

# AIR AND SPACE BASIC COURSE SCHOOL



## LINEAGE

Constituted as Air and Space Basic Course School on 5 Sep 1997  
Activated on 12 Sep 1997  
Redesignated Aerospace Basic Course School on 8 Feb 2000  
Redesignated Air and Space Basic Course School on 1 Mar 2002

## STATIONS

Maxwell AFB, AL, 12 Sep 1997

## ASSIGNMENTS

Air University, 12 Sep 1997  
Squadron Officer College, 8 Feb 2000

## COMMANDERS

## HONORS

### Service Streamers

None

### Campaign Streamers

None

### Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

## Decorations

Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards  
[12 Sep] 1997- 30 Jun 1998  
1 Jul 1998-30 Jun 1999  
1 Jul 1999-30 Jun 2000  
8 Feb 2000-30 Jun 2001  
1 Jul 2003-30 Jun 2004  
1 Jul 2005-30 Jun 2006

1 Jul 2006-30 Jun 2007

## **EMBLEM**

Approved on 6 Apr 2000

Per bend Sable and Azure, a lightning bolt bendwise throughout Argent, between in chief three mullets of six points two and one, and in base a vol fesswise surmounted by a two blade propeller in pale Or; all within a diminished bordure of the same.

## **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

Blue and yellow are the Air Force colors. Blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations. Yellow refers to the sun and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. The stars represent the core values of "integrity first," "service before self" and "excellence in all we do" and associate air and space as the learning environment. The lightning bolt symbolizes the rapid deployment of technology and notes the brief amount of time in history that it has taken the United States to become the world's most respected air and space force. The winged propeller embodies the heritage that is the foundation on which the school fosters a base for teaching to the future.

## **EMBLEM SIGNIFICANCE**

## **MOTTO**

## **NICKNAME**

## **OPERATIONS**

On 12 September 1997, the Air and Space Basic School activated at Air University under a direct mandate from the Air Force Chief of Staff. The school would conduct a new course, the Air and Space Basic Course, for all new Air Force lieutenants.

### **Air and Space Basic Course Begins**

On 6 July 1998, Air University began a 7-week test class for the new Air and Space Basic Course. The purpose of course was to inspire new USAF officers to recognize their role as airmen and warriors, to embrace USAF core values, and to be able to articulate the contributions of air and space power to a military campaign.

In 2002, Air University redesignated the School of Advanced Airpower Studies as the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, and the Aerospace Basic Course School became the Air and Space Basic Course School, in order to reflect the increasing emphasis of the space component of the Air Force mission.

## **AIR AND SPACE BASIC COURSE**

(Affiliated with the Spaatz Center)

The Air and Space Basic Course (ASBC) is the first level of officer PME. Initially chartered by Corona in 1996, ASBC is currently a 6 week resident course for newly-commissioned second

lieutenants and select civilians. Attendees represent all the line officers, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard. ASBC's mission is "To inspire new USAF officers to comprehend their roles as Airmen who understand and live by USAF core values, can articulate and advocate what air, space, and cyberspace power brings to the fight, and are dedicated as warriors in the world's most respected Air, Space, and Cyberspace Force." The curriculum builds the warrior ethos by focusing on expeditionary skills, USAF capabilities, enlisted relations and leadership, and includes the study and application of air, space and cyberspace power, Air Force heritage and the profession of arms, team building, and ethics.

ASBC graduated 2,815 students in FY09. The projected throughput for FY10 is 3,640 students in order to meet the Air Force requirement of 100 percent attendance for line of the Air Force, active duty lieutenants.

Big changes are coming to officer education. Air and Space Basic Course for lieutenants is going away and Squadron Officer School, which captains attend, is getting an overhaul.

What that means for lieutenants is no formal leadership training; captains are looking at three more weeks of classes, many of them pickups from ASBC.

The decision to consolidate the schools came down from the four-stars last month at their summer Corona meeting, held this year at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

Cost cutting and course duplication were the primary reasons behind closing ASBC, according to Col. Terrance McCaffrey, who oversees both programs as commandant of Squadron Officer College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.

