



Ministry
of Defence



Allied Joint Publication-3.7

Allied Joint Doctrine for Recovery of Personnel in a Hostile Environment



NATO STANDARD

AJP-3.7

ALLIED JOINT DOCTRINE FOR RECOVERY
OF PERSONNEL IN A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Edition B Version 1
with UK national elements

JUNE 2025



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
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12 June 2025

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Allied Joint Publication-3.7

Allied Joint Doctrine for Recovery of Personnel in a Hostile Environment

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Head Doctrine and Analysis

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Joint doctrine



The UK places NATO at the heart of its defence. In doing so the UK should strive to achieve maximum coherence and interoperability with, and between, our closest allies and partners. Where possible the UK will adopt NATO doctrine (Allied joint publications) rather than producing national doctrine (joint doctrine publications). Where it cannot, the UK will ensure it remains compatible. As a result the UK doctrine architecture comprises:

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Record of national reservations

Chapter	Record of reservation by nations
Note: The reservations listed on this page include only those that were recorded at time of promulgation and may not be complete. Refer to the NATO Standardization Documents Database for the complete list of existing reservations.	

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Record of specific reservations

[nation]	[detail of reservation]
BEL	1. Ch2, Sect 2, 2.11 (p.8): “BEL does consider SAR as part of the PR scope since this can be one of the available PR capabilities in theatre to consider in the conception of an overall PR plan.” 2. Ch2, Sect 6, 2.19.a. (p.11): “While BEL acknowledges the fact that deleting ISOPREP data is a JFC overall responsibility, it should be clarified that BEL as a TCN reserves the right to have these data deleted unilaterally at any level when the concerned personnel are no longer in theatre.” 3. Ch2, Sect 6, 2.20, bullet 6 (p.11): “BEL does not consider the production of special instructions (SPINS) as being the task of the JPRC. The production of SPINS is a JFAC responsibility as part of the ATO process and the overall air operations related documents for the JOA. The JPRC merely contributes to the PR section in the SPINS and provides this guidance to the JFAC in order to include it into the SPINS.” 4. Ch2, Sect 6, 2.24 (p.13): “BEL does not consider the PR officer to be in charge of the coordination all PR documentation. The PR officer only coordinates the unit related PR documents (ISOPREP, EPA, ...) with the other PR nodes being mainly the PRCC.” 5. Ch3, Sect 2, 3.13 (p.17): “BEL does not support the routine invitation of civilian organisations for attending the planning process.” 6. Ch3, Sect 3, 3.21 (p.19): “BEL does not consider the authority to declare a ISOE/PR event at JFC level. The philosophy of PR for BEL is to solve the event on the lowest level possible, hence a declaration authority only retained at JFC level will hamper an efficient and timely PR operation. BEL considers the declaration of a ISOE/PR event at component/regional/large unit PRCC level through the PRCC Director and the attribution of a PR event number at a later stage at the JPRC level only for joint monitoring purposes.”

[nation]	[detail of reservation]
Note: The reservations listed on this page include only those that were recorded at time of promulgation and may not be complete. Refer to the NATO Standardization Documents Database for the complete list of existing reservations.	

Summary of changes

1. The former edition A of AJP-3.7 was a first effort to formally codify common principles to plan for, prepare and conduct recovery of isolated personnel. It was soon realised that the focus of these principles should rather be centred on isolated personnel, regardless of the capabilities used to recover them. Besides, due to the fact that some nations had been in the process of developing capabilities with the sole purpose of conducting recovery of personnel in hostile environment, a large agreement on terminology was not achieved at the time of publication of edition A.
2. This edition B of AJP-3.7 reaches a new level of maturity in providing doctrinal guidance for recovery of personnel during the Alliance's operations. This guidance can now, after constructive discussions, be readily used by commanders and staffs at different levels, without the need of being a subject matter expert.
3. Like in edition A, peacetime search and rescue is still not part of AJP-3.7 (B), as different national interpretations of applicable international aeronautic and maritime regulations still exist on the edge between peacetime and wartime. That is why in the title and in the content of this edition B, the circumstance of a hostile environment is focussed on, whether this hostile character is confirmed, or only presumed. When it is only presumed, nations may have different approaches, depending on their positions about law and regulations, but the doctrinal guidance is essentially the same.

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Related documents

- A. NATOTerm (<https://nso/nato.int/natoterm>)
- B. MC 0763 *Policy for Personnel Recovery in Hostile Environment*
- C. C-M(2009)0048 (INV) - *NATO's Comprehensive, Strategic-Level Policy for Preventing the Proliferation of WMD*
- D. BISC 080-006 LL Policy
- E. MC 0603/1 *NATO CBRN Defence Concept and MCM-0208-2016 CBRN Capability Indicative Roadmap*
- F. AAP-47(C) *Allied Joint Doctrine Development*
- G. AAMedP-1.12 *Medical Training and Equipment Requirements for Search and Rescue (SAR) and combat SAR missions*
- H. *Allied Command Operations Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD)*
- I. AJP-3(C) *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations*
- J. AJP-3.5(B) *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*
- K. AJP-3.14 *Allied Joint Doctrine for Force Protection*
- L. AJP-3.16 *Security Force Assistance*
- M. AJP-5 *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Planning of Operations*
- N. ATP-3.3.6, *NATO Force Protection Doctrine for Air Operations*
- O. ATP-3.8.1 Vol. I, *CBRN Defence on Operations*
- P. APRP-3.3.7.2, *Standardization of Reintegration*
- Q. APRP-3.3.7.4, *PR Staffs' training standards*

R. APRP-3.3.7.5, *NATO Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Extraction (SERE) Training Standard*

S. APRP-3.3.7.7, *NATO Personnel Recovery Tactics, Techniques and Procedures*

UK related documents



Joint Service Publication (JSP) 911, *MOD Policy for Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Extraction*

JSP 998, *MOD Policy for Joint Personnel Recovery*, Part 1 – Directive

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Preface

Context

1. This document focuses on NATO personnel¹ who become separated from their unit (as an individual or a group) while participating in a NATO-led military activity or mission and who find themselves isolated in an environment where their physical or psychological integrity could be endangered by a hostile activity.

UK 1. The UK also considers the capability protection of sensitive equipment as part of force protection and personnel recovery. Sensitive equipment recovery or denial is factored into the UK personnel recovery planning process where appropriate, and the term is applied to actions undertaken to ensure capability protection of sensitive equipment is deployed/employed operationally with our personnel.



2. An isolation event of NATO personnel in a hostile environment would be a time-critical situation regarding force protection, mission assurance, operations security, morale of assigned forces, next-of-kin and families, and public support.

3. Personnel recovery (PR) is an allied joint forces responsibility, which embraces a wide range of situations requiring different levels of responses. Member states provide NATO with the personnel and assets necessary to carry out NATO operations and NATO should ensure there are means available to recover personnel under its responsibility who have become isolated. For their part, troop-contributing nations should ensure their personnel have been appropriately trained and equipped to assist in their own recovery. NATO must ensure allied joint forces establish an architecture capable of reporting an isolation event, and of locating, supporting, recovering, and reintegrating personnel who have become isolated while participating in NATO operations.

4. Troop-contributing nations are responsible for the security of their personnel. Public opinion is therefore highly sensitive to the welfare of isolated

.....
¹ Including NATO civilians authorized to accompany the NATO Force.

persons. The exploitation of an isolation event can have a major impact at the political level, directly or indirectly, by weakening the nations' participation in ongoing operations, or by pressuring political leaders to change their priorities.

Scope

5. Allied joint publication (AJP-3.7), Allied Joint Doctrine for Recovery of Personnel in a Hostile Environment, is the Allied joint publication for the preparation, planning, execution and adaptation of PR across the full spectrum of Alliance missions, operations and to some extent activities in a hostile environment. The scope of this publication addresses roles and responsibilities and provides guidance for the NATO commander. It does not address PR operations that, at the tactical level, are not led or supported by military forces. This document is subordinate to AJP-3, Allied Joint Doctrine for Conduct of Operations, and it is part of the Allied joint doctrine architecture.

UK 2. Specific authorities and direction for UK forces in the preparation, planning, execution and adaptation phases of PR are provided in the UK related documents box and should be read alongside this doctrine.



Purpose

- 6. Troop-contributing nations of a multinational force may have differing PR conceptions, policies, doctrines, priorities, and capabilities. An overarching PR doctrine is required to facilitate unity of effort.
- 7. This document provides direction and guidance to NATO operational commanders and staffs with responsibilities related to the recovery of personnel.
- 8. This document provides the fundamental principles for the recovery of personnel in a hostile environment, taking into account each national responsibilities and considerations where applicable.

Application

9. Chapter 1 explains the key concepts. Chapter 2 presents the main responsibilities, methods and applicable options. Chapter 3 highlights

important points of the recovery process. Annex A provides an annotated extract² of the template for a joint force (operational level) operation plan (OPLAN), from the comprehensive operations planning directive (COPD) V3.0 (dated 28 Jan 21) in which this annex bears the designation of ‘Annex V’.

.....
² For access to the full annotated recovery annex of the OPLAN, refer to the Annex V of COPD.



Chapter 1



Chapter 1 gives an overview of the fundamentals of the recovery of personnel in a hostile environment. An example of lessons learned from a rescue sets the basis. It explains the key concepts for the personnel recovery system.

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“

There is no exercise better for
the heart than reaching down
and lifting people up.

”

John Holmes

Chapter 1

Fundamentals

Section 1 – Lessons Learned: Rescue of HAMMER 34

1

1.1 **Isolation event.** Shortly after midnight on 2 May 1999, HAMMER 34 (F-16 piloted by Lt Col Dave Goldfein³) was on a destruction-of-enemy-air-defences mission over Serbia in support of Operation ALLIED FORCE when a Serbian surface-to-air missile (SAM) impacted his aircraft. Goldfein attempted to return to friendly territory in his damaged aircraft but was forced to eject over Serbian territory.

a. **Activation time.** At 0016Z, the rescue helicopters SKAT 11 (MH-53M), SKAT 12 (MH-53J), and SKAT 14 (MH-60G) were notified of a possible downed aircraft. After gathering the information necessary to execute the rescue mission (which included survivor coordinates and condition, authentication information, threat information, communications data and information on support assets), the helicopters were given launch authority at 0102Z and execute authority at 0106Z. Just prior to take-off, the recovery force received new coordinates from the airborne mission commander, which delayed their departure by approximately 12 minutes.

b. **Insertion.** The recovery force chose an ingress route that they felt best mitigated the known threats, but as they crossed the border into Serbia, they were fired on by at least three Serbian SAMs. After successfully evading the missiles, the helicopters arrived at the first objective (the new coordinates they were provided just before take-off) at 0220Z but were not able to establish communications with HAMMER 34. The helicopters held for several minutes while attempting to establish contact and verify the coordinates. The airborne mission commander then passed new coordinates, which were very close to the original coordinates given to the force.

