

SAN ANTONIO CONTRACTING CENTER

LINEAGE

San Antonio Procurement Center
San Antonio Contracting Center

STATIONS

Kelly AFB, TX, 1 Jan 1977-1 May 1979

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE

MOTTO

NICKNAME

OPERATIONS

In January 1978, ATC noted that the San Antonio Procurement Center had encountered major problems due to its location at Kelly AFB, an Air Force Logistics Command installation. Since the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency was its major customer, ATC decided to collocate both organizations at the San Antonio Air Force Station. The move began at the end of 1978 and ended in May 1979. Also on 1 October 1978, Air Training Command redesignated the procurement center as the San Antonio Contracting Center, and at the same time, the command redesignated its 3303d Procurement Squadron as the 3303d Contracting Squadron.

Effective 1 January 1977, ATC activated the San Antonio Procurement Center at Kelly AFB.

The center was responsible for all base procurement functions at Kelly, Brooks, Lackland, and Randolph. It was to be a group-level organization under the operational control of the ATC Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics. 1977

Effective 1 April 1989, ATC inactivated its San Antonio Contracting Center (SACC). Originally established on 1 January 1977 as the San Antonio Procurement Center, SACC had provided centralized contracting support to military installations in the San Antonio area. Six months after the SACC shutdown, ATC inactivated the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency (SARPMA), another venture that had centralized civil engineering functions in the San Antonio area. With Air Staff approval, ATC inactivated both of these named activities, and returned direct control of civil engineering and contracting functions to base commanders-the people directly responsible for mission performance.

The creation of contracting and civil engineering squadrons was in anticipation of the dismantling of the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency (SARPMA) and San Antonio Contracting Center (SACC), scheduled for 1 April and 1 October 1989, respectively. The Air Training Command began the process of disestablishing the San Antonio Contract Center and San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency with a 12 April 1988 announcement. Inactivation of SACC was set for 31 March 1989 and SARPMA for 30 September. Civil engineering, facility maintenance, contracting, and local procurement functions would then be decentralized and returned to the immediate control of installation commanders.

The central offices of the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency began planning the construction and service projects that military installation officials wanted to be contracted out. It designed the projects and determined their cost and time requirements, sending planning packages to the San Antonio Contracting Center for presentation to bidders and for contract award. As the largest and most extensively equipped federal government maintenance and construction operation in the San Antonio/South Texas region, SARPMA contracted its services to various federal agencies. It was also called upon in emergencies, e.g., repairing damage from tornados spawned by the 1988 Hurricane Gilbert.

San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency maintained field engineering branches at the five major military installations to perform all civil engineering functions other than managing base housing, fire protection, and real estate. Field engineers directed SARPMA crews in doing general maintenance, contracted construction inspection, and "major projects" (small-to-medium construction projects) on their particular military installations. Branch chiefs served as staff civil engineers to each installation's senior officer. Later, Lackland got a second field engineering branch exclusively to handle Wilford Hall USAF Medical Center.

The history of the San Antonio Contracting Center was parallel. It was part of the same management philosophy and came into being in 1978, also headquartered at the San Antonio Air Force Station. The center handled the publishing and awarding of all contracts for construction and services on participating military installations. It established detachments at each installation to monitor contractor performance and to make incremental payments to contractors for work completed.

This centralized engineering and contracting arrangement was never popular among Lackland's leadership, depriving training center, medical center, and base commanders of direct control of essential housekeeping operations. The previous 3700th Civil Engineering Squadron, inactivated in 1978, had been led by military engineers and been part of the chain of command; the field engineering branch of SARPMA that succeeded it was manned almost exclusively by civilians; maintenance came under a different cost management system with unfamiliar procedures; commanders had less leeway in redirecting their organizations' budget allocations and materiel resources. Lackland officials also had developed a perception of the SARPMA/SACC structure as generally inefficient and costly in comparison to the old decentralized system.

San Antonio Procurement Center

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1978

Relocation of Procurement Center

In January 1978, ATC noted that the San Antonio Procurement Center had encountered major problems due to its location at Kelly AFB, an Air Force Logistics Command installation. Since the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency was its major customer, ATC decided to collocate both organizations at the San Antonio Air Force Station. The move began at the end of 1978 and ended in May 1979. Also on 1 October 1978, Air Training Command redesignated the procurement center as the San Antonio Contracting Center, and at the same time, the command redesignated its 3303d Procurement Squadron as the 3303d Contracting Squadron.

