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14. ABSTRACT The USAF moving of the Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) mission from Air Combat Command (ACC) to Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) in 2003 left out many of the key players involved in a traditional CSAR task force (CSARTF), specifically the On Scene Commander (OSC), Rescue Mission Commander (RMC), rescue Escort (RESCORT), and the Airborne Mission Coordinator (AMC). Moving helicopters and support aircraft under the guise of "moving the CSAR mission" to AFSOC, without considering the other key players of CSAR, placed an overemphasis on the helicopter as the key element of CSAR. This organizational focus on the helicopter as "CSAR" has led to a lack of unity of effort. This has had negative implications in the organizing, training, and equipping of CSAR forces. While the capability of the USAF to conduct CSAR has not degraded to the same level as pre-Desert Storm, it is critical that it not regress further due to a continual disassociation of the AMC, OSC, RMC, and RESCORT roles from the CSAR mission. In April 2006, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force moved the CSAR mission back to ACC. This move offers the USAF a unique opportunity to align its Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures with Air Force and Joint Doctrine. Additionally, the move allows the USAF to reemphasize its role in organizing, training, and equipping CSAR forces to bring unity of effort to this critical mission. ACC should consider assigning a single person to act as both the Point of Contact (POC) and the Program Element Monitor (PEM) for all CSAR matters. The CSAR POC/PEM could act as team leader for a CSAR working-group that should include experts in the following roles: Joint Personnel Recovery Center, AMC, OSC, RMC, RESCORT, Recovery Vehicle (RV)-helicopters, RV support, Pararescue Jumpers, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape. Assigning a CSAR POC in ACC will allow the proper level of coordination, conformity and compatibility among all of the key players. Coordination would clear doctrinal disconnects; enable both large scale CSARTF and small scale C2 specific CSAR training; and ensure compatible equipment for the entire CSAR force. The ACC CSAR POC would also represent USAF in Joint Personnel Recovery matters. This would build unity of effort between all of the key players in a CSARTF.				
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**U.S. Air Force Air Combat Command Takes Control of Rescue Forces:
An Opportunity to Re-energize the Unity of Effort**

by

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of
the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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Abstract

The USAF moving of the Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) mission from Air Combat Command (ACC) to Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) in 2003 left out many of the key players involved in a traditional CSAR task force (CSARTF), specifically the On Scene Commander (OSC), Rescue Mission Commander (RMC), rescue Escort (RESCORT), and the Airborne Mission Coordinator (AMC). Moving helicopters and support aircraft under the guise of "moving the CSAR mission" to AFSOC, without considering the other key players of CSAR, placed an overemphasis on the helicopter as the key element of CSAR. This organizational focus on the helicopter as "CSAR" has led to a lack of unity of effort. This has had negative implications in the organizing, training, and equipping of CSAR forces. While the capability of the USAF to conduct CSAR has not degraded to the same level as pre-Desert Storm, it is critical that it not regress further due to a continual disassociation of the AMC, OSC, RMC, and RESCORT roles from the CSAR mission. In April 2006, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force moved the CSAR mission back to ACC. This move offers the USAF a unique opportunity to align its Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures with Air Force and Joint Doctrine. Additionally, the move allows the USAF to reemphasize its role in organizing, training, and equipping CSAR forces to bring unity of effort to this critical mission. ACC should consider assigning a single person to act as both the Point of Contact (POC) and the Program Element Monitor (PEM) for all CSAR matters. The CSAR POC/PEM could act as team leader for a CSAR working-group that should include experts in the following roles: Joint Personnel Recovery Center, AMC, OSC, RMC, RESCORT, Recovery Vehicle (RV)-helicopters, RV support, Pararescue Jumpers, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape. Assigning a CSAR POC in ACC will allow the proper level of coordination, conformity and compatibility among all of the key players. Coordination would clear doctrinal disconnects; enable both large scale CSARTF and small scale C2 specific CSAR training; and ensure compatible equipment for the entire CSAR force. The ACC CSAR POC would also represent USAF in Joint Personnel Recovery matters. This would build unity of effort between all of the key players in a CSARTF.

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INTRODUCTION

“Our joint team deserves the best combat search and rescue capabilities that can be fielded. In my view this is an absolute moral and ethical imperative.”¹

General Michael T. Moseley, Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF)

Sebastian Junger’s popular book and subsequent movie titled, *The Perfect Storm* is about the confluence of two low-pressure systems that become a killer storm. The storm wreaked havoc on the North Eastern Seaboard of the United States subsequently sinking and killing the crew of the fishing vessel *Andrea Gail*. The term “Perfect Storm” has become a common phrase in military lexicon, used to describe events that, together, may wreak great havoc on the institution. For example, the United States Air Force (USAF) used the term “The Perfect Storm” to describe the potential combined impact of the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Committee, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, and the need for personnel cutbacks.