.....
3 After being recovered, Lt Col Goldfein would later go on to serve as the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff.

c. **Extraction.** The team continued to the new objective area and were met by SANDY 12 (A-10 rescue escort) on the Combat search and rescue (CSAR) communications net. As the force approached the area, HAMMER 33 (Goldfein's wingman and on-scene commander) assisted with authentication and vectoring the helicopters to Goldfein's location. SKAT 11 was overhead the second objective area at 0243Z and after receiving a bearing from Goldfein's personnel locator system in his survival radio, SKAT 11 turned in that direction. Two miles short of the survivor's location, the force encountered aimed and accurate small arms fire coming from the second-floor windows of a nearby building. SKAT 14's flight engineer returned fire and successfully suppressed it. The recovery force established communications with Goldfein and instructed him to turn on his infrared strobe light. Goldfein informed SKAT 14 that they had just overflowed his position; SKAT 14 returned, visually identified his position on a short final, and proceeded inbound for pickup. SKAT 14 landed in a field very close to Goldfein, deplaned all three special tactics team members, who authenticated Goldfein and loaded him aboard the helicopter. SKAT 14 was airborne at 0245Z, about 20 seconds after landing. SKAT 14 egressed the area, re-joining SKAT 11 and 12.

d. **Return to base.** Near the Serbian-Bosnian border, the force again encountered small arms fire but they were able to evade. No other hostile fire occurred after crossing the Bosnia border. The force landed at Tuzla Airbase at 0330Z, where Goldfein was transferred to an MC-130P for transport to his home base at Aviano.

1.2 Comments

a. **Previous lessons learned.** Earlier in his career, Goldfein had attended both the U.S. Air Force's Combat Survival Course and the Water Survival School. He also had previous rescue experience: he had served as the On-scene commander for a rescue mission during Operation DESERT STORM in 1991. During that mission, the airborne mission commander had relayed the isolated personnel (ISOP) position in the clear. Goldfein did not want that to happen with his rescue, and so before bailing out, he instructed HAMMER 33 not to discuss his position once had confirmed a lock on his location.

b. **Training.** At the time, there was a limited opportunity for units to train for rescue missions; there were only two dedicated personnel

recovery (PR) exercises in the U.S. Department of Defense. The recovery force itself had had limited experience before the rescue of HAMMER 34, and the rescue mission commander had reported that their learning curve had been steep.

Section 2 – Personnel Recovery: Primary Terms

1.3 **Personnel recovery.** The sum of military, diplomatic and civil efforts to effect the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel.

1.4 **Isolated personnel.** Military or civilian personnel who are separated from their unit or organization resulting in a loss of positive and/or procedural control, that may require them to survive, evade, resist exploitation, and either have to make their way back to friendly control or require assistance to do so.

1.5 **Reintegration.** The operational process of providing medical and psychological care to personnel recovered from isolation, and debriefing them for intelligence and lessons learned purposes.

1.6 **Combat recovery⁴ (CR):** a method used for recovering non-detained isolated personnel from a situation in a hostile or potentially hostile environment, using conventional tactics, techniques and procedures.

1.7 **Combat search and rescue⁵:** combat recovery of personnel trained in and equipped for survival, evasion, resistance and extraction, using specifically organized and equipped capabilities that are nationally designated for personnel recovery.

Section 3 – General Description

1.8 **Personnel recovery system.** The system takes place in a set of initial conditions that are qualified as an isolation event (ISOE). An event qualifies as an ISOE when life and health of an isolated individual is in danger and that forces this individual to survive environmental factors, escape/evade hostile actors, resist exploitation, or escape hostile conditions. To solve the ISOE

4 This term has been proposed for NATO Agreed status via TTF 2008-0444.

5 This term has been proposed for NATO Agreed status via TTF 2011-0054.

in the most efficient manner, PR is an allied joint forces responsibility and embraces a wide range of situations requiring different levels of responses. The PR system activates different options, means and methods through different resources. The joint force commander and staff validate this occurrence of an ISOE, conduct a thorough mission analysis that considers all available PR options and capabilities to successfully plan recovery operations within the joint operation area (JOA). In addition, subordinate component commands have a responsibility for PR within their own area of operation. PR involves an integration of activities between the three elements of the PR system: commanders and staffs, recovery forces, and isolated personnel. This includes commanders and staffs trained to integrate and synchronize PR planning and operations into all operations and activities, and recovery forces staffed, trained and equipped to exercise and execute PR missions. This PR system's mid-level collection of processes is represented as a macro-process in figure 1.1 below.

UK 1.1. The UK Ministry of Defence PR system is designated to fulfil the duty of care and obligation to protect our people, preserve operational advantage, and deny our adversaries the opportunity to influence our military strategy and national will through the exploitation of our personnel or sensitive equipment. It is achieved through the designation of capable forces, generated and held at readiness in accordance with operational plans. These forces can undertake PR missions in hostile environments, by day and night, and are interoperable and interchangeable with allies and partners to provide global coverage. The system is underpinned by a resilient workforce in which personnel at risk of isolation are trained and equipped to avoid isolation where possible, survive and evade where required, resist exploitation if captured, and to return with dignity once recovered.



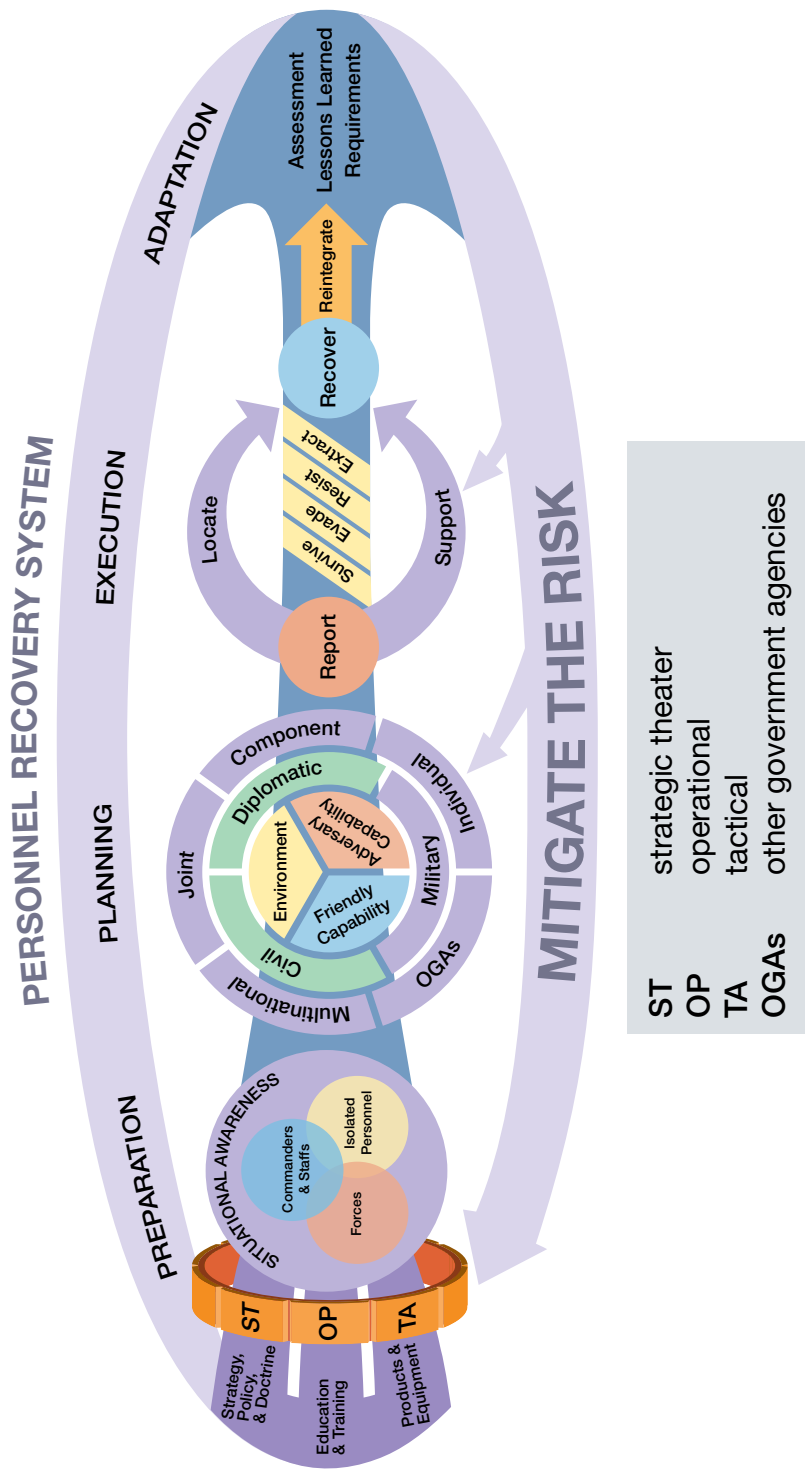


Figure 1.1 – personnel recovery system macro-process

1.9 **Aims.** Recovery missions should aim to:

- Recover all ISOP;
- Minimize risk to ISOP;
- Minimize risk to recovery forces;
- Seek to prevent escalation of the overall military situation.

1.10 **Personnel recovery functions.** The PR system is comprised of four functions.

- a. **Preparation.** In PR, a key to success is the proper organization, education and training, equipping, and employment of the involved forces in order to gain and maintain the ability to quickly process relevant information and to rapidly take appropriate action.
- b. **Planning.** Commanders and staffs should consider all available PR options and capabilities to successfully plan PR operations within their areas of operations. Options to recover ISOP include military, diplomatic and civil options, or a combination thereof.
- c. **Execution.** The PR system is centred on five PR execution tasks: report, locate, support, recover, and reintegrate. Along with these tasks are the supporting activities required to resolve an isolation event, such as next-of-kin and families support or public affairs management. The ability to complete the execution tasks is not the work of a single entity, but rather the collective and concerted efforts of the command and staff elements, recovery forces, and ISOP.
- d. **Adaptation.** Adaptation is the continuous analysis of all aspects related to PR during preparation, planning and execution of PR operations, in order to improve the PR system.

