



Base Realignment and Closure

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Revisiting the past gives IMCOM its future home

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The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure requirement to relocate Headquarters, Installation Management Command, from Arlington, Va., to Fort Sam Houston will not only involve a move across the country, but a trip back in time. To accommodate the more than 1,500 military and civilian positions associated with IMCOM and its subordinate components, five historic structures are being renovated to go along with the construction of two new buildings.

The \$150 million in projects will colocate several elements of IMCOM, reducing certain overhead expenses and creating a new level of consolidation and operational efficiency when the facilities are finished in 2011. Besides the relocation of IMCOM headquarters, its subcommands – Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command and Army Environmental Command – will also relocate to Fort Sam Houston.

The arrival of these commands complements earlier realignments mandated by BRAC law that took place on the post in 2006.

At that time, IMCOM's Northwest Region headquarters moved from Rock Island Arsenal, Ill. and merged with IMCOM's Southwest Region headquarters on Fort Sam Houston to form a single West Region headquarters.

The West Region is one of six IMCOM regions around the world and includes everything west of the Mississippi River. The other IMCOM regions in the U.S. are the Northeast and Southeast, while IMCOM Europe, Korea and Pacific are responsible for overseas installations.

Headquarters, IMCOM, oversees all facets of managing Army installations around the world, including maintenance of the roads, grounds and lighting; new construction; barracks and family housing; food management; environmental programs; Soldier and family morale, welfare and recreation programs; logistics; and installation funding.

Moving forward by looking back

One of the chief advantages of the cross-country move for IMCOM is anticipated cost savings. IMCOM's headquarters is currently in leased space in the Washington, D.C., area, which, historically, has been more expensive to occupy than government-owned buildings.

On Fort Sam Houston, IMCOM will use a campus of facilities centered on a group of three-story, historic structures arranged in the shape of a square. These buildings were built as infantry regimental headquarters and an infantry barracks between 1928 and 1929.

In the middle of these facilities, a new 168,000- square-foot headquarters building will be constructed. This structure will reflect the Spanish motif of the surrounding buildings, with features such as a red tile roof, but will not replicate their exteriors to avoid any suggestion that it is also a historic building.

Across the street, a new 28,000-square-foot instructional facility for FMWRC personnel will be built. The development of the campus will also include constructing new roads and extending, widening, and replacing certain existing roads to facilitate traffic flow.

Not far from the IMCOM headquarters building, the historic Fort Sam Houston Theater is being renovated and expanded to support the realignment. The facility opened in 1935 as one of the first dedicated movie theaters built by the Army in the U.S. It will become the new home of the FMWRC's Army Entertainment Division, which is relocating to Fort Sam Houston from Fort Belvoir, Va.

This division stages a touring musical production called the U.S. Army Soldier Show, featuring active duty Soldiers who are selected by audition from throughout the Army. The renovated 14,700-square-foot theater will serve as the rehearsal hall for the cast of the annual production, while a 26,000-squarefoot addition will provide theater support facilities, office space, recording studios and equipment storage.

The project will alter the building's original movie-theater configuration to accommodate theatrical productions. The work will extend the existing stage and modify the rear portion of the building to incorporate the 80-foot-tall fly tower necessary to raise and lower stage sets. The balcony seating will be removed to make room for lighting and sound equipment, reducing the theater's seating capacity from 1,100 to 800.

Many elements of the theater's Spanish Colonial Revival style architecture will be retained as part of the renovation project.

The theater has a white, stucco exterior, arched entryways and a bell tower reminiscent of the 18th century Spanish missions in San Antonio. Among other features that are expected to be retained are original light fixtures, wooden banisters, exterior lamp posts, the heavy wooden front doors, painted wooden ceiling beams, frescoes and wall murals, and the original ticket booth at the entrance.

In addition to preserving Fort Sam Houston's architectural character, the structures being renovated and built to create IMCOM's new home are being developed according to the standards necessary to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Silver certification. With such features as natural lighting, super-efficient heating and cooling systems, waterless urinals and a rainwater capture system to feed drip irrigation

to the native Texas landscaping, these facilities reflect IMCOM's vision for sustainable and environmentally friendly installations.

Beyond BRAC

The BRAC projects that are making way for IMCOM's headquarters aren't the only substantial historic renovation projects on Fort Sam Houston. A non-BRAC funded project has allowed IMCOM's West Region headquarters to move across the post into a refurbished building that was built in 1908 to serve as the installation's hospital.

The building is a three story wood and masonry structure with a basement and an attic. It has limestone exterior walls, wooden and masonry columns, wraparound wooden verandas on the first and second floors, and a wood-framed roof structure. This facility is a prime example of the huge inventory of historic structures on the installation. Construction of the post began in 1876 and today it has about 800 historic structures, which is more than any other active military installation in the United States.

The historic structures involved in BRAC and associated projects require extensive rehabilitation to become suitable for their new tenants. In most cases, existing interior partitions, electrical wiring, plumbing, climate control systems, and interior and exterior lighting fixtures need to be replaced. Stairways, ceilings, wooden floors, structural roof members, interior and exterior doors, and windows are also being repaired, refinished or replaced.

Ultimately, the goal is to preserve distinctive architectural features and maintain the historic nature of the buildings.

Other renovation efforts will help meet anti-terrorism and force protection requirements, such as installing blast-proof windows that are designed to look like the originals.

Transition time

As IMCOM awaits completion of its new home, the process of shifting operations to San Antonio has already begun. An advance team of more than 500 employees has stood up Headquarters, IMCOM, Forward in a building several miles outside of Fort Sam Houston that formerly housed a department store.

Making this temporary relocation possible required installation of furniture and a telecommunications system. This arrangement will make the final transfer from Virginia to Fort Sam Houston much easier when the IMCOM campus is complete.

IMCOM's changes are coming against a backdrop of transition across all of Fort Sam Houston. The 2005 BRAC law that dictated IMCOM's realignment is also bringing several medical and research missions to the post, necessitating construction of many new facilities.

The most prominent projects include the expansion and renovation of Brooke Army Medical Center and the creation of a campus to consolidate the enlisted medical training programs of all service branches.

The BRAC and BRAC related construction on the installation amounts to about \$2.3 billion dollars. At the peak of construction, about 65 percent of the post was fenced for either renovation or construction projects.

Many of the facilities are being completed and turned over for use in 2010, setting the stage for a final push toward the completion of all BRAC construction on Fort Sam Houston by September 2011.

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