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To A confirms FSH 'Armyness' continues

By Steve Elliott
FSH Public Affairs

A transfer of authority ceremony at the Quadrangle Sept. 30 confirmed the "Armyness" of Fort Sam Houston would continue. The ceremony symbolized the transfer of the garrison's Army-specific functions to Army Support Activity manager Frank E. Blakely II.

"This ceremony marks the beginning of the numerous things we're going to have to sort out and work through as we make this into a partnership," Blakely said. "We are taking things apart, putting them together into neat piles and seeing how they can work together."



"The best solution was to empower the people who do the jobs every day and they would figure it out," he said. "Since April, I have validated an old Texas axiom: 'If you think you're a person of influence, try ordering someone else's dog around.' At least now as ASA manager, I can claim part of the dog."

"While our title is changing from U.S. Army Garrison to the 502nd Mission Support Group, we are still providing installation mission readiness and quality of life support to all the same said folks," said Col. Mary E. Garr, 502nd MSG commander. "It will just be within the construct of a partnership with Lackland and Randolph Air Force Bases."

"The intent of Congress with joint basing was that services at installations located near each other could be more efficient if they were one," Garr explained. "We are still providing those services and will become more efficient and cost-effective, while not degrading the quality of service."

"I have assured the community this is still Fort Sam Houston. It's not an Air Force Base and you're not going to see the Air Force symbol on the front gate," said Brig. Gen. Len Patrick 502nd Air Base Wing commander. "You'll see 'Joint Base San Antonio' under 'Fort Sam Houston,' but the heritage and the legacy of the three installations has got to remain solvent. It's my vow that I'll do that."

“Over the past 134 years, a lot of historic events have happened in this Quadrangle. This is an historic change in the way our armed forces and our Army do business and take care of those under our responsibility,” said Lt. Gen. Guy C. Swan III, commander, U.S. Army North and senior commander on Fort Sam Houston. “The Air Force and Army are committed to maintaining the “Armyness” of Fort Sam as we go forward.”

Joint Base San Antonio is one of a dozen such operations around the country and will be the largest joint base in the nation. It will support 211 units around town, including Brooke Army Medical Center, the 59th Medical Wing at Lackland and the Air Education and Training Command at Randolph.

The ceremony also recognized Garr’s contributions to U.S. Army Garrison Fort Sam Houston in completing its transformation into the 502nd MSG, which is aligned under the 502ndABW. Lackland became the 802nd MSG and Randolph the 902nd MSG earlier this year.

“The installation support structure has changed, not the quality of life,” Swan said. “You will see a lot of visible changes in the coming year, like new paint jobs on police cars and signs,” Swan said.

“The most significant changes are going on behind the scene to deliver the kinds of municipal and base support services that we expect. The service you have come to rely on and be proud of at Fort Sam Houston is going to continue.”

“Joint Base San Antonio will take the best practices of both services and shape all three installations into an even more dynamic asset for the defense of our nation,” said J. Randall Robinson, director of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command West region.