If there can be a perfect storm, then there can also be a perfect high pressure system, or a confluence of events that has the potential to bring great positives. USAF Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) forces are in the midst of such a perfect pressure system. In April 2006, the CSAF moved the CSAR mission from Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) to Air Combat Command (ACC).² This move offers the USAF a unique opportunity to align its Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) with Air Force and Joint Doctrine (JD). Additionally, the move allows the USAF to reemphasize its role in organizing, training, and equipping CSAR forces to bring unity of effort to this critical mission.

WHY IS USAF CSAR IMPORTANT TO THE JOINT FIGHTER?

The Department of Defense has mandated that each Service maintain a unilateral PR capability in support of its own operations. This responsibility is codified in joint doctrine through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Joint Publication (JP) 3-50, Joint Personnel Recovery.³

To fulfill this requirement, each service prepares forces that are organized, trained, and equipped to perform the five personnel recovery (PR) tasks, which are: (1) report (2) locate (3) support (4) recover and (5) reintegrate.⁴

During a conflict, the Joint Force Commander normally assigns the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC), traditionally a USAF General Officer, as the supported commander for joint PR operations. This was the arrangement for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Therefore, although a joint PR operation may use a combination of forces from any of the components, the assets will typically come from the USAF. It is therefore incumbent upon the USAF to perform this mission right, and they will. As the CSAF said, “The USAF has committed itself to being the world’s best at Joint/Coalition Combat Search and Rescue. This mission is inherently an Air Force core competency”⁵

There are numerous reasons why the Department of Defense places such a premium on PR. Besides the obvious moral obligations, CSAR is also one of the few tactical missions that may have both operational and strategic implications. In his book on CSAR in Southeast Asia, Earl Tilford lists aggressiveness as a key operational factor. He states that, “from the early days of aerial combat the men who fly and fight performed their duties more efficiently knowing that every effort will be made to rescue them if they

were shot down.” On the Strategic side both costs and public opinion are considerations. Tilford claims that, “The expense of training aircrews for the U.S. Armed Forces is very high in both money and time to produce an experienced aviator. As a pilot gains experience, his value to the Air force increases....”⁶ The potential negative effect of U.S. prisoners of war on public opinion must also be considered. With the advent of instantaneous world wide media coverage, unfriendly governments will exploit captured American citizens and downed-aircrew to undermine the nation’s will to fight.⁷ An article on CSAR in *Joint Forces Quarterly* claims, “The American public’s concern over casualties can intensify a situation that involves even one American life into a major crisis.”⁸ Acknowledging all of the above factors, the Department of Defense (DOD) Personnel Recovery System established the following PR objectives: (1) return isolated personnel to duty (2) increase morale (3) increase operational performance and (4) deny adversaries an opportunity to influence our military strategy and national will by exploiting the intelligence and propaganda value of isolated personnel.⁹

CSAR - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to better understand the most challenging issues facing USAF CSAR today, one must first understand the roles and the responsibilities of the various players as defined in Joint Publications (JP), Air Force Doctrine Directives (AFDD), and Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (AFTTP) manuals.

According to AFDD 2-1.6, Air Force Personnel Recovery, there are three CSAR components: (1) the command, control, and coordination node (2) the recovery forces and (3) the isolated personnel. An expanded explanation of the first two components is in following sections. In general, the command, control, and coordination node consists of

the Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell (PRCC), and the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC).¹⁰ AFTTP 3-1.1, General Planning and Employment Considerations, offers the most holistic and inclusive definition of the recovery forces. It states that the primary USAF method of conducting PR is through the use of the CSAR task force (CSARTF). The document goes on to say that,

Although the helicopter may operate independently, its CSAR capabilities can be significantly expanded when other assets provide support. The roles required to be performed in a CSARTF include the Airborne Mission Coordinator¹¹ (AMC), On-Scene Commander (OSC), Rescue Mission Commander (RMC), rescue escort (RESCORT), rescue combat air patrol (RESCAP) and the recovery vehicle.¹²

Additionally, a CSARTF may include support assets such as Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses, an airborne Forward Air Controller [FAC(A)], aerial refueling, and attack aircraft.

Command, Control and Coordination Node

As mentioned earlier, component commanders have the responsibility to plan and conduct PR in support of their own operations. To support this requirement, each combatant commander establishes a Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell (PRCC) which is typically located at the component's operation center. For example, in a particular theater the Maritime, Ground, Special Operations, and Air components all have their version of a PRCC at their component's operation center. Additionally, each service has unique tactics, techniques and procedures for conducting PR. For example, the Marine Corps conduct PR via their Tactical Recovery of Personnel (TRAP) system, while both the Air Force and Navy use CSAR. Additionally, each component is normally responsible for a particular area for PR. For example, the Navy may be responsible for

over water recovery, the Marine Corps for the area at their forward edge of the battle, and the USAF for missions deep behind enemy lines.

