

# **Air Force Officer Training School (OTS)**

Officer Training School is located at Maxwell AFB, Alabama, and provides a 12-week program basic officer training program, designed to commission 1,700 officers annually. The Basic Officer Training program at OTS is the gateway to the Air Force officer corps. OTS helps prepare the trainee for leadership challenges they'll face as officers in the Air Force. Family members of students at OTS are eligible for medical care under TRICARE. To ensure they receive the proper care, the trainee must first make sure they are enrolled in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment System (DEERS). See the section "Married to the Air Force" in this handbook for information about getting enrolled in DEERS.

## **What to expect when your spouse is at OTS**

Officer Training School is a rigid program, both academically and physically, to prepare the trainee for life as a commissioned officer. The program is 12 weeks long and is broken down into "lower class" (first six weeks) and "upper class" (second six weeks) status. Training begins at 0500 and "lights out" is at 2300. The day is structured, especially while in lower class status and will include physical training, academics, drill (marching) and mandatory study time.

Upon arrival, the officer trainee will be given the opportunity to make a brief phone call to a family member to assure them of their safety. Throughout OTS, the trainee does have access to telephones but the tough academics do not allow much free time, especially while in lower class status. Officer trainees may not have cell phones but there are phones on every dormitory floor that can be used to make calling card, collect or DSN calls. It is highly recommended to write letters to your trainee; you'll be able to get their address within the first few days. Care packages with food and any other homemade goodies are welcome, but make sure to include enough for a flight of 15-16 people to share. Care packages are placed in the lounge for everyone to enjoy; food isn't allowed in the trainees' dorm rooms. If you live near Maxwell AFB, you may be able to go to the on-base post office and mail care packages for free! In addition, the trainee will eventually have an email account through Maxwell AFB and may be contacted this way as well.

If you live near Maxwell AFB, you will be allowed to attend church with your trainee throughout the entire 12 week program. If the service you wish to attend is offered at the Chapel on-base, you will have to meet your trainee and attend there; if your services are not offered on-base, your trainee can meet you at an off-base church.

Once the trainee reaches upper class status, he or she will have the opportunity to begin earning privileges based on their performance. Demerits are issued and the extent of his or her privileges is based upon them. Towards the end of the 12-week program, your trainee *may* earn privileges that allow weekend visitors or the ability to go off base, but there is no guarantee until Thursday of that week.

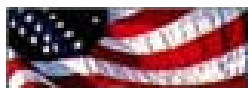
If your trainee has no prior military service, he or she will find out where you'll be stationed between weeks seven and nine. If your trainee has prior service, he or she should already have the assignment before arriving at OTS. The last three to four weeks of OTS will allow ample

time for your trainee to call your new base for information, set up the transportation of your household goods and to get a sponsor. The sponsor can be very helpful in getting you good information, helping to set up temporary housing, as well as giving you a tour of the base when you arrive. Your sponsor can also answer your questions, so make sure your trainee gets one.

Friends and family can arrive at Maxwell any time during the week of graduation but is only guaranteed to see the trainee on Thursday and Friday. Thursday afternoon is family-oriented and the OTS staff gives welcoming slide shows, briefings and tours of the area before you can greet your trainee. This welcoming coincides with a separate event for the trainees, after which you may spend time with your trainee. On Friday morning, there will be two ceremonies: a graduation, which will be a smaller, more intimate ceremony for your trainee and the other members of his or her flight, followed by a parade where the entire class marches for all friends and family members. Both of these are very special events so you'll want to be sure to have a camera to take pictures. Times and locations for these events vary so make sure to get this information from your trainee on Thursday. Childcare may not be available, so you may want to make appropriate arrangements ahead of time if you have young children.

On-base lodging fills up quickly for graduation, so your trainee will need to book early during OTS. He or she *may* be told when rooms may begin to be held; be sure to check so you can book as early as possible. Because on-base lodging does fill up, many visitors stay in off-base hotels. The most popular areas are those in Prattville, a ten-minute drive up I-65 from Maxwell AFB.

The website for Officer Training School: <http://ots.afoats.af.mil/>



USAF OFFICER TRAINING SCHOOL