Section 4 – Operating Environment

1.11 **Variety.** Allied joint forces may conduct a wide variety of NATO-activities or missions from combat to humanitarian assistance within the JOA. Experience demonstrates that a wide range of military activities are required simultaneously, rather than single focus activities. This leads to a variety of ISOE risks and associated recovery capacities.



Allied joint forces may conduct a wide variety of NATO activities or missions from combat to humanitarian assistance within the joint operations area

1.12 Evolving environments. In managing a crisis through military operations, military forces are required to deal with a diverse range of risks and complex situations. These situations could evolve from a permissive to an uncertain or hostile environment in which engagement by adversary forces can be expected. Other possible evolution could be a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear-contaminated environment. This indicates the need to monitor the evolution of ISOE risk.

1.13 Awareness. Commanders should be aware of the threats and hazards to isolated personnel and recovery forces prior to execution of any mission. During the first phases of the planning process, the PR system intelligence planners should be activated. They should thus continuously establish a situational understanding of the environment for PR. The development of plans will depend on the ability of the designated commander and principal staff officers to observe and accurately assess conditions within the JOA.

1.14 Readiness. Regardless of the operating environment, forces must be trained and ready to respond to ISOE during activities or missions in the JOA. Readiness aims to prevent the adversary intention of capture by using an observe-orient-decide-act loop that is faster than the opponent's decision loop. This requires a standing and interoperable PR system.

1.15 **Preparedness.** ISOP, through training, should have been prepared to survive, evade capture, support their own recovery, and if captured, resist exploitation, and escape.

Section 5 – Civil/diplomatic Connections

1.16 **Alternative options.** Although this doctrine focuses on the military PR option, a recovery is also possible through diplomatic and civil options. Commanders should consider all PR options. PR planners and staff should be able to require and coordinate diplomatic and civil PR actions.

1.17 **Comprehensive approach.** While military commanders may have little or no control over civilian and diplomatic efforts to locate, support and/or recover isolated personnel, they may be able to offer guidance, and should be prepared to assist where necessary and feasible. While these situations are difficult to predict or direct, deliberate planning and coordination procedures may facilitate successful outcomes.

1.18 **Civil-military cooperation.** In the case of civil organizations engaged in PR, a useful point of contact may be the civil-military cooperation cell (J9) in the joint task force headquarters. In the case of diplomatic teams engaged, the point of contact could be the local embassy, consulate or national liaison.

Section 6 – Limitations

1.19 **Non-conventional actions.** This doctrine focuses on mainly conventional methods and capabilities and/or tactics, techniques and procedures of CR and CSAR that could be used by a commander. When ISOP need a recovery in a hostile environment with the use of non-conventional military capabilities, refer to Joint Commanders and Special Operations Component Commanders instructions, and national guidance. The Joint Commanders should be the gateway to request and coordinate non-conventional military and non-military actions with the conventional military domain.



Key points

- Lessons learned and training are key elements to success for the personnel recovery (PR) system.
- An isolation event is when the life and/or the health of isolated personnel (ISOP) are in danger and that forces the ISOP to survive environmental factors, escape/evade hostile actors, resist exploitation or escape hostile conditions.
- The PR system includes: preparation, planning, execution and adaptation. The goal in all of these phases is to mitigate the risks.
- The joint force commander and their staff validate, analyse and plan recovery operations within the joint operations area. Subordinate component commands are responsible for PR within their own area of operation.
- The UK Ministry of Defence PR system is designated to fulfil the duty of care and obligation to protect our people, preserve operational advantage, and deny our adversaries the opportunity to influence our military strategy and national will through the exploitation of our personnel or sensitive equipment.
- Other PR options, beside military, include diplomatic and civil options.



Chapter 2



Chapter 2 presents the main responsibilities, methods and applicable options for personnel recovery. It looks into the notional personnel recovery command and control architecture and defines different rescue elements.

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2

“

Take calculated risks.

”

General George Patton Jr.

Chapter 2

Recovery Options, Recovery Modes and Methods

Section 1 – Recovery Options

2.1 **Criteria.** Although civil and diplomatic options are not the responsibility of the military domain, they should be considered during the preparation, planning and execution of personnel recovery (PR). The recovery of isolated personnel (ISOP) includes military, diplomatic and civil options, or a combination thereof depending on criteria such as balance of force, complexity of the operational environment.

2.2 **Military.** The military option includes the preparation, planning, execution and adaptation of activities by commanders and staffs, recovery forces, and other personnel to report, locate, support, recover, and reintegrate ISOP.

2.3 **Diplomatic.** National governments are the lead for all diplomatic activities to prepare for, support and possibly resolve the recovery of ISOP, in accordance with international laws.⁶

2.4 **Civil.** Civil options may include sanctioned or unsanctioned intervention by intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and private citizens to resolve the isolation event (ISOE).

Section 2 – Recovery Modes

2.5 **Recovery modes criteria.** Depending on the situation, commanders may want to rely entirely on the lowest level of command, or several levels of command, through a single type, or a combination of several modes of PR.

.....
⁶ Such as Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, and International Human Rights Law as interpreted by Nations.

2.6 **Self-recovery.** The self-recovery mode is determined by the capabilities regarding training for survival, evasion, resistance and extraction (SERE), and the condition of the ISOP. Self-recovery is divided into two subcategories: unassisted and opportune.

- a. **Unassisted recovery:** ISOP have a responsibility to facilitate their own recovery as much as possible, especially when situations or environments may hamper other methods of recovery. The unassisted recovery requires the capabilities that enable an isolated individual to survive and independently evade capture to return to friendly control. Evasion aids may be issued to assist the evader to survive and avoid capture.
- b. **Opportune recovery:** this is an assisted recovery whereby an ISOP takes advantage of an opportunity to use the aid of actors who may or may not have been considered in friendly forces planning, following either an inadvertent discovery of the ISOP or a deliberate decision by the ISOP to seek help.

2.7 **Unit recovery.** The unit recovery mode consists of PR performed by the unit to which the ISOP belong. Commanders at all levels are responsible, within their means and capabilities, for the recovery of their own personnel if they become isolated.

2.8 **Component recovery.** The component mode consists of PR performed by military forces of a single functional component.

2.9 **Joint recovery.** The joint mode consists of PR performed by military forces of two or more components.

Section 3 – Recovery Methods and Capabilities

2.10 **Recovery method criteria.** Risk, complexity of operation, scale, environment and the type of training troops received determine the methods used to accomplish recovery as following.

2.11 **Search and rescue (SAR).** SAR is the use of aircraft, surface craft, submarines, specialized rescue teams and equipment to search for and rescue personnel in distress on land or at sea. Nations are responsible for recovery of personnel in their territory in accordance with international agreements. As a national responsibility, SAR is out of the scope of this document.

2.12 **Combat recovery (CR).** CR is a method used for recovering non-detained isolated personnel from a situation in a hostile or potentially hostile environment, using conventional tactics, techniques and procedures.

2.13 **Combat search and rescue (CSAR).** CSAR is combat recovery of personnel trained in and equipped for survival, evasion, resistance and extraction, using specifically organized and equipped capabilities that are nationally designated for personnel recovery.

2.14 **SOF recovery operations.** Recovery operations referred to in Allied Joint Publication (AJP)-3.5, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations*.



UK 2.1. The UK's approach to PR is to provide CR through designated force elements that are capable of the task by nature of their primary role. The UK recognises CSAR as a subset of CR but there is no aspiration to develop a dedicated CSAR force. The UK already possesses force elements capable of recovering ISOP from high threat areas. Additionally, almost all UK force elements are capable of conducting or supporting joint PR missions, but they may not have received specific recovery training or equipment.

UK 2.2. This approach avoids the overheads associated with dedicated CSAR forces, and maximises the availability, flexibility and utility of potential recovery elements available within each area of operations. This simplification allows commanders to view PR as a calculus based on the specifics of the ISOP, the recovery forces and the operating environment (along with associated threat and operational risk assessments), rather than as the application of prescribed methods to specific environments. The UK PR calculus is further described in paragraph UK 3.4.

Section 4 – Response Options

2.15 Response criteria. Different response options exist to respond to an ISOE, depending on criteria such as time, assets available and the tactical situation. These options may be conducted based on arranged plans including alert postures that will allow the resources dedicated or designated to the recovery to act in the best way. Depending on the means concerned, these alert postures are either permanent or dedicated to PR operations, or ad-hoc, when a PR operation is possible. Once launched, these PR response options can be changed, depending on the tactical situation.

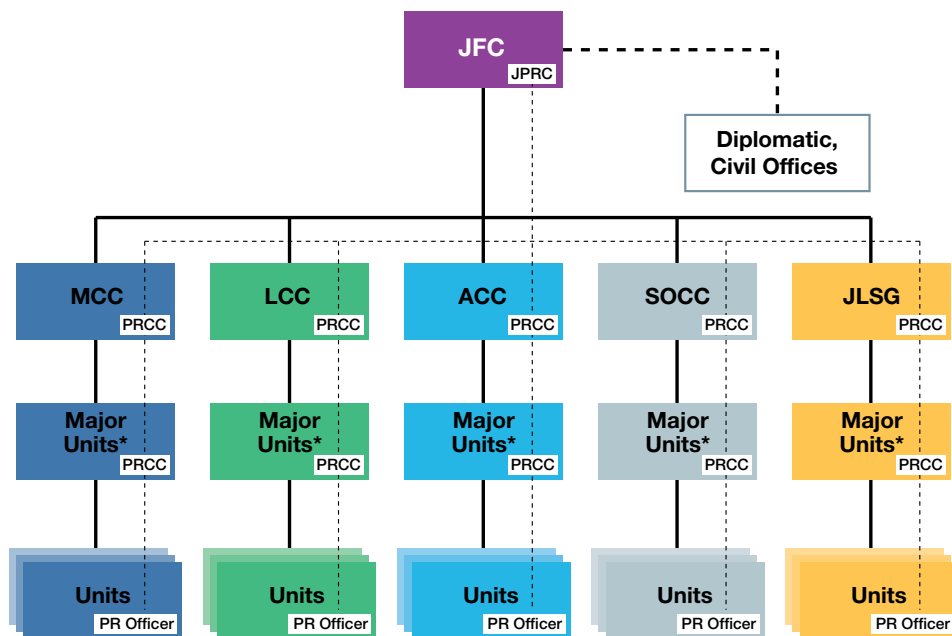
2.16 Immediate recovery. Immediate recovery generally uses available assets that are in the immediate vicinity of the ISOP location, on alert, or can be rapidly diverted from other missions to the recovery of isolated personnel. NATO forces may be redirected to react to an isolation event using a quick reaction force that can respond via ground, sea, or air routes, depending on availability of assets, launched from a ground or sea-based location.

