

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

A Joint Level-C Survival, Escape, Resistance and Evasion (SERE) Program for the Armed Forces

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: A Joint Level-C Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) Program for the Armed Forces

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The Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) was established in 1999 to replace the Joint Services SERE Agency as the DoD proponent for Code of Conduct Training. In January 2001 the Department of Defense updated DoD Instruction 1300.21 to specify additional SERE training requirements for the Services' SERE programs. The Services currently train under three separate Programs of Instruction (POIs) to meet DoD requirements. This paper will focus on the increasing demand for Level-C SERE training and offer a Joint training approach for consideration to expand the DoD capacity to meet the rising demand for SERE training.

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A JOINT LEVEL-C SERE COURSE FOR THE ARMED FORCES

In an ever increasingly volatile world, the United States finds itself engaged on a daily basis in operations cutting across the entire spectrum of conflict in many parts of the globe. US Soldiers and citizens are placed in harms way as a matter of course in all of these activities. As a result, our traditional concepts of who is at risk must be reviewed and our programs designed to protect all Americans require updating. While we understand that every combatant is at risk, there are many military and civilian personnel who find themselves in close proximity to the enemy and are considered to be at "High Risk" for capture. Adequate preparation and realistic training is critical to protecting U.S. personnel and preventing the enemy from exploiting them in the event of capture. The Combatant Commander holds the responsibility to determine who those High Risk personnel are. Once the Combatant Commander determines who is at high risk in his theater, the Services assume the responsibility to train those personnel and ensure they are protected. The training course used by all of the Services is the Level-C (High Risk) Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) course.

Each Service approaches Level-C SERE training in its own unique way to prioritize resources and attempt to train all of their personnel identified as high risk for capture and exploitation. In the past, identifying personnel at high risk was relatively easy. On linear battlefields, service men and women placed in close proximity or expected to travel beyond the Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT) were identified as being at high risk and automatically considered for Level-C SERE. As such, we traditionally considered Aviators, Flight crewmembers, Special Operations Forces and Reconnaissance forces to be at high risk for capture due to the nature of their duties. In the 21st Century we can be sure that future conflicts and contingency operations will not always be linear in fashion. A non-contiguous environment vastly expands the number of people placed in a potentially high risk situation. A non-linear battlefield is full of pockets and seams where minimum protection is provided. We no longer have clearly defined forward lines, main battle areas or easily identifiable rear areas. Consequently, the likelihood of "rear area" personnel coming into contact with the enemy increases dramatically. We are already beginning to experience this in our operations. In early 1999 three First Infantry Division Soldiers were taken hostage in Macedonia. None of the three had any formal SERE training and were exploited for political gain. Likewise, in peacetime environments American servicemen are currently engaged in de-mining and other engagement activities worldwide and are often in countries that are not supportive of US policies. Such

environments increase the number of Americans at risk and their activities go beyond the scope of what we traditionally have called "High Risk" military occupational specialties. We now must consider personnel in rear areas or other high risk situations to be at a similar risk. In addition, we can expect that government civilians operating in an operational area are at an equal risk for capture and exploitation. Finally, we should not think of this as a problem for just uniformed personnel; it applies to civilian contractors and other civilian government representatives as well.

In this increasingly dangerous world environment the demand for Level-C SERE training is expanding. This causes the Services to divert additional resources into SERE training programs to meet the higher demand. Within the Services there are already growing populations of individuals who are recognized as High Risk for capture but are not afforded the opportunity to attend Level-C SERE training. The Service schools are at their maximum throughput and cannot meet the rising need to provide additional capacity. The Services are forced to prioritize resources and determine who can and will attend Level-C SERE. The Services need additional resources and support to increase their capability to conduct Level-C SERE training.

