

FROM AMERICAN AIRLINES

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American Airlines pilot training center at Ardmore, Oklahoma, which has been called the "West Point of commercial air transportation" is the largest and one of the foremost schools of its kind in the world.

It is the only complete training headquarters for commercial pilots, agents, flight dispatchers and mechanics, and stewardesses.

Some 900 pilots already have received training at Ardmore during the past 12 months. More than anything else, Ardmore is a post-graduate school. Pilots must have chalked up at least 2,500 flying hours before they even gain admittance.

American Airlines chose this training base after more than two years serious study. Some 96 airports were considered but Ardmore filled the bill more adequately than any of the others. It had previously been an Army Heavy Bombardment Training Base, and offered a maximum of flying time unhampered by adverse weather conditions. Sixteen miles from the city and out of the main stream of air traffic, it covers 2,200 acres of land and has four 7,200 foot concrete runways, two completely equipped hangars, 15 modern classrooms and a separate building for instrument flight trainers.

Facilities include a modern medical unit, nine dormitories, a complete cafeteria and a sewage disposal plant. The center has its own radio range, instrument landing system, airport control tower, weather service, pilot critique rooms and aircraft maintenance.

The Center schools personnel in many branches of commercial aviation from ground agents to flight crews, and is staffed by 175 employees who care for an average student flow of about 135 a month.

All 13 flight instructors are veteran American Airline pilots with many years of experience in both scheduled airline and military flying. They are rated as assistant chief pilots, eight are CAA flight examiners. Safety, efficiency and precision flying techniques are stressed in all pilot instruction.

Head of the Training Center is William T. Arthur who during the war as a Colonel was director of training for the Air Transport Command. He holds the Air Medal and three battle stars.

The training program is broken down into various classifications, all of which combine intensive ground and flight instructions.

1. New pilots, regardless of previous experience (American's requirements are high), spend four weeks in preparation for assignment as probationary First Officers (co-pilots).
2. Sometime in his first year of service, each new First Officer returns to the Training Center for an additional week of instruction, during which his progress and performance are carefully checked.
3. Both Captains and First Officers return to the Training Center for transition instruction on new types of aircraft as they are added to the fleet. This requires two weeks.
4. Promotion of First Officers to Captaincy. Preparatory instruction and the flight examination are given at the Training Center.
5. The Stewardess training program.
6. The Flight Dispatchers and the Maintenance training courses require six weeks each.

Pilots are chosen for their Ardmore assignment by seniority at various stations along American's system. A certain number are taken from each station each month.

Pilot training currently is concentrated on the DC-6 transition training program. American's DC-6 Flagship is the newest airplane to be put into operation in the post war period. Each trainee is receiving two weeks instruction including 10 hours of flying for Captains and five hours for First Officers. All receive 10 days ground school. All DC-6 pilots are thoroughly experienced with the DC-4, its predecessor.

Besides training American Airlines pilots, the Training Center also has instructed pilots of airlines operating overseas service, pilots of foreign government airlines, and those of private industrial concerns.

There are five stewardess instructors, five instructors for passenger agent training and 19 ground instructors, each a specialist in one or more aeronautical subjects. Stewardess training, designed for new employees, requires four weeks. The carefully selected girls are thoroughly indoctrinated in all the courtesies of passenger comfort which make flying the airlines today so enjoyable.

Agent training, also for new employees, takes four weeks. These young men, who care for passengers at the ticket counters and loading ramps, are taught speed, accuracy, and courtesy.

Flight Dispatcher training, a two-week course, is given only to employees who have been prepared for the assignment by many months of on-the-job training. Training courses for mechanics vary in length with the purpose.

Recreational facilities at the base include: volley ball, soft ball, horse-shoes, table tennis, reading, and music (piano and phonograph). Nearby are many favorite spots for hunting, fishing, golf, riding and swimming.

Students live at the Training Center during their entire course. They find all of their needs have been carefully considered. This has been accomplished advisedly so that the greater portion of their energies may be directed toward their particular training program.

As far as pilots are concerned, most of them feel that their assignment is a pleasant change from the year-round duties of flying American Airlines Flagships.

They are justly proud of their profession and anxious to absorb the excellent instruction which the Training Center provides

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