The PRCC is responsible for coordinating all component specific PR activities. Other responsibilities include monitoring PR operations executed by other component forces and remaining ready to assist as directed by the JPRC; notifying the JPRC when isolated personnel are reported; and forwarding pertinent data regarding isolated personnel, their status, and/or location to the JPRC and recovery forces. When a particular service recognizes that they are unable to execute a PR with their organic assets, they request additional forces through, and may hand off the effort to the JPRC.¹³

As the supported commander for joint PR operations, the JFACC will establish a Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC). Normally, the Air Operation Center will have both a PRCC and the JPRC. For Operations Allied Force and Iraqi Freedom the JPRC was located at the Combined Air Operations Center. The PRCC director is typically dual hatted as both the component PRCC and the JPRC director.¹⁴

The JPRC coordinates and plans joint PR operations. Among their numerous other duties, they also coordinate PR sections of OPLANS and Special Instructions (SPINS) between component's JRCC. Additionally, preplanned CSAR that includes forces from more than a single component or country will be coordinated through the JPRC.¹⁵

Key Players in the CSARTF

The CSARTF is a mutually supporting package of assets tailored to meet a specific CSAR requirement. The size and complexity of the CSARTF depends on mission requirements and the threat facing the isolated personnel (IP) and CSARTF. The

objective of the CSARTF is the successful recovery of IP without the loss of additional assets.¹⁶

The On-Scene Commander (OSC) is normally someone in the immediate vicinity (e.g., a wingman, FAC(A), or ground or maritime forces) of the IP who is capable of providing on-scene coordination. The OSC initiates the rescue effort, and is responsible for locating, authenticating, and protecting the IP. The OSC is also the individual designated to control recovery efforts in the objective area, and is responsible for recommending the feasibility of executing a quick recovery. The OSC should be the person with the best situation awareness in the immediate area of the IP, and should have the ability to communicate with recovery and support forces. Additionally, the OSC should update Command and Control (C2) elements on IP status. The OSC remains on station until forced to leave due to threats, weather, or fuel, or is properly relieved.¹⁷ During OIF, every fighter and attack pilot received OSC training and associated OSC checklists. It was expected that any trained pilot would perform OSC duties if required.¹⁸

The Rescue Mission Commander (RMC) is a specially trained aircrew that is an expert in the control of a CSARTF. Once the RMC arrives on station, control is passed from the OSC, and the RMC becomes the tactical commander in charge of the mission. The JPRC or the component commander through the PRCC designates an RMC to coordinate and control the effort.¹⁹

In a non-traditional CSAR, any platform may act as RMC. Additionally, there may be situations where the threat is permissive enough that an RMC is not required and the Rescue Vehicle (RV) simply makes a recovery. Traditionally, however, the RMC is a fighter aircraft with the call sign Sandy.

Rescue escort (RESCORT) aircrew are trained to provide airborne protection to the RV. According to JP 3-50, Appendix F, US Air force Personnel Recovery, “RESCORT is a force protection asset used to augment CSAR missions as the threat level dictates.” It goes on to say that “aircrews performing the role of RESCORT significantly increase the chance of successful recovery.”²⁰ RESCORT aircraft can be either fixed- or rotary-wing aircraft and should be capable of providing the recovery vehicles with reconnaissance, route sanitization, armed escort, suppressive fire support, and communications relay.²¹

The RV picks-up the IP. Normally the RV is a helicopter, but there are exceptions. For example, during OIF, Maj. James Ewald was recovered by a U.S. Army armored personnel carrier after ejecting from his A-10 over Baghdad.²² During CSAR missions, once the RV has eyes-on the IP, they take over temporary OSC for the final portion of the pick-up. Helicopters remain the RV of choice as they are specially trained and equipped for the mission.

Rescue helicopters are capable of air refueling. They are supported by the MC/HC-130E/H/P which refuel the helicopter, have limited C2 capabilities, and perform numerous other CSARTF support tasks.

The AMC plays an absolutely pivotal role in a CSARTF. They are responsible for coordinating all mission activities between the OSC, RMC, recovery forces, and C2 elements. They act as the extension of the component commander responsible for the PR mission, through the JPRC.

The AMC should be the airborne platform with the best combination of on-station time and communications capability. It should also be capable of coordinating multiple

airborne assets. Additionally, the AMC requires radio line-of-sight with the OSC and RMC, and over-the-horizon High Frequency or Satellite Communications with the JRCC and/or JPRC. Typically, the AMC has been an Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, but any aircraft with appropriate C2 capabilities may perform the role.²³

Duties of the AMC are numerous. They are charged with designating an OSC, and if required, requesting additional assets. The AMC ensures safety-of-flight by providing airspace de-confliction and coordinating the refueling of recovery assets. The AMC crew also supports the recovery effort by relaying isolated personnel intelligence and authentication data to appropriate C2 agencies and the recovery force. Finally, the AMC advises C2 of mission progress as well as factors that may affect the mission.²⁴

Another key member of a CSARTF is the Sandy. Although AFDD 1-2.6 and the USAF Appendix to JP 3-50 fail to mention the Sandy role, AFTTP 3-1.1 does. A Sandy is a specially qualified fighter pilot trained in OSC, RMC, and RESCORT duties. Most are also FAC(A) qualified.