Throughput is not the only problem confronting our SERE schools. Current Doctrine specifies that each Service and the Special Operations Command is responsible for integrating Code of Conduct and resistance training into appropriate Survival Training Programs.¹ However, Joint operations are by definition not Service unique. It is very likely that members from all of the Services will be engaged in common operations in a Joint Operations Area or Theater of War. This would lead one to believe that the Service SERE programs are Joint in nature and serve to meet all of the Combatant Commanders requirements to adequately train personnel identified as High Risk for capture. In fact, the Services do an admirable job in meeting this requirement but there are some aspects of the Service SERE schools which do not meet all of the Joint SERE training requirements. For instance, the Army SERE school trains all of the mandatory Joint SERE tasks but does not have the ability to conduct hands on rescue operations with actual Air Force or Navy assets. The Navy and Air Force SERE schools do not have Army Special Operations Forces on hand to conduct actual rescue operations in a field environment. At a minimum, Joint SERE tasks are covered in the classroom but in some cases no hands on training is available. The Service SERE schools are simply not resourced with the Joint assets required to conduct practical exercises on all of the Joint SERE tasks.

The increase in personnel identified as High Risk puts a strain on the capability of the services to meet the growing demand. An increasingly Joint environment also means that the SERE POIs must cross train their students in how the other services conduct search and rescue operations and do it to the same standards across the board. Since the services develop their Programs of Instruction (POIs) based upon resources available within their control it is difficult to meet this growing demand on capacity while improving Standardization and Joint Interoperability. The question remains then, how will DoD support Joint Level-C SERE training to meet the growing demand for capacity, ensure task Standardization in all SERE courses and improve Joint Interoperability? This research paper will endeavor to answer these questions. First it will assess each Service Level-C SERE course and recommend changes or additions to meet the Joint community demands for SERE. Secondly, it will lay out a proposal to establish a Joint Level-C SERE course which meets the needs of the Joint community and can create additional training capacity to meet the increased requirement. This paper will remain in the unclassified realm as it relates to High Risk SERE. Classified capabilities exist, but there is no need to include a description of these to make the points.

DOD AND JOINT GUIDANCE

Before a remedy is put forth to fix these programs, we need to understand the current DoD and Joint guidance for SERE training. The military services get guidance on High Risk SERE training from multiple sources. While it is the Combatant Commander who determines who is at High Risk for capture, guidance for what tasks are to be trained rests with the Department of Defense and the Joint Staff. DoD guidance emerges from DoD Instruction 1300.21, Code of Conduct (CoC) Training and Education. This capstone level guidance provides the framework for the Joint Staff and the Services to develop and implement Level-C SERE programs. The overarching concept is to prepare U.S. military personnel finding themselves isolated from US control to do everything in their power to survive with honor.² Military services are obligated to provide training and detailed guidance to such personnel to ensure their adequate preparation for the situation.³

The objectives of DoD Instruction 1300.21 are to ensure that the military departments maintain energetic, uniform and continuing training programs in support of Code of Conduct training including instruction in methods of survival, evasion, resistance and escape under varying degrees of exploitation.⁴ It also ensures that there is consistency in all DoD code of

conduct training programs, materials and instruction.⁵ This guidance is critical since the Services have responsibility to train their own personnel. However, individuals can easily be placed in a situation which is not Service dependent. It is very conceivable that a US Army Soldier isolated behind enemy lines will be rescued by a Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) asset from another Service. Standardization in recovery procedures therefore becomes a critical Joint training requirement regardless of the Service conducting the training. To tackle these problems, the DoD has tasked US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) with the mission to implement and oversee the SERE programs to ensure proper training and guidance for all US personnel at risk. At the heart of the USJFCOM's efforts is the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA). JPRA is responsible for coordinating personnel recovery issues among military departments, combatant commands, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff, OSD and defense agencies, DoD field activities and other governmental activities. On behalf of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA) USJFCOM's office of primary responsibility for Code of Conduct training (JPRA) shall review and monitor the Service training programs for adequacy within this guidance.⁶ JPRA carries out this responsibility through Joint Doctrinal Publications and Executive Agent Instructions (EAI).

We have already noted that an increasing number of individuals are potentially at risk for capture and exploitation. In order to meet the intent of the DoD guidance we must move beyond traditional duty descriptions to determine who is at risk and we must now identify all personnel who can become isolated. Isolated personnel are those military or civilian personnel who have become separated from their unit or organization in an environment requiring them to survive, evade, or escape while awaiting rescue.⁷ Combatant Commanders are responsible to ensure that all potentially isolated personnel are familiar with CSAR Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs), and theater specific survival procedures employed by other Joint Force Components.⁸ Escape and Recovery operations improve the effectiveness of US Combat forces by preventing capture and exploitation of US personnel by an enemy.⁹ Services should integrate code of conduct and resistance training into appropriate SERE training programs.¹⁰ Since it is not possible to train every member of DoD in Level-C SERE, it is important to identify who is at risk for capture.