2.17 Deliberate response. Commanders choose this method when an immediate response may not be possible due to environmental, political, or threat considerations. Deliberately planned missions give planners the flexibility to utilize more time and coordinate more resources. It allows to mitigate and counter negative risks to mission and/or risk to recovery force more effectively prior to executing the PR tasks.

Section 5 – Personnel Recovery Command and Control Structure

2.18 Architecture criteria. PR operations are usually planned and conducted in accordance with standard NATO planning and command and control (C2) procedures (see AJP-5, *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Planning of Operations*, AJP-3, *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations*, and Allied Command Operations comprehensive operations planning directive). PR C2 nodes normally have direct liaison authority with each other, and with other appropriate organizations (such as host nation's rescue coordination centres), to facilitate pro-active planning for PR and enhance situational awareness. Within the joint operations area (JOA), the overall C2 structure is tailored

to meet the characteristics and needs of the operation and environment depending on criteria such as risks to mission and risks to recovery force. PR C2 may thus deviate from the notional structure in figure 2.1.



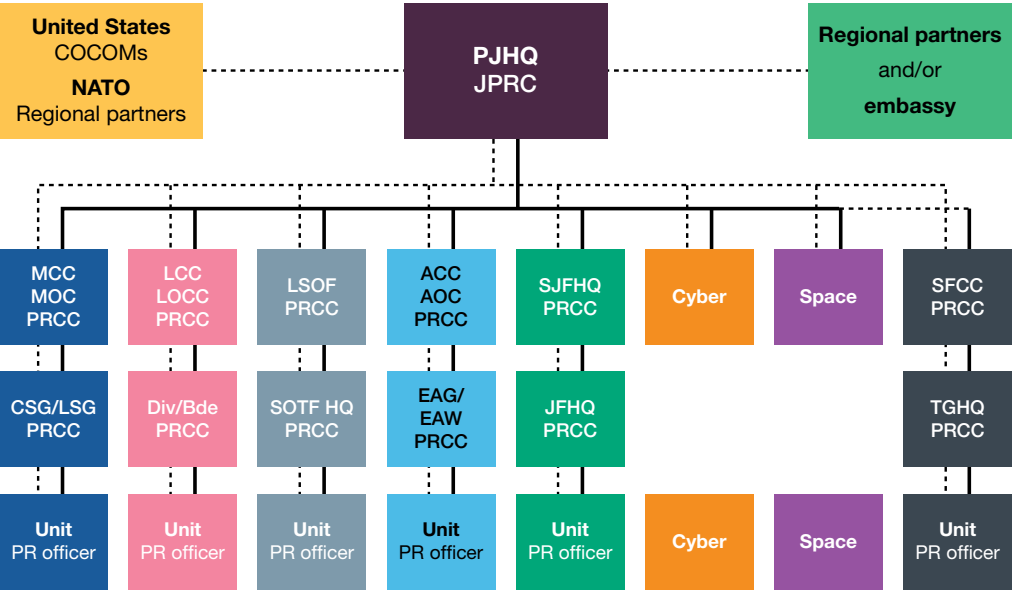
*Major Units: e.g., Corps, Division, Brigade etc. and other services equivalents

ACC	air component command
JFC	joint force command
JLSG	joint logistic support group
JPRC	joint personnel recovery centre
LCC	land component command
MCC	maritime component command
PR	personnel recovery
PRCC	personnel recovery coordination cell
SOCC	special operations component command

Figure 2.1 – notional personnel recovery command and control architecture



UK 2.3. UK PR architecture follows the normal chain of command from the joint force command (JFC) to the component commands and units, as illustrated in UK Figure 2.1. PR C2 nodes usually have direct liaison authority with each other, and with other appropriate organisations, to facilitate proactive planning for PR and to create situational awareness.



—— formal command and control - - - - - communications

ACC	air component command
AOC	air operations centre
Div/Bde	division/brigade
COCOMs	combatant commands
CSG/LSG	command support group/logistic support group
EAG	expeditionary air group
EAW	expeditionary air wing
JFHQ	joint force headquarters
JPRC	joint personnel recovery centre
LCC	land component command
LOCC	land operation component command
LSOF	land special operations forces
MCC	maritime component command
MOC	maritime operation command
PJHQ	Permanent Joint Headquarters
PR	personnel recovery
PRCC	personnel recovery coordination cell
SFCC	special forces component command
SJFHQ	standing joint force headquarters
SOCC	special operations component command
SOTF HQ	special operations task force headquarters
TGHQ	tactical group headquarters

UK Figure 2.1 – Operational command and control best practice

Section 6 – Responsibilities

2.19 Operational level: the joint force command

a. **Command.** The joint commander has overall responsibility for PR in the JOA. The joint force command (JFC) prepares for, plans and executes PR within the JOA. The JFC establishes a PR architecture within the JOA. Additionally, the JFC establishes command relationships and procedures for PR operations, identifies intelligence requirements, and assures PR is an integral part of planning, training and rehearsing. The JFC gives PR guidance in the PR Annex V of the operation plan (OPLAN) and JFC PR standing operating procedures. The JFC is responsible for deleting isolated personnel report (ISOPREP) data that is no longer needed.

b. **Training.** The JFC and troop-contributing nations identify the appropriate levels of PR training for both the recovery forces as well as the commanders and staff in accordance with the operational requirements of the theatre of operations.

2

UK 2.4. The UK applies a risk-based approach to PR and SERE training that is aligned to NATO standards. UK Defence, through the Defence SERE Training Organisation, employs robust, authentic, challenging and immersive training methods, balancing associated legal and safety risks to best prepare UK personnel for PR and SERE. It aims to provide a rewarding experience that enables personnel to contextually identify their strengths and vulnerabilities, increase confidence and survivability, and reduce opportunity advantage to adversaries. The following primary training audiences have been identified across Defence:



- commanders and their staff responsible for PR/SERE planning, advice and coordination;
- potential ISOP;
- recovery force elements;
- PR/SERE instructors;
- personnel working for partners across government, global defence network and partner countries who are potentially subject to exploitation; and
- next of kin of potential ISOP.

2.20 Operational level: the joint personnel recovery centre (JPRC). The JPRC is responsible for PR on behalf of the joint commander. The JPRC should be staffed by appropriately PR-trained personnel who are embedded in the joint staff (usually in the joint operation centre) or by designating a component commander's personnel recovery coordination cell (PRCC) (or equivalent staff entity) to function as the JPRC. The JPRC responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Establish and update the PR annex of the JFC's OPLAN and other PR guidance.
- Serve as central point for all information and analysis related to ISOP and their recovery and reintegration efforts.
- Monitor and support PR operations.
- Coordinate and deconflict PR operations between military domains, and coordinate efforts from the civilian domain to support PR operations in the military domain.
- Produce a joint-level personal recovery standard operating procedure for the area of responsibility.
- Produce special instructions specifying the notification process to disseminate daily PR information such as authentication, challenge and pass to all elements.

UK 2.5. The UK JPRC at the Permanent Joint Headquarters is the primary organisation for planning, monitoring and coordinating global recovery. The UK JPRC monitors, tracks and identifies reported incidents as they unfold and coordinates the recovery of Ministry of Defence personnel as required.



UK 2.6. The UK JPRC has established links with partners across government, Defence engagement networks, deployed task force headquarters, allies and partner nations.

2.21 **Tactical level: component command (CC).** CC plan, coordinate, conduct and control PR operations in their assigned areas of operations.⁷ CCs exercise their PR responsibility through the PRCC or equivalent staff entity, staffed by appropriately PR-trained personnel embedded in the staff. If designated by the Joint Commander, one of the CCs may have to establish a JPRC on its behalf. Even if a CC conducts a PR mission with their own capabilities, the CC should notify the JPRC for deconfliction and oversight.

2.22 **Tactical level: the personnel recovery coordination cell.** The PRCC (or equivalent staff element) responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Develop and maintain component PR plan supporting the joint Commander's PR plan.
- Produce PR standing operating procedures for the area of responsibility.
- Update and disseminate PR guidance.
- Produce and disseminate ISOP guidance.
- Manage the ISOPREPs and evasion plans of action for NATO personnel who are, or may become isolated while supporting a NATO mission or activity.
- Provide specialist SERE input to unit SERE instructors and SERE officers.
- Provide guidance to complete and manage evasion plans of action.
- Monitor all PR missions executed by component forces and remain ready to assist other components as directed by the Joint Commander.
- Coordinate and de-conflict PR operations within the component.
- Conduct periodic PR rehearsals.
- Produce a PR battle drill for all staff sections.

⁷ The component commands can be both at the operational and tactical level, depending of their area of operations.

- 2.23 **Tactical level: the special operations component command.** The commander of the special operations component command (SOCC), through their PRCC, is responsible for special operation force (SOF) recovery operations.
- 2.24 **Tactical level: units.** Unit commanders recover their own personnel with their own assets, whenever possible. Units also plan, prepare and train for an isolation event involving their personnel. Units appoint a PR officer to coordinate with the PRCC and/or JPRC (or equivalent) on all PR-related issues. The PR officer coordinates all PR documentation.
- 2.25 **Tactical level: all personnel.** All personnel within the JOA have three main obligations:
- Immediately report to appropriate C2 elements, when recognizing an ISOE has occurred.
 - Understand the threats and hazards and employ/comply with force protection measures. Comply with the Joint Commander’s orders and rules of engagement and Joint Commander’s PR standard operating procedures, to reduce the risk of isolation and increase the possibility of a safe return from isolation.
 - Prepare for potential isolation in accordance with the education and training received, the joint commander’s PR procedures, and issued equipment.

Section 7 – Recovery force elements

- 2.26 **Command and control functions.** The following functions are part of the recovery forces’ C2 structure.⁸
- a. **Rescue mission commander (RMC).** The RMC has tactical control over assets tasked for pick-up and assumes on-scene commander duties (see below) in the objective area during the recovery phase. The RMC is designated by the appropriate commander and is responsible to plan and execute the PR mission.

⁸ Additionally, for PR, as for missions other than PR, a mission coordinator operates from an airborne platform whenever possible. This mission coordinator manages the aircraft flow to and from the objective area, coordinates air-to-air refuelling, provides communications links and coordinates fire support.



