Capture Avoidance Program

Since World War II, the Department of Defense has required each branch of service to provide training that will enable “Isolated Personnel” to survive and avoid capture:

**DOD Survival, Evasion, Resistance, & Escape (SERE) Program Guidance**

“One of DoD’s highest priorities is preserving the lives and well-being of U.S. Military Service members, DoD civilians, DoD contractor personnel, and others designated by the President or Secretary of Defense to accompany the Military Services, who are in danger of becoming, or already are, beleaguered, besieged, captured, detained, interned, or otherwise missing or evading capture (hereafter referred to as ‘isolated’) while participating in U.S. sponsored activities or missions.

A sponsored military activity includes leave status for military and civilians. Contractors authorized to accompany the force who are on leave, are allowed to be on leave based on the contracting company’s statement of how they run their company and what benefits are provided to their employees.

Adversaries purposely seek to isolate, capture, and detain U.S. personnel for tactical, operational, and strategic advantage. Isolation may occur across the continuum of operations. **Both military and civilian personnel must be capable of evading adversaries and in the event of capture, survive captivity with honor until they are successfully recovered and repatriated.**” OPNAVINST 1000.24D 31 Jan 2019

The Army, Navy, Air Force, & Marine Corps have Level C SERE Programs available to high risk personnel such as pilots, air crews, special operations personnel, and intelligence agents. However, the reality is that the number of military personnel that “need” this training, far exceeds the number of slots available in the Level C SERE Programs. In addition, the DOD guidance states that ALL U.S. personnel are at risk, not just the “high risk” individuals.

In response to this vital need, Gryphon Group has established the Capture Avoidance Program that only focuses on the first two letters of SERE – Survival & Evasion and it meets and exceeds the current DOD standards for this type of training. Our approach is that “If you get the first two letters right, then you don’t have to do the last two letters of SERE – Resistance & Escape.” This program will greatly enhance the survivability of Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, and Airmen in worst-case scenarios if they, for whatever reason, become isolated from American Forces in denied territory.
Capture Avoidance Program & 5-Day Advanced Capture Avoidance Program are conducted in accordance with:

- OPNAVINST 1000.24D 31 Jan 2019
- FM 21-76
- FM3-05-70
- CICSM 3500.11 29 November 2013
- E.O. 10631
- DoD Directive 3002.01 of 16 April 2009
- CJCSI 3270.01B
- DoD Instruction O-3002.05 of 12 April 2016 (NOTAL)
- DoD Instruction 3002.04 of 17 November 2014
- JP 3-50 of October 2015
- Geneva Conventions Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 12 August 1949
- PPD-30, U.S. Nationals Taken Hostage Abroad and Personnel Recovery Efforts, June 2015
- DoD Instruction 3002.03 of 15 July 2013
- Navy Regulations, 1990
- SECNAVINST 1000.9A
- CJCSM 3500.11
- DoD Instruction 3115.10E of 24 March 2006
- OPNAV M-F3500.42 of January 2018
- DoD Instruction 3003.01 of 26 September 2011
- Department of Homeland Security, National Search and Rescue Plan, August 2007
- DoD Instruction 2310.05 of 31 January 2000

As with all of the DOD Level C SERE Programs, Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program will emphasize the “Human Mind” as the primary survival tool. The person’s attitude and ability to control fear & panic is the first and last goal in any survival & evasion situation.

Isolated Personnel must prioritize and stay focused on getting back to American and freedom. The Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force SERE Manuals utilizes an acronym to help their isolated personnel (IP) recall, under stress, how to increase their chances of survival & repatriation:

Size-up the situation – surroundings, physical condition, and equipment
Use all of your senses
Remember where you are
Vanquish fear & panic
Improvise & improve
Value living
Act like the natives
Live by your wits
**CAVEATS:** None

**Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program (CAP)** will allow each participant to gain the fundamental “Skill” of survival & evasion. This course will incorporate the following time-tested evasion techniques & concepts that are included in all DOD SERE Programs:

**Immediate Actions**
- ✓ Assess immediate situation… **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT!**
- ✓ Take action to protect yourself from nuclear, biological, or chemical hazards
- ✓ Seek a concealed site.
- ✓ Assess medical condition; treat as necessary
- ✓ Sanitize uniform of potentially compromising information.
- ✓ Sanitize area; hide equipment you are leaving.
- ✓ Apply personal camouflage.
- ✓ Move away from concealed site, zigzag pattern recommended.
- ✓ Use terrain to advantage, communication, and concealment.
- ✓ Find a hole-up site.