As stated earlier, the greatest problem facing the Services' Level-C SERE courses is meeting the growing demand of those designated as high risk. Let's now take a good look at how each are currently managing the problem.

ARMY SERE

The Army SERE program is a component of the United States Army Special Operations Command and conducted by the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS). It is a 19-day program of instruction designed to address the training requirements of active and reserve component personnel of the armed forces of the United States specified by DoD Instruction 1300.7 and AR 350-30. It focuses on those personnel whose wartime position, MOS, or assignment places them at High Risk for Capture or whose rank or seniority make them vulnerable to greater than average exploitation efforts by a captor. Examples include personnel who operate forward of the FLOT such as Special Forces, Pathfinders, selected aviators, flying crew members and members of Ranger battalions.¹¹

Personnel at risk in peacetime include those who due to their assignment or mission have a high risk of being taken hostage by terrorists or detained by hostile governments in a peacetime environment. Examples include military personnel conducting training in a foreign country, embassy personnel, and contractors supporting US troops or US personnel conducting humanitarian relief. The Army's Level-C SERE course is very successful in meeting the training objectives currently specified in DoD and JPRA guidance. The Army POI addresses all training requirements and operates an approved Resistance Training Laboratory (RTL). The RTL is a carefully designed prisoner of war environment which replicates the physical and psychological stresses of capture and exploitation. However, the Army Level-C SERE course is not resourced to meet the Combatant Commander's total requirement for training.

There is a disconnect between DoD/JPRA guidance and application as it relates to Army SERE training. The Army's priorities for Level-C SERE are clearly focused upon the Special Operations community. Per Joint Publication 3-50.2, the Commander of all Army Forces in theater ensures that personnel involved in Deep operations, watercraft operations, and all aviation crewmembers are familiar with tactics employed by CSAR forces.¹² Personnel in these positions are not necessarily special operations forces. While the guidance does not specify that all of these personnel require Level-C training, it does suggest that the forces identified are at risk for capture and exploitation. The Joint Publication goes on to state that Aviation unit commanders may request Level-C SERE for all flight personnel in addition to unit CSAR training to enhance overall capability.¹³ Today's non-linear battlefield and increasingly dangerous peacetime environment puts more personnel at risk than ever before. The Army can no longer

focus its Level-C SERE training solely on the Special Operations community. The US Army Aviation School at Ft. Rucker graduates more than one thousand aviators per year from flight training but sends fewer than fifty aviators to Level-C SERE due to the limited spaces available at the Army SERE school. The priority for Army aviators attending Level-C SERE goes to the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) due to their operations in a high risk environment in support of Special Operations forces worldwide. Additionally, there are hundreds of enlisted aviation crewmembers who routinely operate side by side with Army aviators in a high risk environment but are not afforded the opportunity to attend Level-C SERE. These crewmembers are just as likely to be subject to exploitation as their commissioned officer counterparts. In reality the Army does an excellent job of identifying those personnel that are in the greatest risk and provides them the requisite Level-C SERE training. There is no problem with the Army's priorities in this area. The problem is not one of quality but quantity. The Army lacks the training capacity to train everyone who needs it. In order to meet the DoD and Joint requirement, the Army must find a way to increase its Level-C SERE training capacity to go beyond the Special Operations community requirement. The Army can and should address the training shortfall to adequately prepare personnel who are actually at high risk of capture. Three possible recommendations include:

1. Increase the training capacity of the USAJFKSWC Level-C SERE school to meet the actual training requirement.
2. Establish a Level-C SERE program as part of the Army's Aviator and Crewmember training programs.
3. Support a Joint Level-C SERE program with instructors and subject matter experts to meet the Level-C demand beyond those identified by Army Directives and guidance.