A personnel recovery task force is organised to execute a specific personnel recovery mission

b. **On-scene commander (OSC).** The OSC controls actions in the objective area and monitors the ISOP's radio frequency in case immediate actions are required to prevent capture. The OSC should be the individual in the immediate vicinity of an isolation event, who temporarily assumes command, with the best ability to communicate with C2 nodes, recovery forces, and isolated personnel. Playing a major role during the support phase, the OSC does not necessarily take part in the recovery task. Once a qualified RMC is in position to take control of the recovery effort, the OSC should perform a handover.

2.27 **Personnel recovery task force (PRTF).** A PRTF is organized to execute

UK 2.7. Whilst the UK recognises the RMC/OSC functions and terminology, the UK JPRC is the primary organisation for planning, monitoring and coordinating global recovery of UK ISOP and it is able to delegate specific responsibilities to role accordingly.



a specific PR mission. A PRTF is capable of locating and authenticating ISOP, protecting ISOP from adversary threats, providing force protection for itself, providing mission C2 systems support, and recovering ISOP. A PRTF can be dedicated and put on alert, or only designated and tasked when needed by

the joint commander or a subordinate command. It is a cohesive, interoperable force that may consist of any variety of capabilities, with embedded medical support. Its size can range from a single recovery vehicle to dozens of air, ground, or maritime elements working in concert. The joint commander or the supported commander for PR appoints the PRTF commander and the PRTF commander plans, coordinates, and executes the PR mission. Usually, the PRTF commander is also rescue mission commander.

2.28 Rescue elements

- a. **Rescue escort.** This escort may include fixed and/or rotary wing assets and/or maritime or ground assets that provide protection to the PRTF by providing reconnaissance and suppressive fire support, and, if possible, communications relay, and assistance in locating/ authenticating ISOP when required. The rescue escort commander may function as RMC when designated.
- b. **Rescue combat air patrol.** This combat air patrol (CAP) assures (temporary) local air superiority or a favourable air situation en-route and/ or in the objective area. Furthermore, rescue CAP protects the recovery force from air-to-air threats. Rescue CAP may assist in detecting and establishing communications with ISOP and may function as OSC until other elements of the recovery force arrive in the objective area.
- c. **Recovery vehicle.** This vehicle is a platform that will take on board the ISOP in the objective area. It can be any ground, air or maritime platform and will often transport a surface operations team that will physically link up with the ISOP. When required, multiple recovery vehicles may be used during a single PR mission, depending on the situation and tactics, techniques and procedure used (e.g., mutual support). Recovery vehicle should be suited for combat operations and be equipped with the appropriate passive and active defensive aids.
- d. **Ground operations team.** A ground operations team, when used, is usually transported on board a recovery vehicle and will disembark in or near the objective area, conduct a physical link up with, and perform identification/authentication of the ISOP, and bring the ISOP to a recovery vehicle. The team may have to provide emergency medical care, both at the objective and when transporting the ISOP aboard the extraction vehicle. A ground operations team may be provided by the joint force's land, air, maritime or special operations component. The ranking member of the ground operations team can act as the OSC.



UK 2.8. As the UK ambition is to provide CR through designated force elements that are capable of the task by nature of their primary role, there is no dedicated PRTF. The PRTF roles above are used as a guide for a secondary role that a force element may conduct if tasked to support PR operations. All UK force elements are capable of executing PR functions and must be prepared to support or recover ISOP at all times.

UK 2.9. **Personnel recovery task force training.** Those force elements nominated as a PRTF or as potential recovery forces are required to have completed a PR collective training pathway to enable declaration of interoperability with partner nations as possible; however, there is also a requirement to maintain a UK sovereign capability for UK-specific operations. Designated units need to ensure that they train, assess and assure their PRTF functions. This will provide confirmation to the combat operation centre that their PR capabilities have been tested and are adequately prepared.



Key points

- The recovery options are military, diplomatic or civil, or a combination thereof.
- The recovery modes are self-recovery (unassisted or opportune), unit recovery, company recovery and joint recovery.
- The recovery methods are search and rescue, combat recovery, combat search and rescue (CSAR) and special operations forces (SOF) recovery operations.
- The UK recognises CSAR as a subset of combat recovery.
- The UK personnel recovery (PR) ambition is to provide combat recovery through designated force elements that are capable of the task by nature of their primary role.
- The recovery response can be immediate or deliberate.
- Within the joint force command (JFC), a structure of embedded PR-trained personnel will provide the expertise on PR. A joint personnel recovery centre and personnel recovery coordination cells (PRCCs) can be established.
- The UK PR architecture follows the normal chain of command from the JFC to the component commands and units.
- The JFC and troop-contributing nations identify the appropriate levels of PR training for both the recovery forces and the commander and their staff.
- The commander of the special operations component command, through their PRCC, is responsible for SOF recovery operations.
- Whenever possible, unit commanders recover their own personnel with their own assets.
- All UK personnel within the joint operations area have three main obligations: report isolation event; limit own exposure to the risk of isolation; and prepare for potential isolation.

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Chapter 3



Chapter 3 highlights important points of the recovery process. It explains how personnel recovery staff should be engaged in operational planning at the earliest possible time and how to prepare forces before entering the operation area. The planning on how to execute a recovery event with risk management is explained. Chapter 3 also describes considerations that should be made during execution of a recovery event and how to adapt afterwards.

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“

To be prepared is half
the victory.

”

Michael de Nostredame

Chapter 3

Functions prepare, plan, execute, adapt

Section 1 – Preparation

3.1 Preparedness. The Joint Commander will supervise the parameters for personnel recovery (PR) operations. PR staffs should be engaged in the operations planning process at the earliest possible time. Before entering the joint operation area (JOA), all participating forces should be educated and trained, equipped and prepared to meet the theatre entry requirements for PR.

3.2 Early deployment. From the onset of a mission, personnel may become isolated. For deployed operations, early deployment of a PR capability is an important priority of the joint commander. In the early stages of the planning process, the PR command and control (C2) system should be activated via the NATO crisis response system (NCRS).

3.3 Education and training of commanders and staffs. All commanders and key staff should have a basic understanding and awareness of PR. For that aim:

- a. Selected staff personnel should be formally trained for PR, in accordance with their anticipated duty position in case of operational deployment. They should participate in collective PR training events whenever possible to further develop their skills and knowledge in multiple PR aspects. An assessment of what personnel are qualified for PR should be delivered as soon as the NCRS activates the PR C2 system.
- b. Commanders and staffs at all levels ensure that exercises include PR scenarios on a routine basis.
- c. During pre-deployment training, commanders and staffs ensure that all personnel are trained in accordance with mission and/or theatre requirements.

- d. Following deployment, in-theatre training should be conducted to rehearse generic PR missions.

3.4 Recovery forces training. All units should be aware of their inherent capabilities to perform PR tasks. Especially combat units have an inherent ability to be employed as recovery forces, and should be prepared for this task. Often, PR tasks can be performed using tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) that are very similar to familiar TTP for other tactical tasks without any need for increased resources. Following deployment, in-theatre training should be conducted, which may include force integration training with foreign units, as well as area familiarization.

3.5 Potential isolated personnel training. All deploying personnel should attend survival, evasion, resistance and extraction (SERE) briefings and/or practical training, at a level depending on both their risk of isolation and exploitation and the severity of the consequences if isolated/exploited. Deployed personnel may benefit from in-theatre SERE training to become familiar with their operating environment.

3.6 Risk categorization of individuals. Individuals are assigned to a specific 'risk of isolation/exploitation' category, primarily based on their unit and occupational specialty. These risk levels are a unit-based generic categorization and depend on the type of unit, the associated mission profile or operational procedures and characteristics linked to an individual's knowledge and/or responsibilities. They are intended to allow cost-efficient associated education, training and equipping of deployable personnel. Personnel can be categorized into three categories associated with both the risk of becoming isolated and exploited and the operational consequences should exploitation occur:

- Low risk of isolation and/or exploitation.
- Medium risk of isolation and/or exploitation.
- High risk of isolation and/or exploitation.

3.7 Survival, evasion, resistance and extraction training levels. NATO has identified three levels of SERE training referred to risk level qualified supra (see 3.6):

- a. **Level A (basic).** This SERE training is intended for low-risk personnel, this includes basic academic education at a minimum and may be augmented by basic practical survival training in a controlled environment. The academic education may be provided as a briefing or as an online course.
- b. **Level B (intermediate).** This SERE training is intended for medium-risk personnel, this includes basic academic education, as well as basic practical survival and evasion training and a classroom resistance training.
- c. **Level C (advanced).** This SERE training is intended for high-risk personnel, this includes both academic education and extensive practical survival, evasion and resistance training, in a strictly controlled, yet realistic training environment.

UK 3.1. The UK terminology associated with risk of isolation is 'medium risk of isolation' and 'high risk of isolation'. Operational risk is owned by the operational commander, as articulated in the operation order, and managed by Permanent Joint Headquarters SO1 J3 Force Protection. Elevated levels of risk of isolation entitles UK personnel to either Level B or Level C SERE training. This information is captured through the Operational Requirement for SERE Training Working Group and recorded in the prone to capture and exploitation list. SERE Level B training is delivered at unit level; however, only the Defence SERE Training Organisation is authorised to deliver SERE Level C training.



3.8 Isolated personnel equipment. The issuing of survival equipment is a national responsibility. The ability to survive, evade, resist and be recovered is enhanced by providing personnel with adequate and interoperable PR equipment and associated training. All deployed personnel must be appropriately equipped for their mission, their assessed level of risk of isolation and/or exploitation and the operating environment.

3.9 Recovery forces equipment. Forces identified to participate in PR missions must be equipped accordingly. While standard equipment should cover most needs, commanders should also consider the need for PR-specific communications equipment.

UK 3.2. In accordance with UK policy, designated recovery forces will not be specifically equipped for PR. Instead, they should be equipped in accordance with their primary role, and their suitability for each recovery task assessed in accordance with environmental and enemy threats as per the PR calculus (see paragraph UK 3.4).



3.10 **Command and control equipment.** Commanders and staffs must have the appropriate hardware and software to effectively exercise command and control during operations that may include PR missions.

UK 3.3. There are no PR-specific equipment requirements for PR commanders and their staff, beyond the need for a functional C2 architecture that can communicate up and down through the various PR nodes to coordinate PR activity and pass on PR information.



