

Fitness Takes Flight

At
Aviano AB

For airmen and their families stationed at Aviano AB in Italy, having access to adequate fitness facilities and programs is vitally important — for overall readiness as well as morale and wellness. This is why Aviano leadership worked with fitness staff to carve out some additional fitness space on base, and create a facility that would become the Wyvern Annex.

“The existing primary fitness center’s space was very inadequate, 30,000 square feet, with only 2,900 square feet of weight room space, and 1,700 square feet of cardio area,” said Fitness & Sports Center Director Tanya McCormick, who manages two fitness centers and a large sports complex that includes a staff of 18 military and civilian members. “We had a secondary facility from 1946 that was also very small and inefficient due to all the small rooms. The secondary facility was scheduled to close soon. Additionally, we had a \$25 million Military Construction (MILCON) addition project scheduled for 2014 that was pushed back to 2030 and we desperately needed relief — yesterday.”

According to McCormick, an opportunity presented itself in the form of a warehouse space that leadership determined could be better utilized for fitness, as it was “truly needed for the community,” she noted.

“The new facility was designed to meet the existing space deficiencies for our current population, such as inadequate weight room space, no functional fitness space, lack of a large mat room to host our expanding martial arts/wrestling programs and lack of a general purpose area to stretch,” explained McCormick, who has more than 25 years in government fitness. “The layout was designed with as many areas as possible being multi-functional. It was also designed knowing that this facility was going to be our 24/7 CAC-access facility, and we wanted a simple and open floor plan for ease of monitoring. We needed to relocate/combine and realign all of our

Wyvern Annex At A Glance

PROJECT VITALS

Total Cost: \$525,000 (facility conversion work); \$130,000 (fitness equipment/supplies)
Funding Sources: Local base funds
Grand Opening Date: Jan. 20, 2015
Size: 22,000 square feet

KEY PLAYERS

Tanya McCormick, Fitness & Sports Center Director
Luca Del Tin, Recreation Assistant
Giancarlo Biasutto, Civil Engineering
Cristina Purisol, Contract Specialist

EQUIPMENT LINEUP

Strength/Plate Loaded: Life Fitness, Hammer Strength
Free Weights, Benches, etc.: Life Fitness, Hammer Strength
Spinners/Bikes: Life Fitness
Functional Equipment: Rogue, Power Systems, Iron Company
Bleachers: Gopher Sport portable bleachers
Turf: Diamondturf by Roll-Deluxe through BSN
Surfacing: Mondo Sport Impact flooring
Basketball Courts: Dalla Riva portable gym floor system
Basketball Equipment: Bison T-Rex 66 (portable adjustable basketball system) through BSN
Ceiling Fans: Big Ass Fans Powerfoil X2.0
Lockers: GES Group, Italy



The fitness annex has dedicated space and power racks for lifting.

Military Fitness

functional areas that were going to move from the closing facility.”

Total cost for the project was \$655,000, which included \$525,000 for the facility conversion work, and \$130,000 for fitness equipment and supplies. The 22,000-square-foot facility, which opened Jan. 20, 2015, has main program areas for cardio, free weight/selectorized and functional fitness, as well as a multipurpose court, a martial arts dojo/wrestling area and locker rooms. Outdoor Support facilities include six ballfields, one soccer field/track and six tennis courts.

With such a unique project, base leadership relied heavily on McCormick’s experience, asking her to wear many hats throughout the project, from planning to design.

“Originally we were asked what was the very minimum we needed to convert the warehouse into a gym if we didn’t have any money,” she explained. “The building was a large vacated warehouse with an office area and three office bathrooms. The primary functional area missing was to be able to utilize this warehouse as a large size gym with locker rooms/showers and toilets. We could have just swept out the rest of the warehouse and thrown in some equipment and called it a gym, like a big home garage. Not pretty at all, but it would have been space we badly needed.”

She continued, “We developed an overall plan, in priority order, of the things we needed to do with the building. Each item listed various cost options depending on how much funding we were going to receive, from shoestring budget to luxury upgrades — for example, for the basketball floor: painted concrete basketball court, portable wood floor basketball court, or installed basketball court.”

Initially, the wing approved a \$150,000 contract to renovate

Aviano AB transformed a warehouse space into a fitness annex that has helped to meet the high demand for fitness space on base.



The new facility features a turf area that can be used for training with sleds and other functional fitness equipment that is available for use.

the office area to convert it into a locker room to be able to support 800 customers a day, a number-one priority item for McCormick and her staff. The contract included infrastructure items such as upgrading water and electrical lines to the building to be able to handle the increased flow of customers and the basic shell of male/female locker rooms.

“The rest of the prioritized work consisted primarily of equipment/installation items, which we estimated to be \$488,000,” she said. “The wing was able to find base funds and gave us \$375,000 to complete as much of the work on the priority list as we could. We were able to get 95 percent of the work accomplished with that funding. Actual supplemental fitness equipment such as treadmills and functional fitness supplies were bought with FSS funds allocated through regular end-of-year budgetary routes.”

McCormick and her staff did everything from purchasing and installing equipment to designing and laying out the facility, and volunteers helped with the numerous and endless tasks associated with such a large project.

“We were responsible for developing the floor plan, securing all quotes, coordinating all work, processing any contracts, payments with GPC card,” she explained. “This sounds easy, but each area has such a complicated process from routing/certifying money, to routing and coordinating with the contractor officer on each micro job. All contractors were Italian and some did not speak English; therefore my assistant Luca, who is an Italian national employee, was very helpful. We had to escort contractors to the work site daily, and coordinated the overall timeline for all the work to be completed in an orderly system so that each contractor complemented each other and not interfered, just like a general contractor.”



