescue Agency (JCRA) into a single Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) under USACOM will certainly streamline and enhance support to the field.

The Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Advanced Systems and Concepts hosted the inaugural meeting of the Personnel Recovery Technology Working Group on February 25th. Regular meetings of this working group will be an excellent forum to ensure we are effectively leveraging technology to support recovery. I am thankful for this program.

Likewise, the command and control architecture being developed by the Office of the ASD(C³) and USCENTCOM will go far toward fixing a long-recognized problem of orchestrating recovery operations at the combatant command level.

I visited Fort Bragg the first week of February to become further acquainted with the capabilities our Special Operations Forces bring to the table regarding personnel recovery, especially Army Special Operations. I was immensely impressed by the professionalism, expertise, and dedication to duty clearly evident throughout my visit.

Next on tap is a trip to MacDill AFB to visit USCENTCOM and USSOCOM, followed immediately by a visit to AFSOC at Hurlburt Field. As I emphasized throughout my visit to Fort Bragg, policy must support operations and not vice versa. Visits to your homebases allow me to hear firsthand the challenges you face and the innovative approaches you are taking to meet those challenges. I continue to be impressed and comforted. You are making it happen through hard work and perseverance.

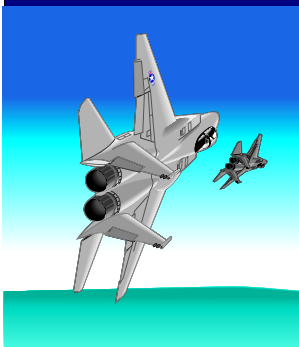


"Hope is not a method!"

—General Gordon Sullivan



— Bob Jones
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(POW/Missing Personnel Affairs)





WORLDWIDE JSSA CONFERENCE MIXES PAST, PRESENT, & FUTURE

By Maj Brenda P. Mangente (DPMO)

We hope you weren't frustrated by the longer than normal wait while entering the Defense Logistics Agency February 2-4 — it was only the 118 attendees to JSSA's annual Worldwide Evasion and Recovery Conference. JSSA commander Colonel Mike J. Bergestresser promised an informative, down-in-the-dirt forum for his audience, and he didn't disappoint. Adding to the conference's usual menu of SERE training updates and mission briefings from the Services' personnel recovery agencies were briefings regarding the new C³I mission tracking software Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (ACTD), classified briefings on Global Positioning System and National Reconnaissance Office support, the new CV-22 aircraft platform, and a demonstration of the Pilot Flight Planning System software.

The Combat Survivor Evader Locator (CSEL) system generated a lot of discussion and controversy. Funding problems had surfaced due to the deficiencies discovered during the operational assessment at the Joint Rescue Exercise last summer. Though the Army and Navy pulled out of the program for fiscal year 1999, the Air Force has kept the system alive with research and development funding. Serving as the system's watchdog is the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for C³I section who will conduct a full program review to assess overall compliance with the Services' requirements.

Between pitches to reinstate an evasion medical kit and the Personnel Recovery Planner's Course, the SERE school in Brunswick, Maine, publicized their upcoming Exercise Highland Contact 99. They are seeking additional student evaders to enhance the training exercise, sharpen their evasion skills, and enjoy the town of Rangeley while being chased by an army of aggressors, to include the state's prison dog team. Count on local residents to add a flavor of realism by providing (or not) shelter and safe points.

Master of Ceremonies John W. Swain, Chief of JSSA's Operations Division, kept his audience's attention by adding two working groups, one to concentrate on Intelligence Support to Personnel Recovery and another to revamp blood chits/evasion kits, intended to swap ideas or issues. Mr. Swain was responsible for the success of this year's conference, and hopes that next year's response will be even better. In order not to burden attendees with copious notes, the staff has made all the briefings available on their SIPRNET home page. You can access the site at the following internet address: hqjssa.incom.army.smil.mil.

If topics continue to be lively and educational, better plan for next year's conference. The wait is expected to be a little longer coming in to DLA.