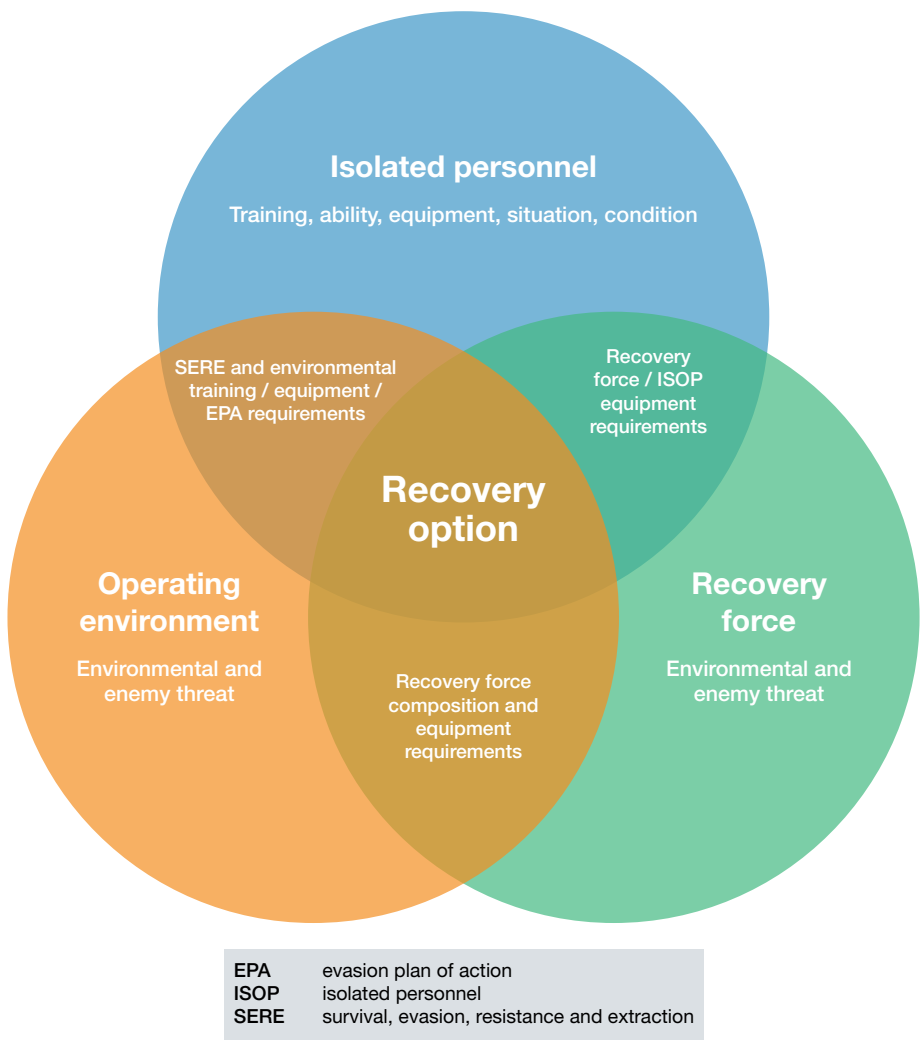
3.11 **Risk mitigation.** Commanders at all levels incorporate protection measures to reduce the risk of isolation/exploitation. Joint commands provide isolated personnel with guidance for the JOA, which may include training and/or equipment requirements. Risk of isolation/exploitation of deployed personnel must be communicated to troop-contributing nations in an advanced and timely manner for them to provide the congruent level of training and equipment to personnel prior to entering JOA.

Section 2 – Planning

3.12 **Planning process.** PR has to be considered from the start of the operations planning process. As soon as the PR C2 system is activated via the NCRS, a PR operational planning group should be set up. By this way, all current PR staff officers should be available at different C2 levels with a qualification, to ensure a PR support to the first elements deployed in the JOA. Prior to deployment to each mission, the applicable PR guidance should be reviewed. The required documents to facilitate PR missions e.g., isolated personnel report (ISOPREP) and evasion plans of action (EPAs), should be completed or reviewed. During the planning process, commanders continually assess operational PR requirements against the force PR capabilities. Assets that are capable of conducting PR should be integrated within the force and be fully operational before the operations start. Details of the PR plan are to be specified in the Joint Commander’s operation plan (OPLAN).



UK 3.4. UK PR planners should view recovery planning as a calculus (as illustrated in UK Figure 3.1) based on the specifics of the ISOP, the recovery forces, and the operating environment (along with associated threat and operational risk assessments), rather than as the application of prescribed methods to specific environments. The elements of the calculus to be considered are described below.



UK Figure 3.1 – UK personnel recovery calculus

a. **Isolated personnel.** The capability, training, equipment, situation and condition of the ISOP and how these factors may affect their

ability to survive and evade in the operating environment, as well as how they might affect their ability to be located and recovered.



b. **Recovery force.** The capability, training and equipment of the recovery force and how these factors might affect their ability to cope with the operating environment (both in terms of enemy and environmental threat), the recovery scenario, and their ability to locate and recover the ISOP depending on their situation and condition.

c. **Operating environment.** Both the environmental and enemy threat that the operating environment poses to both the ISOP and the recovery force, and the training and equipment considerations that result for both.

3.13 **Civil organizations.** Civil organizations, especially lead/coordination agencies, operating in the JOA should be invited to attend the planning process as they hold invaluable information and could contribute to the coordination required for PR, within the limits of operations security requirements. Moreover, this facilitates the establishment of contacts and allows for the start of further coordination. The Joint Commander should emphasize to those representatives the mutual benefit of this coordination with NATO forces, respecting the independence of civil organizations, while information sharing activities could significantly mitigate negative impacts for the operations at every level, and facilitate military PR operations.

3.14 **Planning details.** The PR annex of the OPLAN – as shown in annex A – should include, but is not limited to:

- **Situation** (e.g. PR-specific environmental and threat information not covered elsewhere in the OPLAN).
- **Mission** (the Joint Commander's PR mission).
- **Execution** (including commander's intent, concept of operations, forces and resources, tasks to subordinate commanders and coordinating instructions).

- **Administration and logistics** (including instructions related to points such as dress, survival equipment, resupply, medical support, potential ISOP planning documents, management of evasion aids, information of next-of-kin).
- **Command and signal** (points such as PR command and control organization, launch/execute/hold authority, liaison, signal instructions).

3.15 Risk-related planning principles. PR is subject to high visibility and cost/benefit considerations. Regarding the accepted level of risk, the joint command weighs courses of action against undesired outcomes and potential effects on the overall operation. The risk management is conducted in the same manner as for other military operations, taking into consideration that typical PR missions are executed at the tactical level, but may have operational or even strategic impacts.

3.16 Information sharing. Based on the isolation event (ISOE) risk, the pre-mission preparation may include documents such as an ISOPREP to be able to formally identify and authenticate ISOP, and such as an EPA to identify evasion intentions to recovery forces. The security classification of PR documents should not only consider operational security requirements, but also the potential benefits of sharing knowledge and TTP among participating nations and relevant agencies.

3.17 Decision criteria. The following criteria may contribute to the decision to conduct a personnel recovery mission:

- Location of the isolated personnel and how the location was determined;
- Condition of isolated personnel;
- Ability to authenticate isolated personnel;
- Access to intelligence;
- Available assets/capabilities;
- Risk to isolated personnel and to recovery forces;
- Impact on morale to the wider force;
- Political intent.

Section 3 – Execution

3.18 Command and control principles. Any individual observing an ISOE, contacting ISOP, or recognizing a potential ISOE is about to occur, should immediately notify their appropriate command element. Ideally, the recovery should be effected by on-scene or nearby assets whenever possible. Once personnel become isolated and immediate recovery is not possible by on-scene assets, the requirement is passed through appropriate channels to PR command and control nodes. Depending on the situation, forces may be designated or dedicated for specific PR missions and maintained at an elevated notice to move or they may be dual tasked while conducting other missions.

3.19 Risk of unawareness. Isolation occurs most of the time during a tactical situation with events such as ambush, plane crash, breakdown – where the focus is on the general resolution of the incident and its consequences and not on verifying the presence of all personnel in the team or the crew, inducing possible delays before the alert is given. Any situation in which NATO personnel, whether military or civilian, who are separated from their unit or organization resulting in a loss of positive and/or procedural control, should be considered as PR events. The joint personnel recovery centre (JPRC) and the involved personnel recovery coordination cells (PRCCs) must be notified, until it is confirmed the event is not isolating.

3.20 Initial Report. Timely notification is essential for a successful recovery. Initial notification of ISOP can come from a variety of sources, e.g., distress call from the ISOP on their survival radio, observation by intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, friendly force tracking devices, overdue action, unit, or eyewitness reporting.

3.21 Initial response. Once an initial report has been received, validation of the incident is the utmost importance. Other PR nodes should be notified of the initial report as soon as possible to allow them to assist in the validation of the incident, if applicable. Once the incident has been confirmed and given a PR event number (i.e. when it is not the result of misreporting or a deception attempt by the adversary), the joint commander is responsible for declaring an ISOE, notifying the chain of command and other PR nodes, having PR missions assigned. The joint commander may delegate these responsibilities to the joint operations centre.



Expediency is required to prevent exploitation by an adversary, meet urgent medical needs and limit exposure to extreme environments



UK 3.5. **Joint personnel recovery centre notification.** Even if recovery is to be executed at unit or component level, the JPRC should be informed as soon as possible.



3.22 Location verification. Following notification, the priority is to locate the ISOP. Verification of the location information is of utmost importance and all available resources should be used as required (ISR, self-reporting, or eyewitness reports). Space can add significant value both in supporting communications from ISOP but also in locating. In case some of these capabilities are nationally controlled, procedures to activate, coordinate and pass information should be established and rehearsed prior to requesting support for an actual isolation event. In addition, the methods used to locate and communicate with the isolated person's position must ensure the isolated person's position is never compromised.

3.23 Timing. Expediency is required to prevent exploitation by an adversary, meet urgent medical needs, and limit exposure to extreme environments. A timely response may also be required to stay ahead of the adversary's decision cycle. Similarly, there may be preferred periods to execute a recovery (e.g. at night) or specific times when the isolated personnel is contactable or available

for recovery. PR assets should remain flexible and able to react rapidly when required.

3.24 Authentication. Even with precise coordinates that pinpoint the ISOP location, recovery forces will authenticate the ISOP prior to a recovery. An effective authentication system is essential to prevent the compromise of vital information and minimize risk to ISOP and the recovery force. This holds true because personnel recovery task force assets may be extremely vulnerable during the actual recovery. Accordingly, ISOP and recovery forces should take extreme care not to compromise authentication information. Authentication methods should be described in the PR Annex V of the OPLAN and/or the PR standard operating procedures and/or PR specific information in the special instructions. It is important that the JPRC actively tracks the use and/or compromise of authentication means to promulgate required changes.

