

# Personnel Recovery Academy



## Personnel Recovery Academy (PRA) Seal

### Description

This seal was designed in preparation for the official PRA Standup and Assumption of Command ceremony held on 26 October 2001. It consists of an "old fashioned" American bald eagle with wings displayed horizontally and imposed atop a ring of barbed wire adorned with six gold stars. At the top, on an encircling band, the inscription reads "PERSONNEL RECOVERY ACADEMY," while "REVERTI CUM HONOR" adorns the bottom part of the band.

### Symbolism

The American bald eagle, an emblem of strength and freedom, has a long association with the United States of America and its military establishment. The barbed wire on the seal represents the dangers and harshness of potential isolation and/or captivity of U.S. personnel while protecting and defending the United States. The gold stars represent the articles of the Code of Conduct - the moral benchmark and guide for all who may find themselves isolated or captured while serving our country. The stars emblazoned over the barbed wire and the eagle standing forward symbolize the concept that freedom can never be confined or suppressed. The PRA commits itself to the protection and preservation of individual freedom through support to the warfighter - that they may RETURN WITH HONOR as written in Latin at the base of the seal.

### Personnel Recovery Academy Mission

PRA's mission is to provide Code of Conduct (CoC)/Survive, Evade, Resist, Escape (SERE) training and subject matter expertise for the Department of Defense (DoD), including all related training in the U.S. Government, to enable isolated persons to return with honor.

### Currently assigned:

- 1 Officer
- 13 Enlisted Personnel
- 115 Perm DAF Civilians
- 84 contractors (full and part time TATE, Lockheed)

### PRA Background

JPRA's Personnel Recovery Academy serves potential isolated personnel (IPs), Forces, and organizations by providing specialized SERE training. Specialized SERE training meets Joint or Interagency (IA) requirements not resident in Service or Combatant Command (CCMD) programs. It does this by providing unique SERE knowledge and skills to select personnel, whose mission profiles, positions, or operating environments make their exploitation highly valuable to an adversary. PRA courses are highly specialized, and are tailored to specific customer requirements and missions. Many times these training activities require unique security requirements. Specialized SERE training does not, and is not meant to, meet DoD Level C SERE requirements.

Established in October 2001, the PRA traces its history back to the government's response to Cold War detention incidents, such as pilot Francis Gary Powers' 1960 U2 shoot down incident. In 1961, the Air Force developed the Special Survival Training Program (SSTP), a unique training program addressing a new captivity environment. The resulting program, first aligned under the Air Force Survival School at Stead AFB, Nevada, moved to Fairchild AFB, Washington, in 1966. The 1980s saw student

### PRA COMMANDERS

**Their leadership enabled the men and women of the PRA to better serve America's Warfighters so that they may "Return With Honor"**

Lt Col Timothy L. Reichart	Aug 2001- Apr 2004
Lt Col John D. Huffstutter	Apr 2004- Jun 2006
Lt Col Eric E. Watkins	Jun 2006- May 2008
Lt Col Jonathan M. Duncan	May 2008- Jun 2010
Lt Col Carmelo J. Giovenco	Jun 2010- Jul 2012
Lt Col David M. Mohon	Jul 2012- present

attendance rise, as rapidly changing geopolitical/military matters demanded United States involvement. Training began for Special Mission Units and other Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations operators in special peacetime governmental detention (PGD) and hostage detention (HD). During the 1990s the dynamic nature of the international threat environment required program class sizes to more than triple. The realignment of JPRA in 1991 under the Chief of Staff Air Force, coupled with the effects of the Director of the Joint Staff Memorandum 1103-91 directing that JPRA become the Executive Agent Action Office for Operational POW/MIA Affairs made that year a challenging one for PRA personnel. In 1994, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) assigned JPRA as the focal point for all personnel recovery (PR) related activities - the PRA's training role increased pace yet again.

After the November 2011 realignment of JPRA as a Controlled Activity under the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, the JPRA Director stated, "JPRA enables the DOD to prevent, prepare for, and respond to isolating events. We do this as the Chairman's PR OPR, supporting the warfighter, and maintaining a focus on the future operating environment." Now the DODD 3002.1 has increased JPRA oversight to DOD PR OPR duties. The PRA never lost a step in supporting these goals.

### **Warfighter Support**

In his February 2012 pamphlet, "*Chairman's Strategic Direction for the Joint Force*," General Dempsey notes that though drawdown continues in certain conflicts, numerous other demanding missions remain for the Joint Force. America will continue to shape the global environment and deter aggression by state and non-state actors. America's warfighters will patrol the global commons, maintain nuclear deterrence, train partners, and deliver humanitarian aid - all while remaining vigilant of new threats and shifting enemy capabilities. General Dempsey emphasized that the men and women sent into harm's way on behalf of our national objectives must have the resources they need to succeed.