AIR FORCE SERE TRAINING

Per Joint Pub 3-50.2, all Combat Air Force Aircrews receive SERE and water survival training. If they become isolated, personnel are prepared to assist rescue forces.¹⁴ The United States Air Force's approach to SERE training is a compartmentalized program designed to meet this requirement. The Air Force operates seven SERE courses in order to focus the specific skills to the right personnel. The base SERE course is designed for combat

crewmembers. Forty-nine classes produce a throughput of more than 6,500 students annually to meet the training demand. Five of the seven courses are taught at Fairchild AFB, Washington. The other two courses operate at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola Florida and Eielson AFB Alaska.

The base Level-C SERE course is a 17-day training program which addresses each of the seventeen mandatory subjects required by JPRA guidance. Just as in the Army's Level-C SERE course, the Air Force combines classroom education with a demanding field training exercise and culminates with a realistic capture scenario in a Resistance Training Laboratory (RTL). In addition to meeting all JPRA requirements, the Air Force adds several service specific tasks to ensure that all graduates meet the exact standards per any given situation. For instance, upon completing the basic survival course, crewmembers may attend an additional course to prepare them for a specific situation. The course in Alaska focuses on cold weather survival while the other courses focus on water survival or parachute survival techniques. These additional courses are designed to give crewmembers hands-on application of demanding tasks which might otherwise only be taught in a classroom environment at a basic SERE course. This modular approach to SERE training is a very useful model for consideration by JPRA to assist the Services in adding required training capacity by developing compartmentalized SERE training in a Joint environment. The Air Force is in the process of adding Peacetime Detention to its SERE POI. Full implementation is pending approval of Military Construction (MILCON) proposals. Despite the expanding efforts in the Air Force SERE program, the training is still geared to Aircrew members and selected job specialties who have traditionally been determined to be at high risk for capture. The program does not account for the larger populations of personnel on the non-linear battlefield. The suggestions relevant to improving the Air Force SERE program are:

1. Resource the Air Force SERE school with funding to expand the throughput capacity of the school to meet the additional training requirement.
2. Support a Joint Level-C SERE program with instructors and subject matter experts to meet the Level-C demand beyond those identified by Air Force policy and guidance.

NAVY SERE TRAINING

The Navy SERE program currently meets the training requirement of all of the Naval personnel identified as High Risk. Navy Sere training is conducted by two Fleet Aviation Specialized Operational (FASO) Training Groups. The Atlantic Fleet course is conducted at FASO, New Brunswick Maine and the Pacific Fleet course is conduct at FASO North Island, San Diego, California. The FASO Detachments provide SERE training to pilots, flight officers, intelligence officers, aircrew and other personnel designated high risk of capture in skills necessary for world wide survival; expediting search and rescue efforts; evading capture by hostile forces; resistance to interrogation, exploitation and indoctrination; and escape from detention of enemy forces IAW DoD Directive 1300.7. The Navy also provides geographic specific training focusing on the Mediterranean littoral, Southeastern Europe, Southwestern Asia and South Central American areas of operation.¹⁵

The Navy SERE program mirrors the Air Force SERE program in the way it is compartmentalized. A basic Level-C SERE course meets all mandatory DoD and JPRA requirements for those individuals the Navy determines are at high risk. In addition to the basic Level-C course, the Navy runs three additional courses to meet SERE training demands to prepare individuals for specific situations. The basic Level-C SERE course is twelve days in length and is offered nineteen times per year. Three additional courses address training requirements to enhance the skills learned in the basic SERE course. The Advanced Level-C (ASERE) for Theater specific or refresher SERE training, the Advanced Evasion (Adv Ev.) course designed to enhance the skills learned in basic SERE, and the Cold Weather Environmental Survival Training (CWEST) course combines classroom and practical application in a cold weather environment.

Navy Level-C SERE is adequately focused on those Naval personnel at highest risk of capture and exploitation. In order to maximize available resources, the Navy has taken the compartmentalized approach to meet this demanding training challenge. By establishing a Level-C SERE baseline of training, the Navy can more easily conduct refresher training or return specified personnel to additional training in order to meet the requirements of a specific geographical area or environmental condition. The most innovative aspect of Navy Level-C SERE is the use of mobile training teams available to go out to the unit or activity which requires the training. The concept allows for maximum flexibility and saves the Navy the cost of sending

large numbers of personnel on Temporary Duty (TDY) status for refresher or theater specific training. Sending a small number of SERE instructors TDY to link up with a unit at a forward location can be more cost effective. In addition, the mobile training team can focus the training to a specific need in order to reduce training time and highlight the specific skills required for the upcoming mission. While this program continues to be modified to meet current demands it also is still focused towards training only those personnel occupying traditionally high risk duties. However, this forward looking approach to SERE training fits very well into the concept of a Joint SERE training program. The suggestion relevant to improving the Navy SERE program is to support a Joint Level-C SERE program with instructors and subject matter experts to meet the Level-C demand beyond those identified by Navy policy and guidance.