3.25 Support to isolated personnel. Support to ISOP may include establishing two-way communications, providing moral support, resupply, or direction towards a cache. Support may also encompass the suppression of enemy threats. This may preclude capture and disrupt the adversary's response to PR efforts. If required, recovery forces and/or equipment may be pre-positioned to support the ISOP before the recovery phase. Support also addresses the following needs:

- a. **Sustainment.** Support to isolated personnel includes the effort necessary to ensure their physical and psychological sustainment.
- b. **Next-of-kin and families.** The behaviour and statements made by next-of-kin and families may seriously endanger isolated or captured personnel. Proper support, especially physical and psychological, to the next-of-kin, families and unit may have a positive effect on the recovery of the isolated personnel. While support to the isolated personnel's next-of-kin and families is a national responsibility, the process may be initiated by the JPRC through established channels.
- c. **Other considerations.** An ISOE tends to generate many media inquiries regarding the ISOP and the next-of-kin and family. PR staff should therefore liaise with the public affairs office during an ISOE.



UK 3.6. Physical and psychological assistance. As well as support to the ISOP, support in the form of physical and psychological assistance is also available for the ISOP's family and unit. Support to the ISOP's next of kin and families is a national responsibility.

UK 3.7. Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre. When dealing with a PR event, the JPRC will inform the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre. All missing Service personnel/Ministry of Defence civilians will be reported to the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, which will follow next of kin informing procedures for personnel missing or taken hostage.

3.26 Recovery

a. **Activation time.** Recovery attempts are activated first at the unit command level. Unit commanders should always attempt to resolve an ISOE in their vicinity as quickly as possible if it is tactically and technically feasible. Feasibility is assessed by unit's command considering the tactical situation, while concurrently informing the PRCC immediately. If recovery cannot be resolved at the unit level, responsibility may shift to the next higher level, coordinated by the PRCC. An immediate recovery should be considered with forces available in the vicinity. The responsible PRCC will notify the JPRC and attempt to recover the ISOP using available (organic) PR capabilities. If the PRCC determines it is unable to accomplish the recovery with its own resources, the JPRC will coordinate with other PRCCs to conduct the mission using joint capabilities.

b. **Recovery process.** The recover task, when engaged at the maximal level, involves the coordinated actions and efforts of several commanders and staff, recovery forces, to bring ISOP under the physical custody of a friendly organization. When the ISOP return to control of friendly forces, the recovery force will normally perform one last authentication. ISOP have a significant responsibility in the recovery process. The force performing the recovery task may range from a single recovery vehicle to a complex task force, and may be dedicated and/or designated.

3.27 Reintegration. Reintegration of ISOP is a national responsibility and should be planned and conducted by national representatives. Reintegration by other nations or organizations may occur, based on bilateral agreements.



UK 3.8. Reintegration of ISOP will always be a national issue, balancing the provision of bespoke health care (including psychological, emotional and spiritual support for those being reintegrated) with the requirement to gather the necessary tactical, intelligence and SERE information. The health and well-being of the individual takes primacy over the need to conduct debriefings, except when there is an overriding operational imperative, such as recovering other ISOP or protecting lives.

Section 4 – Adaptation

3.28 **PR system improvement.** Adaptation is most effective when it is an integral part of all decision-making processes. Adaptation results in improvements and/or changes and can be done through three processes that occur at different moments of the mission: anticipation, flexibility and lessons learned:

- a. **Anticipation.** Prior to the mission, anticipation consists of the continuous analysis of the environment and collection of related information in order to adapt and improve the PR system.
- b. **Flexibility.** During the mission, flexibility may be necessary to adapt to the changing and unpredictable nature of the mission's environment.
- c. **Lessons learned.** After the mission, regardless of its success, a proper evaluation of the associated preparation, planning and execution will provide lessons identified that should be processed into lessons learned. To this end, all related information (such as PR after-action reports, PR mission logs) needs to be collected and archived.



Key points

- All participating forces should be educated and trained, equipped and prepared to meet the theatre entry requirements for personnel recovery (PR) before entering the joint operations area.
- PR must be considered from the start of the operations planning process.
- There should be an annex to the operation plan describing the planning details for PR.
- UK PR planners should view recovery planning as a calculus based on the specifics of the isolated personnel (ISOP), the recovery forces and the operating environment.
- Early notification of an isolation event to the higher command is essential.
- Verification of the location information is of the utmost importance to ensure the position is never compromised.
- Recovery attempts are activated first at the unit command level and then, if not resolved, the responsibility moves to the next higher level. At the highest level, the mission uses joint capabilities.
- Reintegration of ISOP is a national responsibility and should be planned and conducted by national representatives.
- Adaptation results in improvements and/or changes and can be done through three processes: anticipation, flexibility and lessons learned.

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Annex A

Annotated personnel recovery annex to a joint force operation plan

A.1 **Situation.** Include any personnel recovery (PR)-specific information not covered elsewhere in the operation plan⁹ (OPLAN), using appropriate sub-paragraphs as for an OPLAN format.

- a. **Natural environment:** provide information on the natural environment that will affect PR operations, if not covered elsewhere in the OPLAN.
- b. **Opposing forces:** provide information on opposing forces not covered elsewhere in the OPLAN that will specifically affect PR operations.
- c. **Friendly forces and co-operating actors:** provide information (including strength and location) on friendly forces and co-operating actors, that is not covered in paragraph 3 of this annex, or elsewhere in the OPLAN, and that is specifically relevant to potentially support the JTF's PR operations, such as information on dedicated PR forces under national command only, and SAR assets from non-hostile neighbouring countries not directly involved in the operation.
- d. **Neutral actors** that influence the JTF's PR Mission.
- e. Planning assumptions and limitations.
- f. **Legal aspects:** provide information on legal aspects not covered elsewhere in the OPLAN and/or refer to Annex AA (Legal), as appropriate. Describe the legal status of isolated personnel, including evaders, escapees, and prisoners of war, detainees, and hostages, as applicable.

⁹ All information provided in the Annex V of the OPLAN must be relevant to PR operations and not covered elsewhere in the OPLAN.

A.2 **Mission.** State the mission of the JTF with regard to PR, in a single phrase, containing whom (e.g. “JTF XX”), what (e.g. “conduct PR of ...”), where (e.g. “throughout the JOA”), when (e.g. “if and when required”), and why (e.g. “in order to ensure isolated personnel’s safe return under friendly control”).

A.3 Execution

- a. **Commander’s intent:** concisely describe the commander’s overall purpose and desired end state of PR operations. The commander’s intent may also include an assessment of where and how much risk is acceptable.
- b. **Concept of operations:** describe how the commander visualizes the execution of PR operations from start to completion.
- c. **Forces and resources:** list organic PR resources and their location, as required, including, if and as applicable:
 - (1) Designated PR forces. (e.g., all manoeuvre units)
 - (2) Dedicated PR forces. (if any).
 - (3) PR co-ordination elements. (e.g. JPRC, PRCCs, PR officers/PR points of contact (POCs).
- d. Tasks to subordinate commanders
- e. Coordinating instructions:
 - (1) Tasks: list tasks that affect more than one unit.
 - (2) PR planning guidance: include guidance related to PR planning, such as planning assumptions, subordinates’ PR planning responsibilities, identification and reporting of organic capability shortfalls, co-ordination considerations, entitled personnel, minimum requirements to launch, additional requirements to execute, no-go criteria, and expectation management.
 - (3) Geographic responsibilities for PR: describe the areas throughout which commanders are responsible for PR.

- (4) PR coverage gaps: describe, if applicable, which parts of operational areas cannot be covered by recovery forces.
- (5) Timelines: specify timelines for deployment and redeployment of PR assets, in relation to the overall force deployment.
- (6) PR procedures: list PR procedures not included in standard operating procedure for subordinate units and not (to be) included in special instructions to the air tasking order, including, as appropriate:
 - i. Isolated personnel immediate actions: include instructions for immediate actions when isolated in a hostile, friendly, and/or neutral environment, as applicable.
 - ii. Area - and season - specific survival instructions.
 - iii. Evasion routes and destinations: specify types, locations, and servicing time windows of evasion destinations, including contact points and recovery points, and instructions for actions at those locations, including actions if access is denied.
 - iv. Evasion tactics, techniques, and procedures: include instructions for discreet evasion (including camouflage, movement, and the use of shelters), and for overt evasion (including dress, modes of travel, route selection, and dealing with local restrictions such as curfews).
 - v. Isolated personnel procedures for contact with the local population: include conditions, contact procedures, use of evasion aids, and behaviour.
 - vi. Notification methods and procedures: include instructions for the reporting of isolation events, the monitoring of emergency frequencies, and for the acknowledgement, recording and relay of distress transmissions.
 - vii. Location methods and procedures: include instructions for the development, publication and dissemination of names, locations, validity, and use of search and rescue points

(SARDOTs). Avoid including the actual SARDOTs, if they are subject to frequent change throughout the operation.

viii. Authentication: include methods and general procedures for authentication.

ix. Support: include types of support available to perform the 'support' task, and conditions and procedures for their provision, including instructions for aerial delivery of resupply packages, the airdrop of support personnel, fire support, communications with isolated personnel, and support to families of isolated personnel.

x. Isolated personnel procedures for recovery by friendly forces: include general isolated personnel actions during recovery, helicopter recovery procedures (including helicopter landing site selection criteria, hoist recovery procedures, and isolated personnel actions), ground force contact procedures, and recovered isolated procedures when in custody of friendly forces.

xi. Recovery forces procedures for recovery of isolated personnel: include PR task force procedures, such as actions of mission coordinator, on-scene commander, rescue mission commander, ground operations team actions, as appropriate.

xii. Re-integration instructions

xiii. Precedence of PR procedures, if detailed in different publications.

xiv. Instructions if capture imminent: include instructions for the disposition of weapons, codes and electronic communication/navigation devices (by type and by priority, as appropriate).

xv. Conduct after capture procedures: include instructions for captivity as a prisoner of war, peacetime government detainee, and/or hostage, as applicable.

xvi. Escape instructions: include conditions, methods, techniques and procedures for escaping captivity from anticipated types of captivity.

(7) Isolated personnel report (ISOPREP) completion: provide guidelines for the completion of ISOPREPs. Specify which categories of personnel are required to complete ISOPREPs and within which timelines in relation to their arrival in theatre.

(8) Evasion plan of action (EPA) preparation and submission instructions: provide guidelines for the completion and compilation of individual or team EPAs, including conditions requiring an EPA and guidelines for the inclusion of transported passengers' evasion plans on aircrew EPAs, if applicable.

