

By Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe
437 AW Public Affairs

In a wooded area near the Ability to Survive and Operate yard, a five-man security forces team silently advances forward through the trees, weapons pointed up and ready.

In a C-17 parked on Charleston AFB's busy flightline, maintainers from the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron carefully check an avionics rack and other electronic equipment, making sure each component is in working order.

Security forces and C-17 maintainers are among the eight teams the 437th Airlift Wing will send to Rodeo 2000. This year's competition is May 8-11 at Pope AFB, N.C.

Members of the C-17 maintenance team are 2nd Lt. Ben Edwards, Master Sgt. Mark Burns, Tech Sgt. Tony Trodglan, and Senior Airmen John Emmons, Todd Westhaven, Renee Hess, Sean Starkey, Chris Neldner, John Taylor and Chris Quarles.

The maintainers are preparing their aircraft for Rodeo 2000 by inspecting parts that need to be replaced or repaired, according to team chief, Master Sgt. Mark Burns. "We want to find as many things as we can now."

Once at the competition, Rodeo "umpires" will perform pre-flight and post-flight inspections.

"It'll be competitive," Burns said. "Win or lose, we'll give them a good product. We're looking forward to it."

The security forces team is made up of team leader 2nd Lt. Justin White, Staff Sergeants Toby McKnight, Mike Wilson, Royall Mack, Ryan Lowry and Keith Collins.

Their portion of the competition will consist of combat rifle, combat handgun, combat endurance and combat tactics. The rifle competition will utilize different courses of fire and include running between relays and firing with gas masks. The handgun will also use different courses of fire. The combat endurance will be an obstacle course followed by a run, and the combat tactics scenario will be given to the team when they arrive at Rodeo.

"We'll be doing a lot of M-9 and M-16 firing and physical conditioning to prepare," said White.

The team will use the different ranges offered at Ft. Jackson, which is near Columbia, for M-16 firing and obstacle course work.

They'll use the Border Patrol ranges at the Naval Weapons Station for the M-9, and North Field, the base ATSO area and other base locations to train on the different tactics material.

"All of this is a generalization of the competition and training," White said. "We won't know exactly how each competition will work until later in the game."

(Editor's note: This article is a first in a series on Charleston AFB's Rodeo 2000 teams.)

Getting Ready for Rodeo



photos by Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe

Tech Sgt. William Dunlap (center) is helping the security forces team prepare for the Rodeo 2000 competition.



Senior Airman John Emmons inspects avionics equipment.



Dunlap illustrates defensive security forces techniques.



Senior Airman Chris Quarles inspects sealant applied to a navigation light lens assembly.