As part of the JPRA team advocating for the "person on the ground," the PRA seeks to advance numerous avenues of warfighter support. The bedrock of PR training, Code of Conduct training, has a long history at the PRA. Promulgated by President Eisenhower nearly 60 years ago, CoC training prepares personnel who have both a greater risk of capture due to the nature of their duties, and who have a risk of potential for military, political, or intelligence gain to the detriment of our national security.

Expanding on training provided by the Service Level C SERE schools, PRA training validates the wisdom of President Eisenhower to ensure that potential isolated personnel are properly prepared for their potential isolating event by supplying tools that enable their resistance. Provided at various levels corresponding with mission requirements, some PRA SERE training teaches students how to resist enemy exploitation and return with honor, having lived by the six articles of the CoC.

### **Specialized Training**

In addition to CoC resistance to exploitation (R2E) topics, the PRA provides other tailored SERE training. The relationship between SERE and PR is complementary, as the SERE activities undertaken by an IP to prepare for and assist in their recovery supports PR; the military, diplomatic, and civil efforts to recover and reintegrate isolated personnel. SERE training helps to ensure that the IP will properly perform actions designed to ensure their health, mobility, safety, and honor in anticipation of, or preparation for, their return to friendly control. The PRA assists its customers in defining their training requirements, for example, in urban evasion and escape, then builds individualized courses that achieve desired graduate proficiency levels.

The DoD and Interagency associate PRA as excellent at producing confident, proficient graduates. Besides a low student to instructor ratio, one of the key reasons behind the success of PRA training is the fact that many PRA trainers are specialists, not generalists. With few exceptions, personnel focus on one area of expertise and one area only. For example, consider the skills required to master all elements of escape training. Having trainers dedicate years of effort to one area has propelled PRA training forward as the recognized leader in the field throughout government.

Another asset PRA's trainers use to good result: state-of-the-art purpose-built facilities that allow for increased multi-service student class loads in various SERE/PR subjects. PRA facilities support and enhance realistic, critical training that prepares those operators who, while serving in harm's way, have the misfortune to endure isolating events.

*White Bluff, the 91-acre PRA complex, located approximately 10 miles NE of Fairchild AFB, Washington, was originally a NIKE Air Defense site constructed in 1956. White Bluff came under JPRA control in August 1997.*



### **Support to PR Trainers and Planners**

In addition to specialized training, PRA supports joint warfighters by providing numerous products and services that contribute to the JPRA goal of inculcating PR across the whole of government. This "whole of government" approach strives to effect consistent, relevant, and successful PR planning, procedures, and operations resulting in better-prepared warfighters and the PR systems supporting them. One example of a consistent training product is the Computer Based Training (CBT) SERE 100.1 Level A Code of Conduct course. Available on Joint Knowledge Online (JKO), SERE 100.1 has enabled thousands of personnel to meet Service and Geographic Combatant Command theater entry requirements (TER).

Continuing education for Service SERE trainers plays a huge role in ensuring the best PR training for the warfighter. The PRA continuously refines and adapts its three "train the trainer" programs on resistance, escape, and urban evasion to meet the Services' emerging requirements and training consistency efforts. Graduates return to duty with new skills and the ability to impart the latest tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to others in concert with their fellow SERE trainers worldwide. Another PRA product, SERE Training Instructor Reference Products (STIRPs), contributes to the development of specialized SERE/PR trainer community expertise - over 20 STIRPs are available to SERE trainers on topics ranging from escape to resistance to leaving evidence of presence in captivity. STIRPs give SERE trainers the most up-to-date PR training information available, supported by detailed images that are accessible via SIPR anywhere in the U.S. Government.

For use by PR planners as well as trainers, PRA produces Isolated Personnel Guidance (IPG) manuals. Based on CCMD requirements, these detailed documents are country or region specific and focus on SERE/PR implications and their impact on isolation and recovery of personnel. Currently over 115 separate products are available. Coupled with the Isolation Event SERE Debrief Analysis (SDAP) Products (from 26 IP events) or one of dozens of PRA's indexed Oral History Interviews, SERE trainers provide accurate real-world lessons learned examples to support their teaching points. PR planners also benefit from numerous specialized SERE/PR reports, analysis products, briefings, and background papers created by the PRA in response to specific requests.

In support of the CCMDs, PRA teams also coordinate and facilitate reintegration activities and support Service and Theater SERE debriefing events. Following event conclusion, the PRA then prepares separate Executive, Event, Individual, Reintegration Debrief Analysis and Lessons Learned Summaries for use by individuals at all levels of the PR system.

### **Way Forward**

By providing the best training possible to "the person on the ground," the men and women of the PRA directly support General Dempsey's Joint Force 2020 vision. Properly prepared warfighters enable our leaders to employ a force of conventional and unconventional capability. All who have the privilege of working at the PRA understand that the quality of training has a direct impact on national security; meeting the minimum standard is simply not an option. Building on the past to prepare for the future of PR training constantly drives PRA planning and actions. Leveraging the PRA's incredible facility resources and personnel talent ensures that challenging student PR training will continue to benefit our nation.