JOINT TASK STANDARDIZATION

DoD and the JPRA (Joint Personnel Recovery Agency) provide guidance to the Services for the conduct of SERE training via the Executive Agent Instruction (EAI). At a minimum, Joint doctrine requires that all personnel identified as high risk should be thoroughly trained in the techniques of combat survival, evasion, movement, camouflage, surface navigation, evasion and recovery equipment aids and devices, and recovery procedure and methods.

The JPRA as an oversight agency is in position to dictate SERE training guidance and provide oversight for all DoD SERE training. The JPRA's Executive Agent Instruction (EAI) is the document which specifies guidance to the services to insure that all Joint tasks are trained regardless of the SERE school conducting the training. The instruction establishes minimum SERE training outcomes for a wartime risk of capture (Level-C) Code of Conduct course.¹⁶ It specifically outlines student learning objectives for completion of Level-C training while each service is encouraged to expand their training to include all service specific requirements not addressed in the EAI. Where the Instruction falls short is in identifying conditions and standards for the applicable tasks. The Instruction is a depiction of the tasks to be trained and the Services subsequently add them to their courses. The required tasks trained across all of the services differ greatly in the amount of time devoted to each and the degree of detail per task. While the Services have a great deal of authority as to what tasks, conditions and standards are used in their training, the JPRA only specifies the tasks trained. It does not give conditions or

standards for each task. Per the Instruction the list of subjects taught in all DoD approved Level-C SERE courses includes the seventeen tasks below;

- Introduction to the Code of Conduct
- Legal Aspects of Evasion/Captivity/Escape
- Preparation for Combat
- Psychological Factors
- Survival Principles
- Introduction to Evasion
- Environmental Considerations
- Primitive Medical Care
- Personnel Recovery
- Captivity
- Exploitation
- Resistance
- Escape
- Operational Training
- Resistance Training Laboratory
- Peacetime Detention
- Service Specific Training

Each of the service SERE schools retains the authority to plan and execute this training according to its own program of instruction. A review of the Service programs of instruction reveals that all of the required JPRA tasks are either already in the Service SERE programs or are in the process of being added. The services are clearly on course to meet all requirements and also devote training time to their own service specific tasks. The above tasks are trained in the classroom and put to practical use in a demanding field training exercise culminating with detention in a Resistance Training Laboratory (RTL). The JPRA maintains oversight for the training and is the approval authority for any service to establish and operate a Resistance Training Laboratory (RTL). As the oversight agency, the JPRA will evaluate all service Level-C SERE training to ensure compliance with the EAI at least once every two calendar years.¹⁷ Results of all inspections are forwarded to OSD/ISA (DPMO).

There is sufficient DoD guidance and oversight for the services to determine the tasks required to establish and operate effective SERE programs. However, JPRA's Executive Agent Instruction should go beyond specifying the tasks to be trained, it must determine to what standard of training the task is learned. This will ensure that when an individual is isolated, he/she is capable of assisting in their own recovery to the same level as a member of another Service or person isolated along with them. Once we have established standardization across the Services it is critical that all isolated personnel can work with the rescue agent regardless of which service is providing the assets. This brings us to the issue of Joint Interoperability.