Aviano purchased supplemental fitness equipment to add to existing cardio that was only two years old from the old facility. "We already had some new Life Fitness ellipticals on hand from the previous year when we reorganized our old space, so we were able to put them into operation. We only ordered four new Life Fitness Treadmills as far as brand new cardio and some new Concept2 rowers."

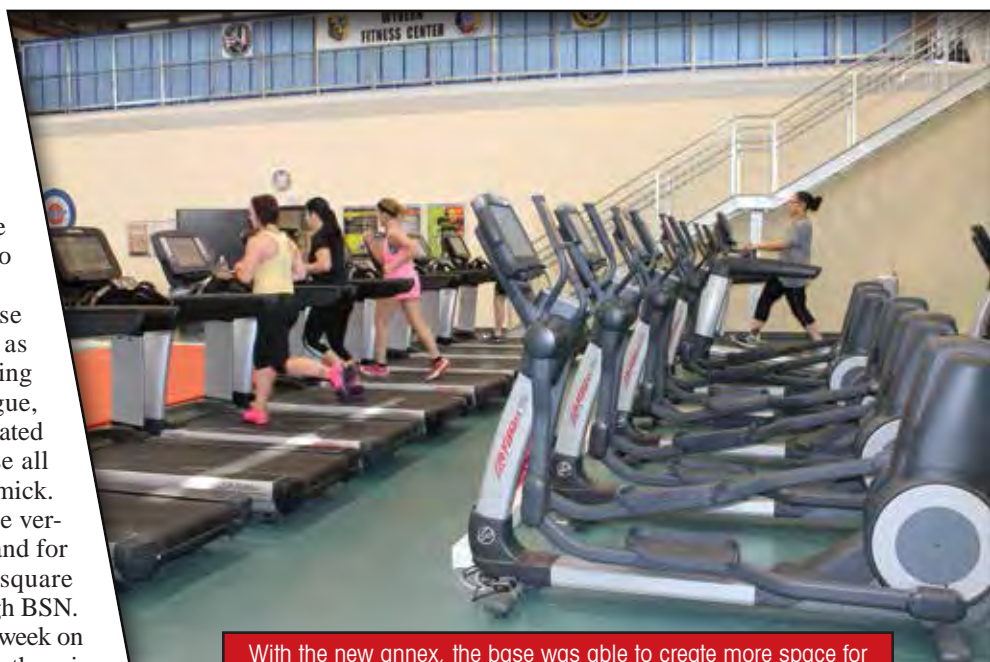
On the functional fitness side, the base purchased a Rogue power rack, as well as a variety of functional equipment, including sleds, medicine balls and tires, from Rogue, Power Systems and Iron Company, and created a 2,400-square-foot grass turf area "to use all of this great equipment on," noted McCormick.

The facility also takes advantage of the versatility of Mondo Sport Impact flooring, and for the turf area, the base purchased 2,400 square feet of Diamondturf by Roll-Deluxe through BSN.

"We offer eight combat fitness classes a week on the turf area," she explained. "Additionally, there is group exercise equipment in this area, weight bars, cardio barbells, steps, hand dumbbells, etc., so when units conduct large group PT or programmed aerobics classes, any user can choose the equipment he wants for whichever type of class is needed. All the items are easily used on the turf or carried 20 feet to the edge of the area to the multipurpose wood floor for larger groups."

With the new facility and space, the base also expanded its martial arts program from 8 to 13 classes. "We didn't have room previously for heavy bags and now have a large heavy-duty multi-bag stand that allows for boxing, MMA and martial arts training," she noted. "The multipurpose wood floor allows for unit PT in larger groups and basketball for esprit de corps or open time."

The new facility has a martial arts dojo/wrestling area that supports a growing martial arts program.



With the new annex, the base was able to create more space for cardio equipment, some of which couldn't even fit in the old facility.

Other classes offered include barbell strength, yoga, spin, urban boot camp, cardio insanity, Zumba and strollercize. Regularly programmed classes are still offered at the primary aerobics studio in the main facility, allowing the new Wyvern Annex to remain available for Unit PT groups.

The base currently has 14 contract or volunteer fitness instructors teaching 37 classes a week. All instructors are Aerobics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA)-certified primary group instructors followed by the specific discipline they need, such as spin or yoga certification, noted McCormick. "We also have three martial arts instructors and offer 13 classes weekly in Karate, Jujitsu and Kook Sool Won."

The base also offers the services of three contract personal trainers, who use manual methods of fitness assessment testing, such as a sit-reach test and body taping, for example. Personal trainers are hired on an hourly basis on nonappropriated personal services contracts.

On the sports side, Aviano offers eight intramural and extramural options for sports including basketball, volleyball, softball, soccer, flag football, golf, bowling and cross-country. All regular intramural and varsity programs remain at the main fitness facility.

All told, the new annex has allowed Aviano to provide for the fitness needs of all on base.

"In terms of morale it has been tremendously exciting, because going from 6,740 square feet of weight/cardio room space and expanding to an open area of 8,800 square feet has made for some very happy customers," said McCormick. "Before, they would come in looking for a weight room and be very disappointed at the tiny spaces we had. Now they go to the Annex and it's more of a 'wow' factor with all the open space." —GRF