

CAFB gets early crack at NGSL

By Senior Airman
Melanie Streeter
437LSS

The 437th Aerial Port Squadron caught a sneak peak at a new era of small aircraft loaders here Oct. 18.

Representatives of FMC Corporation, manufacturer of the Next Generation Small Loader, visited Charleston AFB to acquire video of their product at work for presentation at the Airlift Tanker Association convention, scheduled for the first week of November.

Capt. Jeffrey Babinski, 437 APS combat readiness

and resources commander, said this opportunity was mutually beneficial, with FMC getting their footage and APS personnel having a chance to try out the new product.

The NGSL is used to load, unload and transport palletized cargo. It is lightweight and quickly reconfigures for shipment by aircraft ranging from the C-130 to the C-17. According to Rick Miller, lead system engineer for the System Program Office at Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, two people can ready the NGSL for shipment in 15 to 30 min-

utes. The small loader in use now takes about two to three hours to reconfigure.

Senior Airman Mark Anderson, 437 APS, had a chance to operate the NGSL. "I think it will cut mobility time and the time it takes to get ready. The machine is really user friendly and should help all around. It has an auto-center option for the deck, which the older models don't have. That definitely makes it simple and saves a lot of time."

In addition to replacing the Air Force's current fleet of aging small loaders, some manufactured in 1964, the



Air Force photo

FMC Corporation, manufacturer of the Next Generation Small Loader, will deliver the first model in March 2001.

NGSL will also replace wide body loaders.

FMC was awarded the five-year contract for 264 loaders Air Force wide June 22, and

will deliver the first production model to the Air Force in March. Charleston is currently scheduled to receive its first model in March 2002.

Cardio

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petition between many different projects to be able to reach out and touch Team Charleston."

The Cardio Theater here will use an exercise entertainment system provided by the company, Cardio Theater, that enables people, using a regular set of headphones, to listen to a multiple of different audio components while exercising on cardiovascular equipment

The theater will hold about 50 cardiovascular machines, from treadmills to elliptical crosstrainers, according to Steve Parrish, Fitness and Sports Center director. "It will hold the nearly 40 machines now in the racquetball lobby and the warm-up room; plus four new treadmills, one new elliptical trainer and a new up-

right bike that are on order; and some machines that are now being refurbished."

The room will be 40 ft. by 40 ft. There will be raised-stage flooring with four tiers of machines. "The back row will be treadmills, and the next row will be elliptical trainers," Parrish said. "The front row will hold stationary bicycles."

All of the machines will face toward the entrances, which will remain the same as the current racquetball court entrances. The television sets will be built into the front wall just above the entrances.

"There will be eight TVs, a CD player, and an FM radio tuner," Parrish said. "Each exercise machine will have a remote control box on it so you can push the radio station you want, TV station you want, or the music you want to listen to. The stations and the CDs will be selected based on customer surveys and feedback."

Users will need to bring their own headphones or headphones will be provided at the fitness center.

The project is currently in the demolition phase. "That includes taking down that wall and taking down the glass parts of the former racquetball courts, opening passages for electrical conduits and things that are going to support the new work," said Joe Rackley, 437th Civil Engineer Squadron project manager. The target completion date is March 4.

"S.W. Day, Incorporated is the SABER contractor," said Rackley. "SABER is a civil engineering program of Simplified Acquisition Base Engineering Requirements. It's a contract-

ing tool that the base civil engineer uses to do minor construction and repair projects. This project will be handled under the SABER program.

"The contractor is working with the 437 CES and the 437th Services Squadron to develop the design of the theater. This includes equipment layout, architectural features and special acoustical treatments," Rackley said. "We have to really work on acoustical treatments because being a racquetball court it's real noisy in there, so we're planning on carpeting, installing acoustical ceilings and acoustical wall coverings that match the décor of the base gymnasium."

"The Cardio Theater is just like anything else that has evolved in fitness in the last ten years," Parrish said. "This facility opened up in 1995. The study that we did was in 1985. At the time of the study, there was not enough documentation to support the purchase of treadmills for the fitness center. In the final design stages, in 1993, we decided to put cardio equipment in the racquetball lobby. We determined it could hold 25 pieces of equipment."

"Today we don't have enough treadmills, bicycles or elliptical trainers to meet the Air Force standard, even though there are almost 50 pieces of equipment in there. It's loud and crowded throughout most of the day," he added. "So now we're behind the power curve because of how the industry has changed in the last five years. The norm is that people want to come into a room that's full of cardio equipment with earphones and televisions and radios, where they're in a theater-type setting, exercising and watching television. That's the norm now."

Parrish said the location for the Cardio Theater was selected to minimize impact on the facility and Fitness Center customers. "Racquetball and handball were very popular sports back in 1985, and over the years have developed a smaller but loyal customer participation," he said. "By taking two of the eight courts

available, we're not really impacting the racquetball folks. The warm-up room will be turned back into a racquetball court, so we're taking two courts and giving back one."

The Cardio Theater site receives the heaviest flow of air conditioning in the facility, Parrish said. "So nothing should need to be changed with regard to airflow structure."

During construction, cardio machines will remain in their current locations, Parrish said. Cardio and racquetball customers will be re-routed through the weight room.

The Cardio Theater company claims their product makes your workout a lot better, said Rackley. "They claim it's great for health club business because they retain membership and people stay with the program."

Rackley said he has a special interest in the project because he uses the gym. "I think it's going to be a really good addition." He said the cardio equipment will be in more organized groups, instead of placed around the hallways like they are now. "The way it's set up now they have either CNN blaring or some stock report you might not want to watch. You'll have a choice this way."

Parrish said the cardio theater will bring the Fitness Center a step closer to the high standard the Air Force has set for its gymnasiums. "Even though we've won best in Air Mobility Command for the last three years, we still have work to do." Parrish is currently researching the possibility of a health snack bar.

Other plans in the works, according to Parrish, are a women's locker room expansion, a new aerobics room built behind the racquetball courts, and a resistance training room separate from the free weight room. "We're just waiting for funding, which we hope to get by Fiscal Year 2004."

Parrish added, "Every dollar spent on the fitness center reaps tenfold back to airmen. Findley chose the cardio room first because more people are impacted by cardio than any other thing we can do."



Photo by Senior Airman Jason Smith
Col. Dennis Kaan, 437th Support Group commander, takes a hammer to the wall at a racquetball court where a Cardio Theater is being built.