Mo' Better JCSAR

By Maj Len Mackie (JCRA)

Want more realistic CSAR exercises? Tired of watching the action? Feel the need for true integration with the rest of the air operations? Well, the 353rd Combat Training Squadron in Eielson AFB, AK, is listening. COOPERATIVE THUNDER 99-04 kicks off this July with joint air and ground forces conducting rescue operations that are fully integrated with all other exercise activities. Rescue operations promise to be realistic and will continue (within a reasonable limit) for a survivor until pick up or capture. This also hones command and control at the Joint Air Operations Center, Joint Search and Rescue Center, Joint Special Operations Task

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EXERCISE HIGHLAND CONTACT 99 SOLICITING EVADERS

By Maj Brenda P. Mangente (DPMO)

From May 31 - June 12, the Navy SERE school in Brunswick, Maine will host Exercise Highland Contact 99 in the Saddleback Mountain Range. Graduate SERE students are invited to participate in the exercise, which will concentrate on evasion and combat recovery. Playing supporting roles in the activities are Air Force A-10s, RESCAP fastmovers, and AF-Navy helicopters. Interested evaders can contact Chief Davis (DSN: 476-2560/Comm: (207) 921-XXXX) or Mr. John Rankin (DSN: 476-2104) before 1 May.

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Force, and in the air aboard the E-3.

Units playing in the exercise include Air Force HH-60s and HC-130s from the 210 RQS, Kulis ANGB, AK, A-10s from the 355 FS, Eielson AFB, AK, and 131 FS, Barnes MAP, MA, Navy HH-60s from HCS-4, Norfolk NAS, VA, Army UH-60s and CH-47s from 4th BN 123rd AVN RGT, Ft Wainwright, AK, SEAL Team 8, Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base, VA, Army Special Forces from 3 SFG, Ft Bragg, NC, 11 RCC, Ft Richardson, AK, PACAF RCC, Hickam AFB, HI, and 11 AF JAOC, Elmendorf AFB, AK. Although rescue unit participation in this exercise is limited, COOPERATIVE THUNDER 99-04 will set the stage for future exercises and more extensive, true-to-life CSAR participation.

The Final Planning Conference will be held 30 Mar – 1 Apr 99 at Eielson AFB, AK. For questions, call Maj T.R. Dunn, 353 CTS, DSN 317-377-4968, LTC Don Saxon, JCSAR LTT, DSN 682-9225, or Maj Len Mackie, JCRA, DSN 574-9532.

New Joint Personnel Recovery Agency to Stand Up October 1, 1999

*By Lt Col John R. Pardo, Jr.
(USACOM - J35)*



The new Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) is expected to stand-up on October 1, 1999. Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen formally approved the creation of the new agency on October 15, 1998. Gen Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, followed up with a P-4 to all CINCs and Service chiefs outlining their responsibilities. These acts culminated months of hard work by the Joint Combat Rescue Agency (JCRA), the Air Staff Special Operations Division, and the Joint Staff.

The final implementation plan is expected to pass through the Joint Staff by April 1, 1999. The timeline calls for the JPRA to stand-up within the Air Force and to transfer to USACOM by October 1, 1999.

In conjunction with the work at USACOM, members of JSSA and JCRA are meeting every few weeks to discuss consolidation. The group has formulated a proposed organizational structure that integrates the existing functions of the two organizations. While work on JPRA stand-up continues, one major problem still needs resolution—manpower. The proposal calls for six multi-service billets in addition to the current combined manpower of both agencies. Current Joint manning constraints and limitations complicate this proposal. Efforts are continuing to solve this issue.

Despite the manpower issue, the implementation process within USACOM and the consolidation of JSSA and JCRA into the JPRA continues to move forward. Just over six months from now DoD will finally have a single organization capable of handling personnel recovery operational issues. However, one note of caution . . . While the JPRA may be a one-stop shop, it will not be a personnel recovery panacea. Rather it is another major step in the process of integrating personnel recovery activities and requirements across the Services.



HURLBURT FORCES RESCUE DOWNED PILOTS

*By Staff Sgt. William Seabrook Jr.
16th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs*

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. - Routine training turned into a real-life rescue for Hurlburt Field aircrews January 28th with the collision of two Eglin Air Force Base F-15C fighters over the Gulf of Mexico. The two pilots ejected and were in the water approximately 75 miles from the Florida coast.

A 20th Special Operations Squadron MH-53J Pave Low and a 4th Special Operations Squadron AC-130U Spooky gunship, which were both already airborne in the local area, immediately diverted off their flight path toward the radar plot of the collision site. A second airborne Pave Low headed back to Hurlburt to pick up pararescuemen from the 23rd Special Tactics Squadron along with medical supplies. Simultaneously, an MH-60G Pave Hawk from the 55th Special Operations Squadron was diverted to pick up a similar rescue package.



