

STATE GAZETTE

Dyersburg Police Dept. receives firearms training simulator

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Dyersburg Police received a new piece of training equipment last week, a firearms training simulator (FATS) from Meggitt Training Systems. The department set up and began calibrating the system inside the City's downtown storm shelter. The system trains police personnel on standard firearms practices as well as places officers in situations that test their decision-making and de-escalation skills in numerous situations.

State Gazette photos/ Brandon Hutcheson

BRANDON HUTCHESON

bhutcheson@stategazette.com

Over the course of the prior week, the Dyersburg Police Department received and began testing their newest piece of training equipment – a firearms training simulator (FATS). The system,

which was unanimously approved by the Dyersburg Board of Mayor and Aldermen on June 18, trains police personnel on more than standard firearms practices; it also challenges and tests an officer's decision-making process, including those in potential life-threatening situations.



DPD Capt. Thomas Langford tests the system's marksmanship program with the system's BlueFire wireless patrol rifle.

The total cost of the system was \$64,446.22. Approximately \$20,000 of the cost was donated by ERMCO, with the remainder being paid from the department's drug fund.

The FATS system purchased is the 100P version, which is slightly over one year old. It is the portable version, which the department can use at nearly any location for training purposes. Setup time takes averages 30 minutes.

The system allows up to 6 weapon simulators to be used, including Meggitt's BlueFire wireless weapons that are used in DPD's version. The weapons used in DPD's version of the system are 2 semi-automatic handguns and a patrol rifle, which officers are accustomed to using. The training weapons are to be loaded like a real gun and even kick, as the weapons are air-pressurized.

The system comes with over 250 video scenarios, such as an active shooter at a school, pulling over a drunk driver, responding to a domestic violence call, among many others. From each situational video scenario, thousands of branching options are available. Videos also include marksmanship-training capabilities, where officers can simulate live-fire training.

Following each video drill, the instructor and participating officer can review the training session from start to finish. The playback feature can show where the officer points his or her firearm at all times as well as shows if each shot fired is a miss, a non-lethal hit, or lethal hit.



The system comes with over 250 video scenarios, such as an active shooter (as seen above). Though the cost of the system was over \$60,000, according to the department, the cost would be earned back in three years, as the purchase of live training rounds of ammunition would not be needed as often. Officers would first use the training system before participating in live-fire drills at the range.

According to DPD, the department could train 2 squads each day of setup. Within 6 hours, half of DPD's patrol division could have participated.

"We are excited to now have the firearms training simulator to offer realistic training for our officers," said DPD Chief Steve Isbell. "The FATS system provides far more than the normal firearms training that we receive on the range during live-fire training. The scenario-based training is an enhanced version of the decision-making process to teach officers to utilize all of their training in potential deadly force encounters. Police officers make many decisions throughout their tour of duty every day. One of the toughest decisions is when an officer is faced with the decision to use deadly force. We have worked very hard over the last few years to offer the highest level of training to include de-escalation training that is mandatory for all officers in the DPD, response to resistance that included the updating of our old use-of-force policies, and now the state of the art FATS system. Force encounters with individuals who are resistant to the police can have a deadly outcome that none of us want."

Isbell added, “The FATS system is very expensive costing over \$60,000. We were fortunate to receive a donation from ERMCO for \$20,000, and the drug fund was utilized for the remaining amount, which had no financial impact on city funds.”

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This is a very smart decision. Good job DPD.

-- Posted by **t_n4321** on Tue, Oct 23, 2018, at 6:36 AM

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