JOINT INTEROPERABILITY

Joint Doctrine is very specific as to who has responsibility for SERE and Code of Conduct training. However, the instructions do not specify the interoperability requirements each Service must address. In a Joint environment, isolated individuals may be attempting to evade capture and affect recovery with units from their own service, other service assets or even host nation or international assets. Doctrine and guidance demands that the Combatant Commander or Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander utilize the most expeditious means available to assist or recover isolated personnel. Current Service oriented Programs of Instruction (POIs) do a superb job in preparing personnel in Service specific tasks but sometimes do not have the capability to effectively train tasks relevant to operating with other Service recovery assets. You will recall that each Service and the US Special Operations Command is responsible for performing Combat Search and Rescue in support of their own operations.¹⁸ However, it is increasingly unlikely that a service component will find itself operating independently. Again, the JPRA is in a unique position to review the current Service SERE programs and evaluate ways and means to address the Joint Interoperability issue while providing guidance on what Joint tasks, conditions and standards are necessary to meet DoD guidance. The hard to reach goal is to have each of the Service SERE programs laid out in such a way that regardless of what Service an individual belongs to, he/she should meet minimum Joint qualifications. For instance, the student who graduates from the Army SERE school should be equally proficient in the Joint SERE tasks as a graduate of the Navy or Air Force SERE schools. This is not necessarily the case today. Since services have the responsibility to recover their own personnel, initial recovery operations are likely to come from that person's own service asset. In those instances when Service recovery is not possible or practicable, an asset from another Service is suitable.

There exists a possibility that the individual being rescued may not understand the recovery procedures of the asset assigned for the rescue. This is a critical gap in training. There is an element of teamwork required to safely rescue an isolated person. Isolated personnel themselves have the responsibility to assist in their own recovery to the maximum extent possible.¹⁹ Individual responsibility implies that members of all of the Services understand Joint procedures. This is not easily done at the Service SERE schools because the equipment and assets required to conduct hands on training are simply not available. Rescue assets are available in finite numbers and are engaged in day to day activities. It is difficult to divert them to a training environment and even more difficult to keep them there for extended periods of time.

Since the JPRA was established we have seen steady improvement and increased awareness in the Service approach the Level-C SERE. Even with the increased awareness and focused guidance we still have problems with Throughput, Standardization and Joint Interoperability. The Services could address the throughput shortfalls if given significant increases in funding to expand their training programs. More detailed JPRA guidance may even solve the standardization issue as well. However, even increased funding will not solve the Joint Interoperability issue. Regardless of funding, there are not enough rescue assets to dedicate them to each Service SERE school and still meet operational demands. The most efficient way to address all three problems at once is for the JPRA to develop a Mobile Training Team (MTT) concept similar to the one used by the Navy.

JOINT SERE PROGRAM PROPOSAL

By using the techniques employed by all three services, the Joint community under the auspices of JPRA is in a unique position to develop a flexible Joint Level-C SERE training program. A Joint Level-C SERE course developed around the Mobile Training Team (MTT) concept will address the short falls in Service SERE training. A Joint MTT SERE course can be responsive to the evolving and varied requirements of the Joint community. By borrowing already proven techniques from the Army, Navy and Air Force SERE programs, a JPRA led Joint SERE course will more adequately meet the Combatant Commanders requirements. For instance, a JPRA trained MTT can be designed per Joint Doctrine and DoD guidance to meet a specific Combatant Commander's demand. The JPRA MTT can focus a SERE course to the

specific population requiring the training. Additionally, it can apply hands on training with the actual rescue forces an individual can expect to operate with in a specific theater of operations to overcome the interoperability problem. It can also be tailored to and trained in the actual physical environment the individual will operate. Lastly, it will provide training to those personnel who were not considered at high risk because their duty or job specialty did not warrant their attendance at a Service SERE school.

The Joint MTT addresses the single most glaring need in SERE training, additional capacity. Establishing a Joint course will go a long way to solving this problem. The advantages of such a course are significant and positively impact all of DoD. Personnel requiring Level-C SERE, but not meeting service priorities for attendance prior to their current assignment, can take the Joint course in lieu of the service course. In addition, since the Joint course does not have to address service specific SERE tasks, the course can be completed in a shorter amount of time. This gets the individual back to his/her unit faster.

The Mobile Training Team concept will easily overcome the problem of Standardization. Since the JPRA will issue clearly established guidance on standards, any student who has attended a Service SERE course will have already met many of the majority of the MTT course requirements. This allows the MTT to pare down the number of tasks to be trained on a case by case basis and focus only on those tasks required for the given situation. While it may seem redundant to have the MTT train graduates of a Service SERE course, it demonstrates a very unique capability of the MTT. The MTT will concentrate solely on those tasks pertinent to Theater specific aspects of the upcoming operation. In addition, the commander can always include already trained tasks in the form of refresher training. This ensures that every individual regardless of their attendance at a Service Level-C SERE course will be prepared for an operational deployment prior to movement.