The gunship was the first Hurlburt Field aircraft to arrive on-scene, joining three Eglin Air force Base F-16 Falcons that were already flying with the F-15s when the collision occurred. The gunship immediately began orbiting the scene

using its onboard sensors and navigation equipment to pinpoint the exact coordinates of the

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**SIGNALING
DEVICES****Part No - CERE-25**

Encoder, IR-25
Channel 1, Life
Support Shop Tool
5855-01-452-0079

Part No - MEI-101

Rescue Signal,
Smoke & IR Flare,
Survival Kit Signal
5855-01-456-5752

Part No - MEI-102

Rescue Signal, IR
Illumination
Grenade, Survival
Kit Signal
5855-01-456-5753

Part No - MEI-200

Rescue Signal,
Penguin Flare Kit,
Launcher & Seven
Flares
5855-01-456-5755

Part No-MEI-200B

Rescue Signal,
Penguin Flare Ban-
doleer Only, Seven
Flares
5855-01-456-5757

Hurlburt Rescue

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accident.

"Spooky [AC-130U] really made the difference in making the rescue successful," said Maj Kevin Brooks, aircraft commander of the first Pave Low on the scene. "The [gunship] crew was able to refine the coordinates and talk us right in on top of the accident site."

As Brooks' helicopter approached the scene, the Pave Low which diverted to Hurlburt for medical supplies was on its way along with the Pave Hawk. The Pave Hawk also had a flight surgeon aboard. Once arriving on-scene, Brooks' crew found only some floating debris as evidence of the crash.

"There wasn't much to see out there; in fact, we even had trouble locating the pilots until they popped their rescue smoke," said Brooks. "We then spotted both pilots floating in their life rafts." His crew made the decision to lower their rescue hoist and attempt to pick up one of the fliers. "Once we had him secure in the hoist we lifted him onboard without incident."

Just as Brooks' crew was finishing their pick-up, the MH-60 arrived with the second MH-53 close behind. The Pave Hawk quickly lowered Senior Airman Matt Bury, a pararescueman, into the water to assist the second pilot into the hoist.

"Once we got the pilot onboard, our medical people worked on him, ensuring he was stable and ready for the flight to safety," said Capt Al Nolan, the Pave Hawk's aircraft commander. Both F-15 Pilots were flown to Eglin's Regional hospital.

"The whole operation really showcased Hurlburt's ability to respond in a situation such as this one," said Col Kenneth Poole, 16th Operations Group Deputy Commander. "We had both pilots out of the water and on their way to safety within an hour of being notified of the collision."

Hurlburt leaders are also quick to point out the rescue was a team effort involving the entire base community. "We had more than 150 people involved in the rescue and everybody performed flawlessly to make the operation go as smoothly as it did," said Col Donald Wurster, 16th Special Operations Wing commander. "Training today to provide for a tomorrow is what we do best."



SOUTHCOM LAUNCHES NEW JOINT SAR CENTER

By Lt Col Mac McCausland



With the closure of Howard Air Force Base only a few short months away, HQ USSOUTHCOM is taking steps to ensure Search and Rescue (SAR) continuity and contingency capability IAW current doctrinal guidance. The Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSRC), currently located at Howard, and an Air Force, 24th Wing function, will move to Key West, Florida in March and April 1999. Full up operations will commence on May 1, 1999.

The JSRC will be a truly joint organization aligned under the SOUTHCOM J-3. It will be organized IAW current guidance and the billets will be joint. Currently, the positions are filled by USAF personnel with the Director and NCOIC being permanent party, and the Assistant Director being an augmentee from Air Combat Command. We envision the organization to have three officers, one from each Service, and five enlisted personnel from the different Services. SOUTHCOM J-1 is working to have the joint billets by October 1, 1999. In the interim, the

JSRC will continue operating with TDY personnel supplied by HQ USSOUTHAF (12AF).

This is an opportunity to be in on the ground floor of building a new organization. Eventually all personnel will be language qualified (Spanish) and there will be ample opportunity for travel in Central and South America. In addition to fulfilling Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) functions for the SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR), JSRC personnel will form the nucleus for a contingency JSRC, provide the SAR/CSAR perspective for SOUTHCOM operations and plans, and continue expanding the SAR interface with host-nation countries IAW CINCSOUTH forward engagement policy.

Interested personnel can call their respective Service personnel rep for news on the billets. (Of which the news is slim right now.) Or call Lt Col Mac McCausland at DSN 313-284-7714 for details on operations in Latin America.