After some delay, and despite the high costs, senior Air Force officials decided in the fall of 1986 to disestablish SARPMA and return to standard base civil engineering organizations. At the same time, Gen Larry D. Welch, Air Force Chief of Staff, directed the dissolution of the San Antonio Contracting Center, a procurement agency set up in the late 1970s that handled contracting arrangements for SARPMA. These actions reflected the strong belief of Air Force leaders that installation commanders should have the authority to decide how to accomplish the

civil engineering mission, since they were held responsible for getting the job done. After redistributing its manpower authorizations and equipment to the participating installations (in roughly the same proportion as the installations had initially contributed), SARPMA inactivated on 1 October 1989.

Air Force Order of Battle

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SACC and SARPMA Disestablished. Effective 1 April 1989, ATC inactivated its San Antonio Contracting Center (SACC). Originally established on 1 January 1977 as the San Antonio Procurement Center, SACC had provided centralized contracting support to military installations in the San Antonio area. Six months after the SACC shutdown, ATC inactivated the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency (SARPMA), another venture that had centralized civil engineering functions in the San Antonio area. With Air Staff approval, ATC inactivated both of these named activities, and returned direct control of civil engineering and contracting functions to base commanders-the people directly responsible for mission performance.

The San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency (SARPMA) was a star-crossed enterprise from the beginning. The founding of SARPMA on 1 October 1978 followed a series of studies by the General Accounting Office, the Department of Defense, and the Air Force, all aimed at achieving cost savings through regional consolidations. San Antonio, home to the Army's Fort Sam Houston, and four air force bases-Brooks, Kelly, Lackland, and Randolph-was a prime candidate for such action- Set up at San Antonio Air Force Station, adjacent to Fort Sam Houston, the new organization consolidated the existing civil engineering organizations at all five facilities into a single, industrially-funded organization reporting to Air Training Command. The new structure took control of the civil engineering function out of the hands of local commanders, and, in the long run, that factor played a large part in SARPMA's undoing.

At the start, SARPMA's performance was shaky. Under the consolidation concept, the installation commander retained ownership of all real property and was responsible for its maintenance. However, he no longer controlled the work force and had to pay for the work performed. In theory, the installation commander set priorities for the work to be done, and SARPMA worked toward meeting the completion dates established by the customer. In practice, SARPMA was not meeting those dates and thus not meeting the customers' needs. Initially, commanders had difficulty obtaining such basic information as the status of a work order or the cost of a project, and all were dissatisfied with the time it took to get work done.

Over time, mainly as a result of extraordinary management actions, SARPMA's performance began to improve. As that happened, opposition to the consolidated real property maintenance concept began to soften, especially on the part of the Army at Fort Sam Houston. It turned out, however, to be a case of too little, too late.

In 1983, at the direction of the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, ATC prepared an assessment of SARPMA's performance and of alternate ways to accomplish the real property maintenance mission. While the study findings did not show conclusively that SARPMA was either superior or inferior to a standard base civil engineering organization, the study group did discern a strong distaste for consolidation with its attendant bureaucratic layering and deep concern among commanders about their diminished ability to influence a function so vital to their installations. In the end, ATC recommended to the Air Staff that SARPMA be disbanded and replaced by standard base civil engineering organizations.

Not much came of this first major challenge to the continuation of SARPMA. It got bogged down in the coordination process when the Army suggested tabling the idea until Air Training Command could put together a comprehensive disestablishment plan and assess the costs involved. A review committee, composed of representatives from five San Antonio military installations, took on that job. It turned out that the costs involved were substantial--\$27.6 million in one-time costs to dissolve SARPMA and annual recurring costs of \$24.6 million under standard base civil engineering organizations. Nonetheless, the committee went ahead with the development of a disestablishment plan and called for the base-level engineering organizations to be in-place and operational on 1 October 1987.

After some delay and despite the high costs, in the fall of 1986 senior Air Force officials decided to disestablish San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency and return to standard base civil engineering organizations. These actions reflected the strong belief of Air Force leaders that installation commanders should have the authority to decide how to accomplish the civil engineering mission, since they were held responsible for getting the job done. After redistributing its manpower authorizations and equipment to the participating installations (in roughly the same proportion as the installations had initially contributed), SARPMA shut down operations and was inactivated on 1 October 1989.

On 15 February, at the direction of HQ USAF, the San Antonio Real Property Maintenance Agency (SARPMA) was activated as a group-level named unit and assigned to Air Training Command. It was a consolidation of real property maintenance activities at Randolph, Lackland, Brooks, and Kelly AFBs and the Army's Fort Sam Houston. The new agency was located at San Antonio Air Force Station, adjacent to Fort Sam Houston. However, it did not become operational until 1 October 1978.