

439th SFS, Phoenix Raven train rough and tough

Article and photos by MSgt. W.C.Pope

The few and the proud of Phoenix Raven took to Dogpatch for some hand-to-hand training on the April UTA.

The team of four is a specialized group within the 439th Security Forces Squadron. Their mission is to travel with any AMC aircraft and protect it in foreign countries that have no security.

The Raven program has been around for two years and the current Ravens are Air Reserve Technicians. They will soon add four more from the reserve.

Raven training is held at Ft. Dix, N.J. for two weeks and has a 20 percent failure rate. With the 30 required areas of training, they practice every reserve weekend.



PUSHY — SSgt. Joey Rivera, in the protective gear, is pushed back by SSgt. Alan Zawistowski. Rivera is playing an antagonist trying to gain entrance to the aircraft. "These techniques are used in foreign countries where firearms may not be allowed off of the aircraft," said TSgt. John Lupien, NCOIC of the Ravens. This is the first step used to discourage an intruder.



THE RAVENS — SSgt. Charles Thomas, TSgt. John Lupien, SSgt. Joey Rivera, and SSgt. Alan Zawistowski.



INTERVIEW STANCE — Thomas and Zawistowski use the interview stance and try talking the intruders out of coming any closer. They each hold an asp ready to strike. "In most cases we would be able to talk them out of coming any closer, and even get them to stop by giving them a cigarette, but we have to show them that we will use force," said Thomas.



GET BACK! — In an aggressive posture Thomas beats back Rivera with a training asp. "We alone have to keep them from attacking the aircraft because we can't call for backup," said Thomas.



"DON'T MOVE!" — The final step is lethal force which is only used as a final resort.