**Hole-Up-Site**
- ✓ Reassess situation; treat injuries, then inventory equipment.
- ✓ Review plan of action; establish priorities.
- ✓ Determine current location.
- ✓ Improve camouflage.
- ✓ Focus thoughts on task at hand.
- ✓ Execute plan of action. Stay flexible!

**Concealment**
- ✓ Select a place of concealment providing.
  - o Adequate concealment, ground and air.
  - o Safe distance from enemy positions and lines of communications (LOC).
  - o Listening and observation points.
  - o Multiple avenues of escape.
  - o Protection from the environment.
  - o Possible communications/signaling opportunities.
  - o Stay alert, maintain security.
- ✓ Drink water.

**Movement**
- ✓ Travel slowly and deliberately.
- ✓ **DO NOT** leave evidence of travel; use noise and light discipline.
- ✓ Stay away from LOC.
- ✓ Stop, look, listen, and smell; take appropriate action.
- ✓ Move from one concealed area to another.
- ✓ Use evasion movement techniques
Communications and Signaling
✓ Communicate as directed in applicable plans/orders, particularly when considering transmitting in the blind.
✓ Be prepared to use communications and signaling devices on short notice.
✓ Use of communications and signaling devices may compromise position.

Recovery
✓ Select site IAW criteria in theater recovery plans.
✓ Ensure site is free of hazards; secure personal gear.
✓ Select best area for communications and signaling devices.
✓ Observe site for proximity to enemy activity and LOC.
✓ Follow recovery force instructions.

Isolated Personnel Survival & Evasion Priorities
If American Warfighters, Military Intelligence Specialists, or Special Operations Operators become isolated in denied territory, IT DOES NOT MEAN THEIR MISSION IS OVER!

It means they now have a NEW MISSION… **TO RETURN HOME WITH HONOR!**

Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program will ensure that each participant fully understands this “New Mission” and is able to “perform under stress” the three main goals during any Survival & Evasion Event:

- **Number One:** Focus Your Mind
- **Number Two:** Maintain Your Body
- **Number Three:** Keep Moving Towards Freedom

Focus Your Mind
In our military history, the single most important factor of why “Isolated Personnel” (IP) failed to survive or failed to evade capture is that they gave-up mentally and emotionally. Many of these IPs were in good physical shape and near friendly lines, but became overwhelmed psychologically and became paralyzed by panic.

Gryphon Capture Avoidance Program teaches metal strategies to “Control Panic” and lessen the root-causes of becoming over-whelmed – the Un-Known and the Un-Expected. These Panic Control Strategies to be practiced in very stressful realistic scenarios.

The IP maintaining a “fighting spirit” is the end-state.
Maintain Your Body
Whatever the IP’s physical condition is at the moment of first being isolated, it will not drastically improve during the time while evading capture… it will only get worse.

Pre-Evasion Event Factors: One of the “Universal Truths of the Battlefield” is What you do before a fight, is as important as what you do during a fight.

If the IP is already dehydrated, sleep deprived, and in poor physical condition BEFORE they became isolated, they will NEVER gain back any of these vital conditions during evasion. They will be in serious trouble from the first moments of isolation.

The 72-Hour Rule: Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program will teach the participants and advise the command to establish a “72-Hour Rule” – thereby, 72-hours prior to any mission, all personnel will ensure that they consume, at a minimum, 3.5 liters of water per 24-hour period, get at a minimum of 6 hours of REM sleep per 24-hour period, eat nutritious high-protein meals, exercise, inspect and stock their “Survival & Evasion Kit”, as well as review in detail a map of the expected maneuver area with highlighted personnel recovery areas & friendly-lines.