The Air Force estimates it will save at least \$12 million a year in travel and per diem expenses for the lieutenants, and is tallying up the amounts for overhead and support services. No more than five civilian employees are expected to lose their jobs, and the college will try to find them other work at Maxwell.

"There were several options available, and they didn't go with the cheapest option," he said. "So you can't say [cost] was the only consideration. ... They didn't think we needed to do it twice."

The move doesn't surprise retired Gen. Stephen Lorenz, a former commander of Air Education and Training Command.

Shuttering ASBC is something Lorenz and his fellow four-stars talked about before he left active duty in January. He called the decision "a tough call senior leadership had to make" because of tough financial times.

"I love the course. ... It does a great job," said Lorenz, who also commanded Air University from 2005-08. "But we'll adjust to train the officers in a different way, in a way that will get them prepared for the next step in their careers."

## **Extreme makeover**

SOS is for captains with four to seven years of experience who want to make major — and that won't change. But just about everything else will.

"It'll be a whole new course," McCaffrey told Air Force Times in a telephone interview.

The number of officers who go to SOS every year will jump from roughly 3,000 to 3,500. And the time they're at Maxwell will increase from five weeks to eight. Much of the extra time will be spent covering subjects now taught at ASBC, such as doctrine and core values.

Ninety "lessons" will still be taught during a rotation, McCaffrey said, and they'll still be based on five key areas — profession of arms, leadership, communications, war fighting and international security — with an emphasis on leadership woven throughout.

McCaffrey offered an example of how the revamped curriculum will intertwine leadership and doctrine. Now captains usually don't discuss doctrine in depth because they studied the basics at ASBC. The new SOS will teach doctrine from the perspective of leading airmen from a variety of backgrounds.

"Officers who show up at SOS and who have done ASBC won't say, 'I've already seen this,'" McCaffrey said.

SOS will wrap up at the end of September. The new school is set to debut shortly after the first of the year, and staff members are already hard at work on the curriculum, he said.

"The whole college will be ingrained in this from now until January," McCaffrey said.

SOS's online component is being updated, too.

Right now, it offers a slightly different curriculum than the in-residence program. Students log onto a virtual learning environment and study ethical leadership, decision-making, and team- and coalition-building.

The 138 hours of classes, which captains are expected to finish in 18 months, include readings, interactive exercises and multimedia pieces. Testing takes place at predesignated sites.

When SOS reopens, the brass wants every eligible captain to attend the new SOS in person; now the goal is 80 percent.

Perfect in-residence attendance probably won't be possible, though, because of ongoing operations, McCaffrey said.

The captains who can't make it to Maxwell will be able to complete the new lessons online; the old curriculum will stay in place until January, when it, too, relaunches with a curriculum similar to the in-residence school.

## A fond farewell

Since opening in 1998, ASBC has trained at least 39,000 lieutenants — about 3,000 a year. The last class graduated July 22.

The roots of the six-week ASBC date to a 1996 Corona meeting, where the brass highlighted five problems with company-grade officers: a lack of understanding of the service's core values, a lack of appreciation of the Air Force's capabilities, the inability to advocate the role the service could play in joint operations, limited contact with officers in other career fields and a misunderstanding of the importance of teamwork.

They decided to model ASBC after the Marine Corps' Basic School, hoping to provide a foundation for junior officers to become "inspired to articulate and advocate what the Air Force brings to the joint fight," according to the school's website.

Most lieutenants arrive at Maxwell just after receiving their commission, and all are expected to complete the classes within two years of becoming an officer. The school has four goals: to have them comprehend air, space and cyber operations; understand service history, doctrine and capabilities; adopt the service's core values; and value airmen as a team and the role of officers in leading that team.

In the past two years, the course has placed a greater emphasis on training specific to deployments, such as hand-to-hand combat and marksmanship. The course concludes with a field-training exercise that includes base defense and land navigation.

McCaffrey cautioned against reading too much into the closure of ASBC.

"This was not a decision made by the Air Force because ASBC was doing something wrong," he said



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Air Force Order of Battle  
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Sources