The MTT has the potential to not only alleviate the problems of Standardization and Throughput it will also serve to address the Interoperability issue as well. Using the MTT concept to solve the Interoperability problem provides a significant advantage to the Combatant Commander. Once the MTT arrives in the Combatant Commander's AOR they will rely on the assets within theater to support the SERE training. The Combatant Commander can task the actual rescue assets he has available to him to work with the MTT. This guarantees hands-on practice with Joint assets regardless of what Service or civilian agency the student comes from.

It increases confidence for the individual being trained as well as for personnel who will conduct the rescue operation. It also eliminates the requirement to rotate Service rescue assets through all of the Service SERE schools to achieve Joint Interoperability.

OBSTACLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The services may be resistant to support this approach for several reasons. Attendance at the Joint Mobile Training Team (MTT) SERE course may not meet the full training requirement the services are looking for. Specifically, the Joint SERE course may not train all of the Service specific tasks taught in the Service schools. It also means that each service will have to address the possibility of conducting additional training in service specific tasks outside of their already established SERE programs to make up for the delta in the Joint training. While this may be true, I believe that having an individual trained in a Joint SERE course more than outweighs the negative aspect of providing additional service specific training. Service specific training can easily be conducted at the unit-level with an approved local training program or attendance to a brief refresher or follow on SERE course at an appropriate time. The Air Force and Navy SERE programs already have refresher and short courses built into their programs to address Service specific requirements. The Army will have to build such flexibility into their SERE program as they expand to meet the growing demands for training.

Another service challenge to the Joint course concept will be resourcing. Since the JPRA will have proponentcy and responsibility for the Joint MTT SERE course, it will require personnel and resources from the Services to establish and run the program. The services will be very reluctant to provide either. It is more likely that the services will prefer to use whatever resources they have to expand their own training capacity rather than give up resources to fund and man a Joint Program. However, the true beneficiary of the Joint MTT concept is the Combatant Commander. He can quickly get his non-SERE qualified personnel trained to a high standard without sending them out of theater for several weeks at a time. An option to reduce the impact of having the services provide Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to the Joint SERE instructor pool, the DoD can outsource the instructor requirement with civilian contractors. This will provide the MTTs with the requisite expertise without degrading the services of their SERE cadre of instructors. The return on investment across the DoD will pay significant dividends over the long haul.

Since the Combatant Commanders determine the SERE training requirement in their theaters, it is unrealistic to ask the Services to meet the specific demand of every Combatant Commander. The MTT benefit to the Services is an expanded DoD SERE program which can meet the training demand that the services cannot currently meet. Lastly, in addition to meeting the training demands of military personnel, a Joint Level-C SERE program can expand to meet a training requirement for DoD civilians. Due to the current and future asymmetric threat, we may even be able to use the Joint SERE course to train non-DoD civilians and government personnel who are at high risk of capture and exploitation.

The MTT Program of Instruction (POI) must address the needs of each Combatant Commander. This may cause problems since each Combatant Commander will have varying demands on the MTT's program. The MTT will have to develop a POI for each theater or have plug-in modules which address theater specific training. There are potential drawbacks to an ever changing POI. The manpower demands to continuously review and develop the course can be significant. It will be increasingly difficult to keep up with changes as combatant commanders changeover or conduct additional operations in multiple places within their AOR. Each commander may also adjust his priorities in determining who is at high risk and force the Joint SERE program to adjust accordingly. Another problem may be determining which combatant commander gets priority for training. Commanders will demand their fair share of training slots and expect to get them.