A Sandy flight normally consists of four aircraft each having different responsibilities. Sandy One, the lead aircraft, wears two hats and acts as both OSC and RMC. While Sandy One may transfer OSC to another Sandy, when air refueling for example, Sandy One will always maintain his position as RMC for the duration of his flight. Additionally, Sandy One is typically the only pilot in the CSARTF who has direct voice communication with the IP. Sandy Two provides cover and back-up for Sandy One, and acts as the radio relay to the AMC. Typically, Sandy Three and Four provide RESCORT.

All four Sandy aircraft are capable of delivering ordnance to protect the IP. In most real world CSAR missions, all four of the pilots would be trained in all of the roles.²⁵

Flights of four Sandy are normally placed on an alert status to provide immediate reaction to an isolating incident. A unique evolution of the Sandy role began in Operation Allied Force (Kosovo). The lengthy distance between the Sandy flight on ground alert and the area of operations caused an excessive delay between the notification of a downed aircrew and the arrival of Sandy overhead. The concept of an embedded Sandy was introduced to address this problem and was approved early in the conflict.²⁶

An embedded Sandy is a pilot who has a normal interdiction, close air support, or FAC(A) mission, but is also trained as a Sandy and carries all of the additional required equipment needed to execute a CSAR mission. During both Operations Allied Force and Iraqi Freedom, the Combined Air Operations Center directed that an embedded Sandy be included in every mission package.²⁷

Embedding Sandy aircraft in mission packages provides a more timely response to an isolating event. For example, during Allied Force, Major Less was scheduled as a FAC(A) for his package, and was also the package embedded Sandy. When an Infrared surface-to-air missile struck Major Phil Haun's A-10 aircraft, Major Less was able to provide support almost immediately.²⁸ CSAR missions during Operation Iraqi Freedom offered similar examples. Although Colonel David Stephenson was not the assigned embedded Sandy for the package he was flying in, he was Sandy trained and qualified. When Junker-14, a Navy F-14 was shot-down by enemy anti-aircraft artillery, Col.

Stephenson arrived overhead and performed OSC duties within minutes. Col.

Stephenson acted as the OSC and RMC for Junker 14's successful recovery.²⁹

Issues

A review of numerous CSAR after-action reports, as well as personal interviews with the pilots who flew as Sandy during Operations Allied Force and Iraqi Freedom, reveal that CSAR missions rarely proceed as smoothly as they should. A recurring theme that contributes to excessive friction in the battle space is a lack of unity of effort prior to combat operations.³⁰ The lack of unit of effort has had negative implications in the organizing, training, and equipping of CSAR forces.

Organizationally, finding a permanent home for the CSAR mission has been a challenge. In the 1990s, after Operation Desert Storm, CSAR was moved from special operations to ACC. The mission was moved back to AFSOC in the summer of 2003 after the completion of phase one of Operation Iraqi Freedom.³¹

Moving the CSAR mission to AFSOC in 2003 made sense at the time. The majority of deep-strike missions being flown by the Navy and Air Force were completed, and the nature of rescues had changed.³² As noted, there was also a historical precedent for placing the rescue mission in special operations. As early as Vietnam, for example, Sandy forces flying the A-1 Skyraider were assigned to special operations squadrons. The 56th Special Operations Wing at Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand was home to several squadrons of Douglas A-1 Skyraiders. Note, however, that in this case it was the Sandy aircraft, not the rescue helicopters that belonged to special operations. Rescue helicopters from the 39th Aerial Rescue and Recovery Squadron did establish a

Detachment at NKP.³³ This brought the helicopters closer to the fight and allowed for integrated planning between rescue helicopter and Sandy pilots.

Although Sandy aircraft were not always co-located with the rescue helicopters in Vietnam, the ability to pre-coordinate face-to-face was key to the success of numerous rescues. The most poignant example was the extensive face-to-face pre-coordination that took place in planning the 1970 Son Tay prison rescue attempt. Sandy, rescue helicopter, forward air control, fighter, and command and control pilots all met at Udorn, Thailand to plan this intricate rescue.³⁴

Current doctrine and recent anecdotal evidence support the idea of co-locating CSAR forces as well. Doctrinally, according to AFDD 2-1.6, “in order to improve mission planning effectiveness, it is optimal to co-locate all dedicated (CSAR) forces.”³⁵ Sandy pilots support this concept also. According to Col. (Ret.) David Stephenson, the former 131 OG/CC and a Sandy pilot during OIF, “we were really lucky living and working with the helicopter guys.”³⁶ Likewise, Col. David Kennedy, the 110 OG/CC and Sandy pilot flying out Al Jaber, Kuwait during OIF said, “basing our Sandy pilots with the rescue helicopter pilots was a true force multiplier.”³⁷

Unfortunately, moving the CSAR mission to AFSOC in 2003 left out many of the key players involved in a traditional CSARTF, specifically the Sandy and the AMC. Moving the rescue vehicles under the guise of “moving the CSAR mission” to AFSOC, without considering the other key players of CSAR, placed an overemphasis on the helicopter as the key element of CSAR.

