

Spouses Tour  
SSG Nathan Akridge

FORT SILL, Okla. – The U.S. Army constantly adapts and changes to meet the needs of its Soldiers and their families. Soldiers and leaders come and go, and with new leaders come change and the opportunity to build upon the ideas and legacy of the leaders who came before them. 31<sup>st</sup> ADA Brigade continues to build upon an idea that offers Soldiers and spouses new to the unit a chance to learn what the Lawton/Fort Sill community has to offer.

In February of 2013, with the combined effort of the battalion Family Readiness Groups, the brigade Family Readiness Support Assistant and the brigade command team, the brigade launched a “Newcomers Spouse Tour”. The tour offered spouses and newcomers a chance to visit a few of the locations and learn about resources offered to them on Fort Sill.

“Initially the tour only covered a few places, but we have greatly expanded it so they can see everything that is available to them on post,” said Bonnie Jones, brigade FRSA. “We now offer a resource tour for Soldiers and their spouses that allow them to meet the heads of some of the major organizations and facilities on post.”

One spouse who has been stationed at Fort Sill for three years without attending the tour found time to attend it and said she was glad she did.

“It gives you the idea and the feeling that Fort Sill is actually as old as people say it is, so you get an idea of the military history that is here,” said Crystal Lewis-Bacon. “As a wife, sometimes I

feel like I'm just tagging along for the ride but with this tour I got to see what is available to me and the history at Fort Sill.”

Lewis-Bacon added that the information gained from the tour will definitely be useful in the future.

“I work in the FRG, so learning the specific hours for the Soldiers Closet and the Consignment Store is actually really helpful when I have an incoming spouse that comes to me for assistance and doesn't want to have to go all the way up the chain of command. Now I can easily point them to the specific agency that can best assist them with whatever issue they are facing.”

Bonnie Jones stressed that the spouse's tour goes hand in hand with the brigade commander's guidance given at his in-brief, that mirrors what the Chief of Staff of the Army says, “The strength of our Nation is our Army; the strength of our Army is our Soldiers; the strength of our Soldiers is our Families.”

“These are all resources and agencies that were put here to assist our greatest asset in the Army, the Soldiers and their Families,” said Jones.

Jones added that the tours will continue to be offered every month for Soldiers and families of 31<sup>st</sup> ADA.