Again, the concept of a Mobile Training Team tied to theater specific modules can overcome these potential challenges. The Joint MTT SERE course will address the basic requirements per DoD and JPRA guidance. The MTT program can then be developed in two ways. The first and most effective are to stand up five Joint Mobile Training Teams (MTTs). Assign each team to a specific regional area to support that Combatant Commander for his Level-C SERE training requirements. This serves to develop a solid working relationship between the Commander's staff and the MTT. It also provides a means for the MTT to become keenly familiar with the SERE training demands of that specific AOR. Another option is to stand up a smaller number of MTTs and rotate them through any of the AORs when a Combatant Commander determines a requirement exists for Level-C SERE training. This option is less manpower intensive and relies on the modular POI to address regional specific training demands. Regardless of how many

teams are stood up, each team should contain members familiar with each Combatant Command region.

The cost of deploying mobile training teams can be expensive but the unit or Combatant Command receiving the training should bear any costs associated with the MTT since they benefit from the teams efforts. The MTT will also need Combatant Commander assistance to establish or gain access to adequate training facilities within a region. The facilities must allow the MTT to replicate psychological stress and isolate personnel to be trained. Once again, the JPRA can enforce a basic standard for facilities required and the unit benefiting from the training must meet these requirements to provide the facilities in order for the team to conduct the training. Another consideration is to have the unit requesting the training augment the JPRA team with already Level-C trained personnel. This will enhance the MTT's training capability and increase the number of students who can be trained.

CONCLUSIONS

The Joint Personnel Recovery Agency should continue to develop methods to overcome the Service challenges of providing Level-C SERE training to personnel placed at high risk for capture and exploitation. The JPRA has the mission, expertise, oversight and authority to develop and operate a specialized version of Level-C SERE which addresses the requirements of the Joint community. The JPRA can identify training shortfalls across service lines and focus its programs to cover the gaps created when the services cannot meet the training demand. A very suitable method to meet the expanding demand is to establish Joint SERE Mobile Training Teams. The JPRA can train individuals not given the opportunity to attend Level-C SERE at one of the service schools and help to reduce the high demand on service school SERE programs. It also allows the JPRA to assist in meeting the combatant commanders specific SERE training requirements.

The JPRA cannot complete this task in isolation. A joint effort is required to develop, resource and execute such an ambitious plan. Each of the services must share the cost in dollars and perhaps in personnel to execute the program described. It will be very tempting for the services to resist providing support to a JPRA Mobile Training Team concept, opting instead to expand their own SERE programs to meet training shortfalls. However, the services are locked into a training management system which is not responsive enough to facilitate multiple

short term changes in who can be trained nor can they tailor their training to a specific theater or add highly specialized tasks. The Services also cannot solve the Joint Interoperability issues within their own capacity. Access to rescue assets from other Services is impractical. A modular Joint SERE course can be designed to react to short term mission changes and assist the Combatant Commander in reducing the risk to his personnel regardless of the situation. The service SERE programs are examples of impressive steady state training courses providing personnel with highly specialized skills. The Service courses must stay in operation and continue to meet the component commander's requirements per DoD Instructions.

Supporting both Service and Joint priorities is the only way to get ahead of the increased demand for Level-C SERE. Providing manpower and financial resources will enhance DoD's overall capability to meet the expanding training requirement and reduce the Combatant Commanders risk when placing American servicemen, women and civilians in a high risk situation.

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ENDNOTES

¹ U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Evasion and Recovery. Joint Pub 3.50.3 (Washington D.C. : U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, September 1996), V.

² Department of Defense, Guidance for Instruction DoD Inst. 1300.21 (Washington D.C., January 2001), 26.

³ Ibid.

⁴ United States Department of Defense Instruction, DoD Inst 1300.21 Training and Education to Support the Code of Conduct Encl 4, 34.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 27

⁷ Ibid., I-8

⁸ Ibid., II-3

⁹ Joint Publication 3-50.3 v.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ U.S. Army, Program of Instruction (POI) for Level-C SERE, 2.

¹² Joint Publication 3-50.2, A1

¹³ Ibid., A-4

¹⁴ Ibid., D-4

¹⁵ U.S. Navy Fleet Aviation Special Operation Training Group. "SERE Courses." 14 November 2002. Available from <http://FASOLANT.Navy.Mil.htm>; Accessed 23 December 2003.

¹⁶ USJFCOM, Executive Agent Instruction for Wartime Level-C Training HQ JPRA. 1

¹⁷ Ibid., 14.

¹⁸ Joint Pub 3-50.2, I-1.

¹⁹ Ibid., I-8

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