Numerous examples support the sense that, currently, the mission of CSAR at the USAF level is helicopter-centric. For example, consider the following two articles:

-Air Force Magazine, August 2003, “CSAR under New Management”

-Air Force Times, 13 May 2006, “CSAR Crews Change Command Again”

Both articles report the move of CSAR from one major command to another. The first is about the move from ACC to AFSOC in 2003, the second is about the subsequent move back to ACC in 2006. In both articles, and every other article on the topic, the movement of CSAR is described as “helicopters and C-130 support aircraft.”

Also, as mentioned earlier, the Sandy mission is not described at all in AFDD 2-1.6 or the Air Force Appendix to JP 3-50. Additionally, the appendix also fails to note RESCORT as a key element of the CSAR team but instead describes RESCORT simply as “force protection,” which “augment CSAR missions as the threat level dictates.”³⁸

As a final example, the “Concept of Operations” paragraph under “Execute” in the Air Force personnel recovery Appendix to JP 3-50, specifically instructs the reader to consider the AFTTP for the HH-60G (Blackhawk rescue helicopters) and the HC-130E/H/P (helicopter support aircraft) as the “baseline for current and future employment concepts.”³⁹ The AFTTP for the Sandy and AMC aircraft, as well as the entire C2 structure are, unfortunately, not included in this “baseline” consideration.

The organizational focus on the helicopter as “CSAR” has led to doctrinal contradictions. While no one would argue the critical role that the helicopter plays in a rescue effort, certainly other aircraft have important roles as well. JP and AFDD indicate that the “locate” task is critical. For example, from the Air Force Appendix to JP 3-50, “Regardless of the threat level, friendly forces must first locate and authenticate isolated personnel before initiating combat rescue operations,” and “An accurate location and positive identification are normally required prior to committing recovery forces.”⁴⁰

Furthermore, according to JP 3-50, the parent publication, “Successful recovery depends on the accuracy and reliability of the coordinates or description of the isolated personnel’s location. Ideally, an isolated person would be under direct friendly visual contact from the time of the isolating event until recovered.”⁴¹ JP 3-50 goes on to say, “. . . recovery efforts normally are not committed until after authentication. Further, recovery forces normally will not enter hostile battle space until the location and authentication of isolated personnel has been verified and recovery is feasible.”⁴²

Contradictorily, however, the Air Force Appendix to JP 3-50 claims “the concept of ‘combat search’ associated with USAF CSAR is limited in scope.”⁴³ This flawed concept led to tragic consequences in Operation Desert Storm. During the mid-1980s the USAF thought the high threat nature of the battlefield in Central Europe made OSC, RMC, and RESCORT (i.e., Sandy aircraft) duties obsolete.⁴⁴ The new plan called for SOF helicopters to fly unescorted to recover IP. Consequently most USAF level CSARTF training ended. As a result, by Operation Desert Storm the USAF was woefully unprepared for classic CSARTF operations.

During Desert Storm thirty-eight coalition aircraft were shot down and sixty-three personnel were isolated in hostile territory. Sadly, only seven rescue missions were launched resulting in the recovery of only three IP. Twenty-five IP became Prisoners of War.⁴⁵ Tellingly, one of the successful recoveries was a traditional CSARTF with Captain Paul Johnson flying as Sandy for a flight of rescue helicopters.⁴⁶

Certainly, new data link and GPS technology make it easier to locate and authenticate the IP today. However, even with the best technology, locating, authenticating, and

protecting the IP remains difficult. From earlier discussion, it should be clear that it is typically the OSC and/or RMC (Sandy) who performs these tasks.

Perhaps an equally critical oversight deals with the AMC. As was mentioned earlier, the AMC also plays a critical role in the success of a CSARTF. While other platforms are capable of fulfilling the AMC role, currently AWACS is the primary choice, and it is arguably a high-demand, low-density platform. To highlight the important role that the AMC plays, AFTTP 3-1.1 states that, “CSAR expertise must be on board the AMC platform – either a designated crew member who has received CSAR training or a CSAR liaison officer from the AOC.”⁴⁷ Unfortunately, that is typically not the case. In the AWACS an Air Weapons Officer or Weapons Director (AWO/WD) is the person who would act as AMC during a CSAR. The duty of AMC is secondary to the AWO/WD primary responsibilities. AFTTP 3-1.15, Tactical Employment E-3 AWACS supports this, “in the event of a CSAR mission, established Air Weapons Officer/Weapons Director roles must shift to accommodate this mission.” What is more disturbing, however, is the statement, “due to mission constraints a dedicated CSAR AWO/WD may not be available.”⁴⁸ This is a serious disconnect.

