

AMARILLO TECHNICAL TRAINING CENTER

MISSION

LINEAGE

Amarillo Technical Training Center

STATIONS

Amarillo AFB, TX

ASSIGNMENTS

COMMANDERS

Maj Gen C. H. Pottenger, #1960

Brig Gen Dwight O. Monteith, #1961

HONORS

Service Streamers

Campaign Streamers

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

Decorations

EMBLEM

MOTTO

OPERATIONS

In April 1942, Colonel Edward C. Black, arriving from Shepard Field, with a handful of officers and enlisted men, set up headquarters in the Amarillo Building.

Col Black issued General Order Number One and Amarillo Army Air Field was in operation. The US Engineers began construction of hundreds of dull gray tarpapered buildings on the acreage across the landing field from English Field, Amarillo's municipal airport.

The field was assigned to the Army Technical Training Command with the mission of training

airframe and engine mechanics and flight engineers for the B-17.

Only half the buildings, and none of the hangars, had been completed when the first classes started on Sept. 7, 1942.

The B-29 Superfortress was hurried into production and training at Amarillo Army Air Field was shifted to the bigger bird. Finally there were four B-29 courses here.

Buildings were sold and moved away. Other buildings were converted to peacetime uses. Hangars were filled with grain. Warehouses were leased for various uses. Finally there was one man at the field—an employee of the City of Amarillo who patrolled and watched for fire.

As a consequence of the Korean Conflict, the United States Air Force began an expansion of its manpower strength and combat forces. More sites were needed for training thousands of officers and airmen to maintain and operate USAF weapons. That was the picture when strife erupted in Korea and the Air Force began looking for a place to train men. When inspectors came here they found training hangars that could be rehabilitated, warehouses useable, the hospital ready to be used with a little refurbishing.

Five years had passed since the gates of Amarillo Army Air Field were closed.

The base was assigned to the Air Training Command, and on March 12 of that year the 3320th Technical Training Wing was assigned to ATC. Its mission was to conduct technical training for jet aircraft mechanics.

Colonel Ray H. Clark assumed command of AAFB on March 14, 1951.

Amarillo Air Force Base started a course in jet mechanics. The first group of student airmen arrived in September, 1951, as did the first assignment of jet fighter planes. At the end of September, 64 student airmen and 10 instructors were in training.

AMARILLO AIR FORCE BASE had become the first all-jet mechanic training base in the Air Force.

A new mission was added to Amarillo Air Force Base in the latter part of 1951. The 3320th Retraining Group was formed for the purpose of rehabilitating selected Air Force prisoners. The first re-trainees arrived in February 1952.

In December, 1951, the first student airmen from foreign countries arrived at AAFB for training as jet mechanics.

By April, 1952, the jet mechanics school had reached its planned optimum, with 3,500 students attending classes each day. The first Airframe Repairman School in the Air Force opened on Jan. 30, 1952, and on the same day the first students started a B-47 jet mechanic course.

At the end of 1952, AAFB strength reached over 5,000 officers and men and nearly 900 civilians.

During 1953-54 AAFB continued to train airframe aircraft mechanics.

On Armed Forces Day, 1954, Amarillo Air Force Base repairmen and mechanics for fighter and bombardment aircraft were given a permanent base status by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Nathan Twining.

Brig Gen Walter R. Agee had become commanding officer of AAFB on August 1, 1953. He served in this capacity until Sept. 5, 1955, at which time he was relieved by Brig Gen Herbert L. Grills.

During 1955, four new courses were established at AAFB, including courses on the F-101 and F-102 jet fighters. The number of students neared 5,000 at the end of 1955.

The year 1956 began a new chapter in AAFB history. The new Two-Phase system of basic training began in the Air Force. This meant that basic training was now divided into two parts. Airmen received Phase 1 training at basic military training installations and were sent directly to technical bases such as AAFB for Phase II training.

A new commanding officer arrived at Amarillo Air Force Base on Oct. 29, 1956. He was Brig Gen William L. (Jerry) Lee, and he was to command AAFB until his retirement from military service in 1959.

In 1957, still another department was established at AAFB. On May 6 the Department of Guided Missile Training was established, and courses in the SM-62 (Snark) were taught.

