

New Fitness Complex ADDS MUSCLE

to Federal Law Enforcement Training Center

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— Al Hawkins, athletic trainer, Physical Techniques Branch, FLETC-Charleston

Located on the site of the former Charleston Naval Base in South Carolina, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), Charleston, is one of three FLETC training sites in the U.S. In addition to FLETC-Charleston there are field locations in Artesia, N.M., and Cheltenham, Md., with headquarters in Glynco, Ga.

The new \$7.2 million Physical Techniques Complex (PTC) at FLETC-Charleston, which opened on July 29, 2010, is devoted to the training and fitness of more than 10,000 law enforcement officers and agents who train at this center each year. From officer-response tactics and baton techniques to tactical procedures and physical conditioning, the complex is vitally important to national security. During FY 2010, almost 66,000 students trained at the FLETC centers, and since its inception in 1970, more than 850,000 law enforcement officers and agents have been trained at FLETC.

“This new Physical Techniques Complex is a continuation of a new building style developed in the training center’s master plan that adds to the cohesiveness of the FLETC-Charleston and provides us with the key facilities needed to support basic and advanced training,” says Al Hawkins, athletic trainer, Physical Techniques Branch, FLETC-Charleston. “The mission of the FLETC is to ‘train those who protect our homeland.’ As a testament to this mission, the FLETC serves as an interagency law enforcement training organization for 88 Federal agencies or partner organizations. The FLETC also provides training to state, local, campus, tribal and international law enforcement agencies.”

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FLETC-CHARLESTON

Designed by the Architect and Engineering firm Johnson and McAdams of Greenwood, Miss., and constructed by Hightower Construction Company of Charleston, S.C., the state-of-the-art facility is the first building at any of the four FLETC sites to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, according to Hawkins.

“Specifically, the building received the LEED Silver certification, which is the second level of the four-tiered certification system (Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum),” he noted.

LEED is an internationally recognized green-building certification system that provides third-party verification that a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the required metrics: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

INSIDE THE PTC

The 33,000-square-foot, American Disability Act (ADA)-compliant facility houses five 2,500-square-foot mat rooms used to teach officer-response tactics, baton techniques, tactical procedures and physical conditioning; a 4,000-square-foot cardio room; and a 2,000-square-foot weight/spin room.

The majority of the equipment in the Physical Techniques Complex’s (PTC) cardio room was purchased from Technogym, including many pieces from the Excite line, such as the Run 900E, Cardio Wave 700iE, Bike 700SP, Recline 700SP, Synchro 700iE and Step700iSP. Other equipment utilized in the new facility includes Jacob’s Ladders, Concept 2 Rowers, and Life Fitness Steppers, as well as kettlebells, dumbbells (5 lbs-100 lbs), fixed-weight barbells and weight benches (incline, flat and decline).

During the construction of the PTC, the FLETC-Charleston Student Center (on site) served as the interim fitness-training complex.

“The Student Center’s existing basketball court was transformed into a cardio/weight room and mat room,” Hawkins explains. “Since the completion of the PTC, the Student Center will return to its original state with two weight rooms, locker rooms, and a basketball court, which will augment the training, fitness and recreational activities for students and staff.”

The fitness equipment currently located in the Student Center includes Cybex “Eagle” pin-select weight equipment; Life Fitness Treadmills, Step Mill 700PT and Cable Crossover machine; Hammer Strength Power Racks; Concept2 Rowers; Precor EFX 546i Elliptical Crosstrainers; Star Trac Recumbent Bikes and “V” Bikes; and VersaClimbers. Other equipment includes TRX suspension trainers from Fitness Anywhere, Inc.; sets of dumbbells and kettlebells; Smith machines; and assorted weight benches.

In addition to the cardio, weight and spin rooms, there are spacious male and female locker rooms, an instructor study/prep room and the equipment issue area.