The AMC was deemed important enough during the Vietnam War that a dedicated C2 aircraft was assigned to the CSARTF.⁴⁹ Today the MC/HC-130E/H/P is not only a dedicated helicopter support platform, but it is also capable of performing C2 duties. Is there room to consider either increasing the role of the C-130, considering a new specialized C2 aircraft assigned solely to the CSAR mission, or should there simply be a greater emphasis on AMC CSAR training and participation in CSAR exercises? This is worthy of discussion but will be left for another paper.

While the capability of the USAF to conduct CSAR has not degraded to the same level as pre-Desert Storm, it is critical that it not regress further due to a continual disassociation of the OSC, RMC, RESCORT, and AMC roles from the CSAR mission.

A common lesson learned is the direct link between proper prior training and success in combat. In the last three years realistic CSAR training has suffered. This is not an AFSOC issue, but a CSAR community one. A persistently identified weakness in CSAR training is the ability to gain full participation of all key players. Both Joint and Air Force doctrine, however, support the need for vigorous training at all levels.⁵⁰ Joint and Air Force doctrine specifically recommend exercising the command and control elements of a CSAR to include the JFACC, JPRC, and JRCC.⁵¹ Adding CSAR to USAF Red Flag exercises in Nevada was an effort to correct this deficiency. While often times successful, many times the C2 structure was not adequately exercised. Additionally, the fact the many rescue helicopters have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan has made it difficult to train the specific forces that would work together in theater.⁵²

Another “relearned” lesson is that subordinates who fail to fully support orders can override the best intentions of a commander. In the months immediately preceding the start of OIF, the JFACC directed theater-wide bi-weekly CSAR exercises. Unfortunately, the AMC and the JPRC (JSRC at the time) would often times opt out for more pressing duties.⁵³ This lack of exercising the entire C2 structure (including the AMC) was identified as one of the primary problems with subsequent CSAR missions in OIF.⁵⁴ Similar issues with C2 were reported for Operation Allied Force.⁵⁵ Although CSAR is new to ACC, efforts are already underway to conduct exercises that will include all key players. The first exercise is scheduled for fall 2006 at Moody AFB, GA.⁵⁶

A non-unified effort has also led to issues with equipping CSAR forces. For example, the Combat Survivor/Evader Locator (CSEL) radio is currently the planned follow-on survival radio for all aircrew even though it may be less capable than the current PRC-112B/G, and may have compatibility issues with RMC and OSC aircraft.⁵⁷ Additionally, some current Sandy aircraft suffer due to not being data link capable. This was especially noticeable during OIF when the “JPRC used Have CSAR (a CSAR specific data link system) to run operations.”⁵⁸

RECOMMENDATIONS⁵⁹

As a force provider, ACC’s mission is to organize, train, equip and maintain combat-ready forces for rapid deployment and employment.⁶⁰ The movement of rescue forces from AFSOC to ACC will allow a re-examination of the way the USAF organizes, trains, and equips for the CSAR mission.

ACC should consider assigning a single person to act as both the Point of Contact (POC) and the Program Element Monitor (PEM) for all CSAR matters. The CSAR POC/PEM could act as team leader for a CSAR working-group that should include experts in the following roles: AMC, JPRC, PRCC, RMC, OSC, RESCORT, RV, RV support, Pararescue, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE). This would build unity of effort between all of the key players in a CSARTF. The responsibilities of the ACC CSAR POC/PEM could include the following:

1. Coordinate Joint doctrine, AF doctrine, and AFTTP to clear any disconnects and to ensure clarity.
2. Coordinate C2 training exercises with the numbered Air Forces. This would ensure that those personnel who will most likely work in the JPRC are properly trained.⁶¹

3. Coordinate with other Air Force Major Commands to ensure a unified Air Force CSAR effort.⁶²
4. Act as the USAF representative to Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA).⁶³ As the USAF representative, the ACC POC would assist in building Joint Doctrine and TTP, enable a high degree of equipment compatibility between the services, and build relationships for future Joint CSAR efforts and exercises.
5. Assist in planning independent large-scale semi-annual CSAR exercises, and ensure participation of all key players.
6. Act as the PEM for the CSAR mission. In this capacity, the POC would ensure common and compatible CSAR equipment is purchased for the entire CSAR force.
7. Ensure that lessons learned, such as the concept of the embedded Sandy, are incorporated in AFDD.

