



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS BATTALION  
UNITED STATES ARMY NORTH (FIFTH ARMY)  
FORT SAM HOUSTON, TX 78234-7000

ARNO-HHB

10 August 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Policy Letter: Adoption of Caisson Horses

1. REFERENCES:

- a. Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 2583, Military Animals: Transfer and Adoption.
- b. Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 2635, Ethical Conduct of Government Employees
- c. Department of Defense Regulation (DOD) 5500.07-R, Joint Ethics Regulation
- d. Department of Defense Manual (DODM) 4160.20, Volume 4, Defense Materiel Disposition: Instructions for Hazardous Property and Other Special Processing Materiel.
- e. Army Regulation (AR) 40-905, Veterinary Health Services, 29 August 2006.

2. Purpose. This policy letter articulates the Standing Operating Procedures for the adoption of Fort Sam Houston (FSH) Caisson's horses.

3. Background. Caisson horses are essential elements of the memorial affairs mission of the US Army North, FSH Caisson. When the Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) veterinarian and Caisson Herd Manager assess that a horse is no longer capable of service in the Caisson Section, the horse will be transferred to another military equestrian unit IAW Title 10, US Code, Section 2583 or adopted through the procedures in this policy letter. If a horse is no longer able to serve in the Caisson Section, but still able to serve the military, then the horse will be transferred to another military equestrian unit. If the horse is no longer able to serve in the military, the horse will be retired to a sanctuary, therapeutic riding program as prescribed below, or to a private party through the adoption process set forth in this policy letter.

4. Applicability. The procedures listed below explain the mechanics of the adoption program. These steps serve to protect both the US Army and the retiring Caisson horse after its service to the Nation. Failure to follow these procedures, however, may result in the termination of the adoption program, and processing of all retiring Caisson horses through the Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services system.

- a. Baseline criteria for adoption of a Caisson Section horse is ten (10) years of service in the Caisson Section or sixteen (16) years of age.

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b. These criteria can be adjusted based on the recommendation of the Caisson Herd Manager, and/or JBSA Veterinarian.

c. These criteria are subject to adjustment based on availability of trained horses, procurement of new horses, and ultimately at the discretion of the Battalion Commander based on ability of the platoon to maintain accomplishment of their memorial affairs mission without compromising the health and welfare of the other horses.

#### 5. Adoption Procedures and Requirements.

a. A Caisson Horse Adoption Board (CHAB) will convene to determine final approval on applications to adopt retiring Caisson horses. The committee will be comprised of one president, six members from FSH Caisson, command, or designees thereof. This committee will convene as required to determine outcomes of identified Caisson horses that meet the criteria for adoption. Identification of adoption eligible, or retiring, Caisson horses will be made by the Funeral Honors Platoon Sergeant and/or Headquarters Support Company (HSC) Commander in conjunction with the Caisson Section Herd Manager, and the JBSA Veterinarian. The committee proceedings will be formal in nature and closed to the public. The committee's proceedings will be recorded as minutes by the Battalion S3 to maintain a record of all discussions and decisions. Any adoption applicants who feel the committee's adoption decisions were unfair will have 72 hours from the date the decision is announced to appeal to the Chief of Staff, US Army North. The CHAB will consist of the following members:

- (1) President: Commander, HHBN, US Army North
- (2) Member: Command appointed representative for Chief of Staff, US Army North
- (3) Member: Commander, HSC, HHBN US Army North
- (4) Member: Funeral Honors Platoon Sergeant
- (5) Member: JBSA Veterinarian
- (6) Member: Caisson Section Herd Manager
- (7) Non-Voting Member: Legal Advisor, Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, US Army North

b. The preferred course of action for the disposition of a retiring Caisson horse is adoption. In the furtherance of this goal, FSH Caisson will expend reasonable efforts to coordinate and obtain a qualified adopting recipient. However, should adoption prove unfeasible, the horse may alternatively be processed through the Army disposition

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system via Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services (DLADS), ICW DODM 4160.20, Volume 4.

c. Below are the chronological steps required for adoption of a retiring Caisson horse.

(1) Identification. The Funeral Honors Platoon Sergeant, Caisson Section Herd Manager, and the JBSA Veterinarian will determine when a retiring Caisson horse should be adopted. Upon this determination that a horse is adoption-eligible, the HSC Commander will notify the CHAB through formal memorandum, and a CHAB will be conducted.

(2) Advertising. The Caisson Section, with the assistance of the ARNORTH PAO, will utilize advertisement procedures to facilitate the collection of applications for the CHAB's review and determination of suitability for adoption. These procedures include but are not limited to publicly accessible ARNORTH websites, ARNORTH social media sites, and the FSH Caisson website and social media site.

(3) Notification. The identified adopter will be provided a memorandum for record stating the committee's decision via email and phone call. The adopter will further be advised that coordination is required to transfer the ownership of the retiring Caisson horse officially, and that such transfer must take place within 30 days of notification of the committee's decision. If the primary adopter does not take possession of the retiring Caisson horse within 30 days of notification, then the first-alternate adopter will be notified of selection to adopt a retiring Caisson horse. The alternate adopter will further be advised to secure possession and care of the horse within 30 days. If no alternate adopter is available, the committee will proceed with disposition via DLADS. All applicants not selected for adoption will be notified by email from the Funeral Honors Platoon Sergeant or HSC Commander.