Plans for great expansion of facilities at AAFB were being made in 1957. Most of these plans hinged around the coming of a Strategic Air Command bomber wing to Amarillo Air Force Base. According to SAC's dispersal plan, AAFB was selected to support one B-52 wing. Existing runways had to be extended, additional facilities constructed, and Capehart housing built to accommodate SAC flight and maintenance crews.

By the end of 1958, a second training missile had been assigned to AAFB, and the Training Wing had responsibility for six Snark and three Quail courses.

In July 1958, the Supply and Administration School at Francis E. Warren AFB in Wyoming was moved to Amarillo Air Force Base. All the training courses involved in this movement were operative in late 1958.

A year later, the 3499th Field Training Wing at Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois, was disbanded. Amarillo Air Force Base received the major portion of this command.

In late 1959, construction of the facilities for the SAC bomber wing were completed. The new long-range runway, necessary for jet bombers, was opened on Nov. 16. On Nov. 25. The Air Training Command and the 4128th Strategic Wing of SAC completed a joint tenancy agreement.

Occupancy of Capehart housing for Air Force personnel and dependents had begun in September, 1959. Amarillo Technical Training Command's 500-house Capehart project, completed at a cost of \$7.9 million, received a USAF award for the best Capehart housing in the Southwest.

Brigadier General Lee retired on July 31, 1959 and was temporarily relieved by Col Donald W. Eisenhart.

On August 19, 1959, the present base commander, Gen Charles H. Pottenger, assumed command of ATTC. He was promoted to major general in 1960.

A milestone was reached in Air Force history on May 16, 1960, when the 100,000th student was graduated from the jet mechanic school. He was A/3c George R. Van Nostern.

In 1960, Amarillo was the site of all Air Training Command resident training in the administrative, procurement and supply fields. The command still had the Retraining Group, the Technical Training Command continued to train thousands of airmen as jet aircraft mechanics, jet engine mechanics and airframe repairmen.

From a base comprised of 1,500 acres during World War II, AAFB has extended its limits to contain 3,471 acres.

The major mission of Amarillo Air Force Base and the one involving the largest number of people is the 3320th Technical School.

The school and the base were reactivated together 10 years ago when the Korean Conflict extended the Air Force requirements for technically trained personnel.

The mission of the school then, as now, was primarily the training of Air Force technicians, with emphasis on the development of qualified apprentice personnel. Subsequently, additional course responsibilities were assigned.

Presently course responsibilities fall in two broad areas, those courses required for the support of Air Force weapons and those courses required in the support of various facets of material. In line with the former, the Technical School now has the prime responsibility on all Air Force fighter weapons, as well as the B-47, GAM-72 and certain drones, and the B-70.

The present commander of the 3320th Technical School is Colonel Eldine F. Perrin. His mission responsibility is carried out by five basic methods: (1) through contract for instruction with the aircraft industry; (2) through the establishment of special training courses; (3) a resident program which trains basic airmen to the apprentice skill level in fundamental Air Force specialties; (4) through the management of a weapons oriented field or mobile training program, and (5) through the development and publication of on-the-job training packages in certain technical specialties used in the field by individual airmen in training to up-grade their

capabilities. Total annual student participation in these five programs approximates 275,000 airmen per year. Of this, an average of 16000 per year are graduates of resident courses conducted at Amarillo Air Force Base

Two major programming actions sine the activation of the Technical School in 1951 have provided the current broad training basis. The first occurred in 1958 with the reassignment of training responsibilities in the supply, procurement, fuels and administrative areas from Francis E. Warren Air Force Base to Amarillo Air Force Base; the second, the assignment in July 1959 of the Field Training mission responsibilities from Chanute Air Force Base. The Field Training mission provides for technical training at various Air Force bases within the U.S. and overseas through the use of training detachments, either permanently assigned or mobile.

The resident mission of the Technical School is conducted through three departments: the Department of Aircraft Mechanics Training, the Department of Missile-Bomber Training, and the Department of Material Training. The majority of students entering courses are Basic Airmen who are assigned from Lackland Air Force Base. The balance of this training is carried out concurrently with the technical courses here.