CONCLUSION

In the next conventional conflict, airmen will be isolated behind enemy lines. USAF CSAR assets will execute the recovery. It is imperative the USAF perform this mission well. The movement of the CSAR mission from AFSOC to ACC offers the USAF an opportunity to bring unity of effort back to the mission by re-considering the organization, training, and equipping of the entire CSARTF. Assigning a CSAR POC in ACC to be the primary authority will allow the proper level of coordination, conformity and compatibility among all of the key players. Coordination would clear doctrinal disconnects; enable both large scale CSARTF and small scale C2 specific CSAR training; and ensure compatible equipment for the entire CSAR force. The ACC CSAR POC would also represent USAF in Joint Personnel Recovery matters.

ENDNOTES

¹ Michael T. Moseley, Letter to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Commander of the Marine Corps, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Chief Naval Operations, "USAF Combat Search and Rescue," 19 March 2006.

² Bruce, Relfsen, "CSAR crews change command again," *Air Force Times*, (13 March 2006, Vol. 66, No. 34), 29.

Note: The current opportunity offered the CSAR community by moving the mission back to ACC should not down-play the heroic missions performed by AFSOC rescue personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan during the past three years. While there have not been many traditional CSAR missions, there have been numerous rescues and AFSOC has performed heroically. According to Michael Peck in his article "Combat Rescue Units see shift in Mission," *National Defense Magazine*, (18 April 2006 in USAF Aimpoints), In over 300 rescue missions in Iraq and Afghanistan from October 2001 to November 2005, 250 were casualty evacuations. Greater than 85% of the 300 were in Afghanistan. Only 20 were classified as CSAR. Special Operations rescue forces participated in rescue operations in Just Cause, Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Provide Comfort, Promote Democracy, Deny Flight, and Allied Force.

³ U.S. Department of the Air Force, Personnel Recovery Operations, Air Force Doctrine Document 2-1.6, (Maxwell AFB, AL: 1 June 2006), 5.

⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Personnel Recovery, Joint Publication 3-50 (DRAFT), (Washington, D.C.: 13 January 2006), II-2.

⁵ Moseley Letter, 19 March 2006.

⁶ Earl H. Tilford Jr., *Search and rescue in Southeast Asia*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Air Force History, 1992), 2-3.

⁷ Christopher C. Dunphy, *Combat Search and Rescue: An American Way of War*, (Unpublished research paper, USMC Command and Staff College, Quantico, VA: 2000), 51.

⁸ James E. Moetmann, Edward E. Holland and Gary A. Wolver, "Joint Combat Search and Rescue –Operational Necessity or Afterthought?" *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Spring, 1998), 44.

⁹ JP 3-50, I-2.

¹⁰ AFDD 2-1.6, 13.

Note: The JRCC used to be known as the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC), and the Joint Personnel Recovery Center used to be known as the Joint Search and Rescue Center (JSRC).

¹¹ The AMC was previously called the Airborne Mission Commander.

¹² U.S. Department of the Air Force, General Planning and Employment Considerations (S/NF), Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 3-1.1, (Nellis AFB, NV: 31 May 2004), 9-5.

Note: All references to AFTTP are unclassified.

¹³ JP 3-50, II 3-7.

¹⁴ AFDD 1-2.6, 12.

¹⁵ JP 3-50, II-3.

¹⁶ AFDD 2-1.6, 6.

¹⁷ JP 3-50, VI-4; AFDD 2-1.6, 15.

¹⁸ Telephone conversation with David Kennedy, Colonel, USAF, 110 OG/CC, Battle Creek, MI: 5 April 2006.

¹⁹ AFTTP 3-1.1, 9-14.

²⁰ JP 3-50, Appendix F, U.S. Air Force Personnel Recovery, F-4.

²¹ AFDD 2-1.6, 14.

²² Telephone conversation with James Ewald, LTC, USAF, Chief Weapons and Tactics 110 FW, Battle Creek, MI: 4 April 2006.

²³ AFTTP 3-1.1, 9-5.

²⁴ AFDD 2-1.6, 14-15.

²⁵ AFTTP 3-1.1, 9-17.

²⁶ Telephone conversation with Daniel Swift, Colonel (Ret.) USAF, Former 131 FW/CC, Barnes ANGB, MA: 10 April 2006; David Kennedy, 5 April 2006.

²⁷ Telephone conversation with David Kennedy, 5 April 2006.

²⁸ Telephone conversation with Phil M. Haun, LTC, USAF, Student Harvard University, Cambridge, MA: 27 April 2006.

²⁹ Telephone conversation with David Stephenson, Colonel (Ret.) USAF, Former 110 OG/CC, Barnes ANGB, MA: 26 April 2006.