“The PTC doubled the number of mat rooms utilized for training, spacious male and female locker rooms, designated equipment issue area and additional cardio/weight and spin rooms,” Hawkins notes. “The new PTC has the space and capabilities to provide the highest state-of-the-art training for law enforcement officers and agents who train at the FLETC-Charleston. The PTC was an important addition to the FLETC facility so that we could provide mission-critical training expected by our partner organizations.”

An additional fitness area at the FLETC-Charleston complements the PTC facility and includes an indoor Olympic pool with changing areas; outdoor sand volleyball pit; two horseshoe areas; an outdoor CrossFit area; several outdoor running routes (1-mile to 4-miles); and one outdoor basketball court.

In addition to providing top-notch equipment, facilities and programs to law enforcement officers, the FLETC has established the Employee on Duty Fitness Program, designed to encourage employees to pursue a healthy lifestyle. “Once an employee is granted authorization to participate in the program, the employee is afforded three hours per week to exercise,” says Hawkins.

The FLETC-Charleston also has a full-time recreation specialist available, who coordinates activities for the students on weekends, which typically range from volleyball tournaments to coordinating

trips to local sporting events.

“Fitness and conditioning are important factors in supporting that mission,” says Hawkins. “Upon arrival, the FLETC health unit professionals (medical doctor, registered nurse, certified nursing assistant and two athletic trainers) provide the law enforcement students with health screenings. Both athletic trainers are certified Fitness Coordinators and can also assist students with a fitness plan when needed.”

SPECIALIZED TRAINING

The fitness center goes hand in hand with the specialized training that goes on at the FLETC-Charleston, and at all FLETC training centers.

“The FLETC provides contemporary training by developing and advancing psychomotor skills relevant to arrest techniques, defensive tactics and health fitness,” Hawkins explains. “The instructional staffs are highly trained subject matter experts and remain current in their certifications. In addition, the FLETC requires all instructors to have annual continuing education and CPR/AED and first aid certifications.”

He points out that the FLETC is a



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nationally certified training facility through the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation (FLETA) Board. The FLETA Board governs and establishes standards, processes and policies by which Federal law enforcement training is assessed.

“The accreditation of a Federal law enforcement academy or program provides assurance to the citizens they serve that they have voluntarily submitted to a process of self-regulation and have successfully achieved compliance with a set of standards that have been collectively established by their peers within their professional community that demonstrate their adherence to quality, effectiveness and integrity,” says Hawkins.

Beginning in 2000, in an effort to increase the professionalism of federal law enforcement training, a task force of key training leaders from principal federal and state law enforcement agencies began work to collaboratively conduct research to establish a premier training accreditation model.

“In the development of the model, federal law enforcement training professionals established standards and procedures to evaluate the training programs and training academies used to train federal law enforcement agents and officers,” Hawkins explains. “The intent was to develop an independent



accreditation process that provides law enforcement agencies with an opportunity to voluntarily demonstrate that they meet an established set of professional standards and receive appropriate recognition.”

The FLETA Board is comprised of senior law enforcement and training professionals from federal and independent

agencies or organizations. The Board’s primary focus is to promote excellence in law enforcement operations through FLETA accreditation of training programs and academies. The Board meets regularly to conduct business and to consider academies and programs for accreditation.

The Board’s mission is:

- To enhance the quality of federal law enforcement by establishing and maintaining a body of standards to protect the effective and efficient use of resources for federal law enforcement training;
- To administer an accreditation process based on those standards; and
- To ensure compliance and provide assistance with the accreditation process to instill public confidence in federal law enforcement.

The Office of Accreditation (OA) works as an agent of the FLETA Board to carry out the day-to-day operations of the Board. The OA is comprised of an Executive Director (who is also the Executive Secretary for the Board), Program Managers, a Program Analyst, and a Staff Assistant. The Executive Director assigns Program Managers (PM) to assist applicant agencies with the accreditation process, provide training for applicant agencies and manage the assessment process.

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