The Survival & Evasion Kit (Go-Bag): The Go-Bag should be in close-proximity to each team member at all times during each mission. Just like a Reserve Parachute, it has to be on or near you to be any help during an emergency. This kit will have four categories of items:

1. Personal Weapon – Combat pistol in paddle holster with two magazines.
2. Survival Gear – Ferrocerium rod, water filtration system, sheath knife, cook pot, utensils, dehydrated beef, chicken, & vegetable bouillon cubes to augment gathered food, emergency blanket, folding bow saw, poncho liner, para-cord, and a full 2-liter internal water bladder.
3. Evasion Gear – Compass, map, signal mirror, signal panel, and camouflage sticks.
4. Individual First Aid Kit – Tourniquet, pressure bandages, antiseptics, cravats, etc.

During the Capture Avoidance Program, each participant will train with this exact kit and become very proficient in the use of ALL of its components.

Water: By far, the largest threat an IP has, besides the enemy, is dehydration! Water is life, the lack of water is death.

Each participant will come to appreciate the critical importance of this, and will learn find and purify water by various methods as they are evading capture.
**Fire:** An essential skill in any survival situation is the ability to make an effective fire in any weather condition. Each student will learn the geometry of fire and will become very efficient in creating this vital resource.

![Fire materials](image)

However, while evading, the use of fire has to be balanced by the need to remain stealthy.

Therefore, the participants will learn to make fires utilizing “Dakota Holes”, stripping bark, utilizing trees to break-up what little smoke there is.

**Food:** Each participant will learn to “extend” and “enhance” their survival rations with easily recognizable plants that have little to no poisonous analogues. Resources such as Pine Needles, Pine Phloem, Dandelions, Grasses, Wood Sorrel, Sheep Sorrel, and others are found all around the world and are extremely high in Vitamins A, C, D, & K. By utilizing the well-preserved, easily-hydrated, bouillon cubes that are high in animal and vegetable protein as the “base” and by augmenting this soup with the gathered plant resources, the IP will be able to maintain energy, moral, and stave-off fatigue while maintaining a good evasion pace.

![Food resources](image)

**Shelter:** Each participant will practice making expedient shelters to ward off rain, heat, and cold. Again, whenever stopping for a short or long halt, camouflage must be a priority.
Survival Medicine: Each student will learn how to utilize each component the IFAK. Also, the Capture Avoidance Program will emphasize the concept that the IP should avoid doing additional injury to themselves during evasion as it will only amplify their problem.

Keep Moving Towards Freedom
Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program will be strictly focused on survival during evasion, not long-term survival. The best way of increasing the odds of being repatriated is to keep moving, purposely and stealthily towards freedom…every minute, hour, & day.

Navigation: Each participant will learn to utilize the lensatic compass & sylva compass and will apply them to long distance navigation exercises.

Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program will also teach “Natural Navigation” which is includes establishing and maintaining movement along Cardinal Directions through navigation by circum-polar stars, tree-ring density, moss growth, and natural terrain interpretation.

These navigation exercises will be held in realistic scenarios and will help each participant gain confidence.

Slow, stealthy, purposeful movement will be emphasized following the path of least resistance.
**Stealth Movement Techniques:** When an IP is evading capture, they must move slowly, carefully, and quietly. Stealth is their best weapon and must be preserved.

During Gryphon’s Capture Avoidance Program, each participant will thoroughly practice these movement techniques in realistic scenarios.

**Signaling the Recovery Team:** The participants will practice communicating with signal mirrors & panels with over-flights of drones that will record out their signals looked from the air.
**Countering Canine Tracker Teams:**
Every country today utilizes some type of canines in their law enforcement agencies, militaries, and internal security forces. There is a high probability that the isolated U.S. personnel will encounter them and work against them. During this program, each student will learn the fundamentals of how these Canine Tracker Teams work and Canine-Tracker Team Countermeasure TTP’s:

- **T – Time** = How long have you been pursued
- **E – Environment** = How can you maximize
- **D – Distance** = How far do you have to travel
- **D – Deception** = Scent dispersal, misdirection and countermeasures

The students will conduct hands-on exercises with highly trained Canine-Tracker Teams hunting them during the FTX.

**24-Hour Isolated Personnel Field Training Exercise:**
This 24-hour FTX will take the student from the moment of Isolation (downed aircraft, convoy ambush, compound over-run etc.) to Evading Capture to Survival Sustainment to Repatriation.

All the survival skills and evasion skills taught during the course will come together during this field training exercise.

All of the key events will be video recorded and utilized for a detailed brief-back.