The Department of Aircraft Mechanics Training, the oldest of the three Departments, conducts apprentice type courses to qualify airmen as jet fighter mechanics, jet engine mechanics and airframe or metal working mechanics. In addition, they maintain advanced type courses with more highly qualified specialist airmen in attendance.

The Department of Missile-Bomber Training has two basic programs, one in support of bomber type jet mechanic training and the other in support of a Guided Air Missile (GAM-72) course. Students in attendance are again primarily basic type airmen and receive apprentice level training. In the GAM-72 Course, however, advanced specialist type training is given, as well as apprentice level training.

The Department of Materiel Training conducts training in the aircraft fuels area for officers and airmen, in the supply and procurement areas for officers and airmen, and in the administrative area for airmen. Aside from training available through the use of on-the-job training packages this department provides the only training in the assigned specialties available within the Air Force. In addition to resident courses, the department also provides training in ballistic missile logistic supply courses in support of the Jupiter, Atlas and Titan missile programs through the media of traveling training teams.

A person close to the 3320th Technical School is aware of constant changes, not only in course material and instructional procedures but also in the facilities, both classroom and billeting. Current building programs" include construction of a building to house the various aircraft type courses. Current planning provides for the use of closed circuit television as an instructional medium not only in support of certain presently conducted courses but also in support of the training requirements for the B-70.

The 3320th Technical School has come a long way since March 1, 1951. Its training programs provide key support for current Air Force technician needs. The rapidity of change with the Air Force structure, due to technological advances, could be cause for much change in the Technical School Mission within the ensuing ten years.

The major mission of Amarillo Air Force Base and the one involving the largest number of people is the 3320th Technical School. The mission of the school is primarily the training of Air Force technicians, with emphasis on the development of qualified apprentice personnel. Present course responsibilities fall in two broad areas, those courses required in the support of Air Force Weapons and in the various facets of material.

The Technical School has the prime responsibility on all Air Force fighter weapons, as well as the B-47, GAM-72, certain drones and the B-70. The mission is carried out by five basic methods: 1) through contract for instruction with the aircraft industry; 2) through the establishment of special training courses; 3) a resident pro-gram which trains basic airmen to the apprentice skill level in fundamental Air Force specialties; 4) through the management of a weapons oriented field or mobile training program and 5) through the development and publication of on the job training packages in certain technical specialties used in the field by individual air-men in training to up-grade their capabilities. Total annual student participation in these five programs approximates 275,000 airmen per year. Of this, an average of 16,000 per year is graduates of resident courses conducted at Amarillo Air Force Base.

In 1958 the reassignment of training responsibilities in the supply, procurement, fuels and administrative areas from Francis E. Warren Air Force Base and the assignment in July 1959 of the Field Training mission responsibilities from Chanute Air Force Base added further responsibility to the Technical School. The Field training mission provides for technical training at various Air Force bases within the U.S. and overseas through the use of training detachments either permanently assigned or mobile.

In an effort to standardize organization and save manpower, Air Training Command implemented a reorganization of all technical training centers on 4 January 1971. The command aligned comptroller, civil engineering, personnel, administrative, and band functions under the air base group and designated the air base group commander as base commander. Additionally, the command did away with the commandant of troops position at each of the technical training wings. In place of the wing staff position, on 1 March 1971, Air Training Command activated numbered student groups at each of the centers to manage the troops.

Concerned that the size of each of the technical training bases was more than a single commander could successfully manage, in late 1958 General Smith asked Headquarters USAF for permission to redesignate the technical training wings as training centers. Headquarters USAF approved the request. Effective 1 January 1959, ATC renamed its military training wing and all five of its technical training wings. The 3700th Military Training Wing became the Lackland Military Training Center; while the 3320th Technical Training Wing was redesignated as Amarillo Technical Training Center; the 3345th, Chanute Technical Training Center; the

3380th, Keesler Technical Training Center; the 3415th, Lowry Technical Training Center; and the 3750th, Sheppard Technical Training Center.

USAF Unit Histories
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Sources
Air Force Historical Research Agency. U.S. Air Force. Maxwell AFB, AL.
Unit History. *Amarillo Technical Training Center*. 1960.