(9) PR assets' notice to move time

(10) Commander critical information requirements:

i. Priority intelligence requirements: list those intelligence requirements concerning the adversary and the environment that the commander considers critical to assist him in reaching a decision and making his plan.

ii. Friendly forces information requirements: list requirements for information the commander needs to know about his own forces and supporting capabilities, which might affect the commander's ability to accomplish the mission.

(11) Essential elements of friendly information: list friendly information the commander does not want to reveal to the enemy, i.e. key questions likely to be asked by adversaries about specific friendly intentions, capabilities, and activities, so they can obtain answers critical to their operational effectiveness.

(12) Intelligence support to PR. Provide the concept for intelligence support to PR. This may include, as appropriate:

i. Instructions for the establishment of connectivity and procedures between intelligence staffs and PR C2 nodes.

- ii. Instructions for the preparation of support products for PR.
- iii. Recommendations for the establishment of communications procedures.
- iv. Instructions for the monitoring of friendly distress frequencies, and of adversary communications.
- v. Instructions for the transmission of information related to a potential or confirmed PR incident.
- vi. Instructions for intelligence collection in response to a potential or confirmed PR incident.
- vii. Instructions for time-sensitive intelligence support for PR, including for the dissemination of unanalysed combat information.
- viii. Instructions for the tasking of JISR assets in support of PR.
- ix. Instructions for intelligence debriefings of recovery force members and recovered personnel.
- x. Requests for information procedures.

(13) Information operations in support of PR Operations: describe how information operations will support PR operations. Specify the contribution of each capability, activity or process, as required, including psychological operations, operations security, deception, electronic warfare, civil-military co-operation, key leader engagement, and others, as required. Refer to Annex O (Information Operations) and Annex L (Psychological Operations) to the OPLAN, as required.

(14) Public affairs guidance: provide guidance for public affairs, such as instructions for the control of media releases related to isolation events, isolated personnel, and PR operations, key themes and messages in case isolation events become publicly known, information to be provided to isolated personnel's next-of-kin for dealing with the media, and co-ordination requirements with

operational commands during isolation events and PR operations. Refer to Annex X (Public Affairs) to the OPLAN, as required.

(15) Education and training: describe requirements for pre-deployment education and training, and in-theatre training requirements and opportunities. Include requirements for PR staff personnel, for dedicated and/or (potentially) designated recovery forces, and the requirements for basic, intermediate, or advanced combat survival training for different categories of individuals (as potentially isolated personnel); include criteria for categorization of personnel in relation to their anticipated risk of isolation and/or exploitation, as required.

(16) PR POCs: describe the requirements for establishing PR POCs within each unit, and their responsibilities for pre-mission PR planning, preparation and training.

(17) Restrictions for carrying PR information: state restrictions for carrying PR instructions outside secured locations; list exceptions for PR information loaded into electronic devices for PR use, as required.

(18) Routine situation reporting instructions: describe the requirements and procedures for PR-related routine situation reporting (such as initial statement and updates of command/formation/unit recovery capabilities, requirements for unit survival radio managers to send initial and updated situation reports to the JPRC/PRCC).

A.4 Service support. Describe administrative and logistic arrangements applicable to PR operations and which are not (to be) included in SOP for subordinate units and not (to be) included in special instructions to the air tasking order.

- a. **Dress:** provide instructions for the wearing of uniforms, including those applicable after an isolation event occurs. Include minimum to be worn/carried for environmental protection. Provide uniform sanitization requirements and exceptions (e.g., expectations for compliance with uniform regulations for distinguished visitor parties travel), as appropriate.

b. **Individual survival equipment:** describe requirements for individual survival equipment, including basic equipment for all personnel, and additional equipment to be carried by designated personnel, such as personal locator beacons (specifying number of spare batteries to be carried by type), evasion aids, and other equipment for extended survival/evasion, as appropriate. Specify specific requirements for fire-making, water collection/disinfection, shelter-making, navigation, signalling, survival medicine, and food-gathering. Include instructions for the in-theatre issue of individual survival equipment, if appropriate. Provide guidelines for carrying non-culturally offensive photographs, if appropriate.

A.5 **Command and signal.** Describe command and signal instructions applicable to PR operations and which are not (to be) included in SOP for subordinate units and not (to be) included in separate instructions such as special instructions to the air tasking order.

a. **Command and control:** describe the location of PR co-ordination elements, command relationships over recovery forces, and launch and execute authority.

b. **Recovery forces, including details on delegation and succession of command:** describe command relationships between recovered isolated personnel and assisting units/agencies. Add a C2 diagram for visual clarification, if appropriate.

c. **Liaison:** describe liaisons to be maintained with internal and external (both military and non-military) actors, and the conditions under which designated units and PR co-ordination elements are granted direct liaison authority for planning PR missions.

d. **Signal Instructions**

(1) **Communications architecture:** provide instructions for communications between PR C2 nodes, recovery forces, and isolated personnel. Specify primary, alternate, contingency and emergency communications methods. Add diagrams showing PR communications architecture, for visual clarification, including electronic communications between PR C2 nodes, communications between isolated personnel, PRTF and PR C2 nodes and

communications between PR C2 nodes and external actors, as appropriate.

(2) **PR codes:** provide instructions for the development, publication, dissemination, and use of the following codes: theatre code words (including PR word, number, or letter of the day/week/month/quarter, as appropriate), countersigns (challenge and reply/password), near and far recognition signals, duress codes, synthetic aperture radar targets and local authentication codes, as applicable. Include instructions for the validity of codes for multiple-day missions, and actions on compromise of PR codes. Specify if specific codes are to be used by selected isolated personnel only.

(3) **Use of ISOPREP data:** provide instructions for the use of ISOPREP data, including type and amount of information to be passed to recovery forces and techniques to ensure optimal use of authentication information during multiple recovery attempts.

(4) **Use of international distress signals:** provide guidance on the use of international distress signals, including conditions for their use, if applicable.

(5) **Survival radio programming data:** provide survival radio programming data, including frequencies, pre-set data-burst messages, software applied version, identification codes, almanac updates, points to be loaded, and/or instructions for their development, publication, and dissemination. Refer to the air tasking order and special instructions for aircrew-specific additional instructions, if applicable.

(6) **Survival radio registration procedures:** provide instructions for the registration of survival radio emergency beacons.

(7) **Survival radio interrogators programming instructions:** provide programming instructions for survival radio interrogators; specify by type of device, if required.

(8) **Blue force tracker registration procedures:** provide instructions for the registration of blue force tracker devices.

- (9) **Cellular telephone registration and pre-loading:** provide instructions for the registration of cellular telephones, including international mobile equipment identity (IMEI) numbers and mobile station international subscriber directory (MSISDN) numbers registration.
- (10) **Isolated personnel communications procedures:** provide PR electronic and non-electronic communications procedures and schedules for communications with isolated personnel, including no-radio procedures, and/or instructions for their development, publication, and dissemination.
- (11) **Communications satellite coverage:** provide details on satellite coverage for PR communications, including satellite coverage time windows, relayed frequencies, minimum sending time for activation, notification delay, and restrictions on their use, and/or instructions for their development, publication, and dissemination.
- (12) **Search and rescue numeric encryption grids:** provide instructions for the development, publication, and dissemination of search and rescue encryption grid (SARNEG) information. Avoid including the actual SARNEGs, if they are subject to frequent change throughout the operation.
- (13) **Internet relay chat instructions:** provide instructions for the use of internet relay chat for PR, including windows and nicknames, as appropriate.
- (14) **Procedures for passing Info between PR staff and recovery forces:** provide communications procedures for passing info between PR staff and recovery forces.
- (15) **Use of social media by potential isolated personnel:** provide guidelines for the use of social media by potential isolated personnel and their relatives and friends, including recommended measures to prevent/limit exploitation if captured.
- (16) **Checklists:** provide instructions for the use of mandatory checklists for PR communications, including execution checklists.

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- e. **Reports:** provide instructions for PR message formats and classification.
 - f. **Contact information:** provide contact information of PR C2 nodes, other key PR staff and POCs for the development of air tasking order special instructions, as appropriate. Refer to the operation's PR specific portal or web page(s), if applicable.

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Lexicon

Additional UK terms and definitions are shown in **highlighted text**.



Part 1 – Acronyms and abbreviations

C2	command and control
COPD	comprehensive operations planning directive
CR	combat recovery
CSAR	combat search and rescue
EPA	evasion plan of action
IMEI	international mobile equipment identity
ISOE	isolated event
ISOP	isolated personnel
ISOPREP	isolated personnel report
JFC	joint force command
JISR	joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
JOA	joint operations area
JPRC	joint personnell recovery centre
JSP	joint Service publication
JTF	joint task force
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MSISDN	mobile station international subscriber directory numbers
NCRS	NATO crisis response system
OPLAN	operation plan
OSC	on-scene commander
PR	personnel recovery
PRCC	personnel recovery coordination cell
PRTF	personnel recovery task force
RMC	rescue mission commander
SAR	search and rescue

SARNEG	search and rescue numerical encryption grid
SERE	survival, evasion, resistance and extraction
SOCC	special operations component command
SOF	special operations forces

Part 2 – Terms and definitions

combat recovery

An action used for recovering non-detained isolated personnel from a situation in a hostile or potentially hostile environment, using conventional tactics, techniques and procedures.

(Proposed definition awaiting NATO Agreement)

combat search and rescue

Combat recovery of personnel trained in and equipped for survival, evasion, resistance and extraction, using specifically organized and equipped capabilities that are nationally designated for personnel recovery.

(NATO Agreed)

Evasion plan of action (EPA).

A course of action, developed prior to executing a combat mission, which is intended to improve a potentially isolated person's chances of successful evasion and recovery by providing the recovery forces with an additional source of information that can increase the predictability of the evader's action and movement.

(TTF 2008-0449)

isolated personnel

Military or civilian personnel who are separated from their unit or organization resulting in a loss of positive and/or procedural control, that may require them to survive, evade, resist exploitation, and either have to make their way back to friendly control or require assistance to do so. (NATO Agreed)

Isolated personnel report (ISOPREP).

A document containing information designed to facilitate the identification and authentication of an isolated person.

(TTF 2016-0153).

Isolation event (ISOE).

An event caused by personnel becoming isolated personnel.

(This term and definition only applies to this publication).

personnel recovery

The sum of military, diplomatic and civil efforts to effect the recovery and reintegration of isolated personnel. (NATO Agreed)

reintegration

The operational process of providing medical and psychological care to personnel recovered from isolation and debriefing them for intelligence and lessons learned purposes. (NATO Agreed)

AJP-3.7(B)(1)