³⁰ Telephone conversations with Donald Furland, LTC, USAF, 172 FS/CC, Battle Creek, MI: 13 April 2006; Ronald Wilson LTC, USAF, deputy 110 OG/CC, Battle Creek, MI: 18 April 2006; Keir Knapp LTC, USAF, 172 FS/DO, Battle Creek, MI: 19 April 2006; Stephensen, 26 April 2006; Haun, 27 April 2006.

³¹ Adam J. Herbert, "CSAR under New Management," *Air Force Magazine On line* www.afa.org/magazine/aug2003/0803csar.asp, (August 2003, Vol. 86, No. 8.), 1-2.

³² Michael Peck, "Combat Rescue Units see shift in Mission," *National Defense Magazine*, (18 April 2006 in USAF Aimpoints).

Note: In over 300 rescue missions in Iraq and Afghanistan from October 2001 to November 2005, 250 were casualty evacuations. Greater than 85% of the 300 were in Afghanistan. Only 20 were classified as CSAR. Special Operations rescue forces participated in rescue operations in Just Cause, Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Provide Comfort, Promote Democracy, Deny Flight, and Allied Force.

³³ John T. Correl, "Determination of a Sandy", *Air Force Magazine On line* <http://www.afa.org/magazine/march2006/0306sandy.asp>, (March 2006, Vol. 89, No. 3).

³⁴ Tilford, 103.

³⁵ AFDD 2-1.6, 24.

³⁶ Stephenson telephone conversation, 26 April 2006.

³⁷ Kennedy telephone conversation, 5 April 2006.

³⁸ Appendix F to JP 3-50, F-4.

³⁹ Ibid, F-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid, F-2.

⁴¹ JP 3-50, VI-7.

⁴² Ibid, V-28.

⁴³ Appendix F to JP 3-50, F-2.

⁴⁴ Gregory Rucci, "Do we still need Navy CSAR?" *U.S. Naval Institute: Proceedings*, (July 2000, Vol. 126, ISS 7), 60.

⁴⁵ Harold Kennedy, "Technology Hurdles Hamper Search and Rescue," *National Defense Magazine On line* (May 2001), 3.

Note: 35 of the 38 aircraft shot down were deemed as candidates for rescue attempts due to elements such as survivor location and requirements for voice contact and authentication.

⁴⁶ Andy Evans, *Combat Search and Rescue* (New York: Sterling Publishing Company, 1999), 133-136.

⁴⁷ AFTTP 3-1.1, 9-14.

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Tactical Execution E-3 AWACS (S/NF)*, Air Force Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures 3-1.15, (Nellis AFB, NV: 11 September 2004), 5-28.

Note: All references to AFTTP are unclassified.

⁴⁹ Tilford, 85.

⁵⁰ JP 3-50, IV-2; AFDD 2-1.6, 26.

⁵¹ JP 3-50, IV-2-3; Appendix F to JP 3-50, F-4; AFDD 2-1.6, 4.

⁵² Telephone conversation with Damon Reynolds, LTC, USAF, ACC/A3TW, Langley AFB, VA: 15 April 2006.

⁵³ Kennedy telephone conversation, 5 April 2006.

⁵⁴ Stephenson telephone conversation, 26 April 2006; Kennedy telephone conversation, 5 April 2006; Wilson telephone conversation, 18 April 2006; Furland telephone conversation, 13 April 2006; Knapp telephone conversation, 19 April 2006; Ewald telephone conversation, 4 April 2006.

⁵⁵ Haun, telephone conversation, 27 April 2006.

⁵⁶ Telephone conversation with Mr. Gary Sambuchi, USAF, ACC/A3JE, Langley AFB, VA: 20 April 2006.

⁵⁷ Telephone conversation with Donald Henry, Major, USAF, A8A10, Langley AFB, VA: 8 April 2006.

⁵⁸ Stephenson telephone conversation, 26 April 2006.

⁵⁹ The recommendations section were a collaborative effort with the following people: Col. John Allison, ACC A3F, Col. (Ret) David Stephenson, Col. David Kennedy, 110 OG/CC, LTC (Ret) Robert Brown, LTC Ron Wilson, deputy 110 OG/CC, LTC Don Furland, 172 FS/CC, LTC Kier Knapp, 172 FS/DO, LTC Damon Reynolds, ACC A3TW, LTC Jim Ewald, 110 FW/DOW, LTC David SanClemente, 110 Chief of Safety, Maj. Don Henry, ACC A8A10, and Mr. Gary Sambuchi.

⁶⁰ Air Combat Command Webpage, <http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=137>.

⁶¹ Stephenson, telephone conversation, 26 April 2006

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Joint Personnel Recovery Agency Webpage, http://www.jfcom.mil/about/com_jpra.htm

Note: The JPRA is a subordinate activity of the U.S. Joint Forces Command. They are the Dodd Office of Primary Responsibility for coordinating PR issues among military departments, combatant commands, the Joint Staff, and other governmental agencies.

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