(i) The 30 day requirement may be adjusted by FSH Caisson dependent upon the process of removing the adopted horse(s) from the property book.

(ii) FSH Caisson and subordinate entities are not responsible for the transportation of adopted horses once an approved adopter is announced. FSH Caisson will not agree to any assistance in the transfer process without express consent by the Commander, HHBN, US Army North.

## 6. Adoption Application Procedures and Requirements

a. Parties interested in adopting retiring Caisson horses will provide a written application in accordance with the instructions posted on FSH Caisson's website and social media pages.

b. The Adoption application must include the following:

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- (1) Administrative information regarding the prospective adopter;
- (2) Information on the adopter as it pertains to his or her experience as the owner of horses and other farm animals;
- (3) The intended use for the horse;
- (4) Detailed description and photos of locations the horse will be housed including, but not limited to: barns, stalls, turnout lots, run-in shelter, and type of fencing used to contain horses.
- (5) Specific knowledge and experience of the applicant as it pertains to daily equestrian care, equestrian medical care requirements, horse riding experience, and horse training experience.
- (6) Applicant will also provide personal and professional references from veterinarian, farrier, horse trainer, and any other person deemed appropriate to make a recommendation on behalf of the prospective adopter.
- (7) Applicant must be willing to travel to JBSA to retrieve the horse and provide transport back to the facilities described in the application.

c. The adoption of a retiring Caisson horse is conditioned upon the acceptance of both the terms of adoption and release of liability as set forth in the "Caisson Horse Adoption Application."

7. At the time of transfer, the adopting agency/individual assumes full responsibility for all future expenses related to veterinary care of an adopted horse. New adopters will sign a statement of acknowledgment regarding assumption for all future expenses for veterinary care, assumption of liability for all future acts of horse, etc., ICW AR 40-905 provisions, paragraph 5-3. The adopting agency/individual will receive an SF 600, containing a baseline medical statement of the horse's current medical condition and all medications currently being administered. The final entry will state "horse adopted to (name, address, phone number)."

#### 8. Non-Adoptive Procedures and Requirements.

a. If, after efforts have been made to secure a retiring Caisson horse's adoption but such adoption fails or is either not feasible or supportable; the Funeral Honors Platoon Sergeant will make the recommendation to the Battalion Commander regarding alternate options available for the horse's retirement. The Funeral Honors Platoon Sergeant is to make such recommendation after consultation with JBSA Veterinarian and should address such options as processing the horse's retirement through DLADS, or provision to a sanctuary or therapeutic riding program.

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b. In lieu of selecting an adopter for a retiring Caisson horse, the adoption committee reserves the right to either send the horse to a horse sanctuary or for utilization in a therapeutic riding program, ICW Reference 1.d., noting the option of pursuing "other disposition." If the adoption committee decides to contribute a retiring Caisson horse to a therapeutic riding program and more than one program requests the horse, then the committee will vote to determine which program the horse will be placed. Any selection of either a horse sanctuary or therapeutic program shall be made in consultation with legal counsel from the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, USARNORTH, and in compliance with DoD 5500.07-R, the Joint Ethics Regulation. Care is required to ensure no USARNORTH personnel either implicitly or explicitly endorse any sanctuary or therapeutic riding program through the selection process, in violation of this regulation and parallel provisions in Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 2635.

c. Below are the non-adoption options for retiring a Caisson Horse in the event an appropriate adopter is not identified.

(1) Another state or federal agency accepts use and care of the retiring Caisson horse.

(i) A state or Federal agency must first be identified by the Caisson Section as suitable for the horse based on the needs of the gaining organization, and abilities or limitations of the horse as determined by the JBSA Veterinarian.

(ii) FSH Caisson processes transfer paperwork through DLADS to transfer the horse to the gaining agency.

(iii) Coordination is made by the gaining agency in conjunction with the Caisson Section to transport the horse to the gaining agency.

(2) A Therapeutic Riding Program accepts use of a retiring Caisson horse, referenced above.

(3) Horse sanctuary accepts retiring Caisson horse, referenced above.

(4) The DLADS accepts accountability of the horse as excess government property.

(i) FSH Caisson submits necessary documents to DLADS for the processing of the retiring Caisson horse.

(ii) DLADS processes documentation of the horse to change its status to that of "excess property," and FSH Caisson maintains physical possession of the horse.

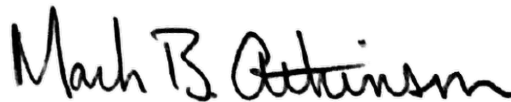
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(iii) DLADS searches for suitable state or federal agencies in need of a horse. If found, the horse is transferred to that agency.

(iv) If DLADS cannot locate a suitable state or federal agencies to accept accountability of the horse, the horse will be auctioned as excess government property on [www.govliquidation.com](http://www.govliquidation.com).

(v) FSH Caisson will transfer the horse to the individual or agency selected to receive the horse.

9. The point of contact for this policy is the HSC Commander, HHBN US Army North, at 210-221-4094.



MARK B. ATKINSON  
LTC, CA  
Commanding

Encl.  
Adoption Application