

AIR UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



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Since 1947, AU has hosted International Military Students, resulting in over 13,000+ International Alumni from over 140 countries



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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Lieutenant General Andrea D. Tullos Commander and President, Air University



Q: How does the US Air Force structure allow us to better partner with foreign countries?

Lt Gen Tullos: Within the context of Great Power Competition, we've recently re-aligned Air University's units in ways taking place across the broader US Air Force. We're establishing command and control relationships that will enhance our ability to integrate our allies and partners assigned to and attending AU by design while working with Allies and Partners worldwide to deter threats, promote the rule of law, and protect the global commons. We need our Allies and Partners now more than ever, and we're committed to strengthening the solid bonds and shared interests we have and fostering new partnerships through our shared interest in Professional Military Education (PME), Instructor Exchanges, and our International Visits Program.

Q: How has wargaming changed or benefited our international partnerships?

Lt Gen Tullos: Our educational wargaming provides recurring opportunities for our international students and instructors to show us our blind spots, offer perspectives that extend beyond our American experience, and stretch our critical thinking in ways that we haven't been able to replicate independently. By including our Allies and Partners in our Title 10 wargames by design, we get to rehearse strategies and concepts without placing them at stake, identify capability gaps or areas where we can drive synergy, and work out command and control relationships and clarify guidance and intent before a crisis, as opposed to while we're in crisis. By training with those we may fight alongside, we're increasing our probability for success and preserving our respective national treasure.

Q: What impact do international students have on the life and mission of Air University?

Lt Gen Tullos: Air University's international students don't simply deepen the learning in our classrooms; they're part of the fabric of the River Region community. Our international students and their families live and participate in communities off-base; their children attend off-base schools, and they participate in activities throughout the broader community. They make lifelong connections with the friends they make here, and I meet many who return to visit and even retire here. When you have an opportunity to visit them in their home countries, they welcome you with a "Roll Tide" or a "War Eagle" and a big smile. We're grateful for our shared experiences and enthusiastically welcome them back to our schools as alumni.



ALUMNI THOUGHTS



CROATIA Major Dario Copetti (SOS 2016)



What is your fondest memory of your time as a Student at Air University?

My fondest memory as a student at AU was the people and the time we spent together after classes. We always worked as a team to solve problems our instructor put in front of us. I especially remembered how the students from US Air Force helped me to adapt and how they accepted me as their own.



FRANCE Colonel David Pappalardo (ACSC 2017)



How did that time prepare you for future assignments in your own air force?

I remember someone telling us, when I was a student, that “Academics was the art of personal decisions.” In retrospect, I think that’s relevant. What’s more, my year at Maxwell enabled me to build partnerships and to create a network of international friends, whom I was lucky enough to meet on my various missions abroad.

ALUMNI THOUGHTS



SWEDEN

Brigadier General

Lars Helmrich

(AWC 2010)



What is your fondest memory of your time as a Student at Air University?

I have many nice memories from my time in the US. The fondest I believe is the hospitality and friendly attitude from all Americans, and other nationalities, we met. This goes for me as well as for my wife and three children who went to school in Montgomery. From my studies I really appreciated the class on American Grand Strategy, the Regional travels and the exercises.



BRAZIL

Lieutenant Colonel

Gustavo Basilio

(ACSC 2024)



Any message you would like to share with fellow classmates or current AU students?

To my fellow alumni and current students, I'd say: cherish the connections and shared learning that come from your time at Air University. The experience is more than academic—it's an opportunity to build lifelong bonds and perspectives that will serve you well in navigating the challenges and demands of our evolving global landscape.

ALUMNI THOUGHTS



NIGERIA
Squadron Leader
MA Bashir
(SOS 2021)



What is your fondest memory of your time as a Student at Air University?

My fondest memory of Air University: The invaluable discussion and interaction between students from different countries as well as those of US Air Force. It's a memory I will live to remember. We still keep in touch, and we are maintaining a good relationship even after we'd left the school.



MALAWI Captain
Daniel Mwalungira
(SOS 2023)



How did that time prepare you for future assignments in your own air force?

My time at the Air University prepared me for a multirole task that I am able to perform. It prepared me for Command of a Squadron, staff officer duties and motivation to my subordinate for the betterment of the Malawi Air Force. To my fellow classmates, thank you for the bond we created, and this is making it easy to contact you each time I need your assistance whether professionally, personally or organisation (military) related. Let's keep sharing our experiences for a safer world.



ALUMNI THOUGHTS

in depth



NIGERIA Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Kabir Usman (ACSC 2022)

What is your fondest memory of your time as a Student at Air University?

USMAN My fondest memory of my time at Air University (AY22) was during our capstone exercise. We were assigned to a challenging case study in Nigeria that involved synthesizing complex strategic, operational, and tactical levels of planning. It wasn't just about applying what we'd learned; it required intense collaboration, innovative thinking, and critical analysis of real-world geopolitical scenarios.

Late into the evening, as fatigue set in, so did camaraderie. Someone suggested we grab some food, and, before we knew it, our group had turned the flight room into an impromptu "war room feast." Pizza boxes and cups of coffee cluttered the tables as we took turns sharing stories from our backgrounds, laughing at our collective exhaustion, and rallying each other to keep going. It was during these late hours that bonds formed beyond the ranks and roles, rooted in mutual respect and shared goals.

By the day of the presentation, we had pulled together a cohesive strategy, but what really stuck with me wasn't the success of the exercise; it was the unspoken sense of unity. This team of accomplished individuals, all driven by purpose, had become more than classmates—we became lifelong allies, each invested in each other's growth and success.

How did that time prepare you for future assignments in your own air force?

My time at Air University prepared me for my current role as Group Operations Officer of 115 Special Operations Group in several important ways:

a. **Strategic and Operational Insight:** The curriculum emphasizes strategic planning and decision-making, skills essential to my role overseeing aircraft operations across multiple theaters in Nigeria. Managing air operations requires a nuanced understanding of regional dynamics, strategic objectives, and operational constraints, all of which were sharpened through ACSC's intensive studies.



ALUMNI THOUGHTS

in depth Lt Col Usman (continued)



b. **Interagency and Joint Operations Coordination:** At ACSC, I gained exposure to joint and interagency operations, teaching how to navigate and coordinate among different military and civilian entities. This skill is crucial in my current role, where collaboration with other branches and agencies can greatly influence mission success and operational efficiency.

c. **Leadership and Team Dynamics:** Leading teams under high-stakes circumstances was undoubtedly a focus at ACSC, and now, as a Group Operations Officer, these skills are pivotal. Managing operations across theaters means relying on effective communication, motivating your team, and fostering trust—all critical for maintaining morale and ensuring operational success.

My time at Air University equipped me to manage the strategic complexity and operational challenges of my current role, enhancing my ability to support the mission and the individuals who execute it.

Any message you would like to share with fellow classmates or current AU students?

To my Air University classmates and current Air University students, I hope this message finds you well on your own journeys. Reflecting on my time at ACSC, I'm reminded daily of how those intense discussions, strategy sessions, and diverse perspectives shaped me for the role I have today.

If I've learned anything, it's that what we did there wasn't just an academic exercise; it was training for the kind of complexity we'd face in the field, where every decision has real-world impact. As I support the conduct of air operations, I'm grateful for the skills we developed together. The critical thinking, adaptability, and camaraderie have all been essential to my role and success here.

To those currently navigating the demands of Air University: Lean into every challenge, collaborate fully with your peers, and absorb as much as you can. The foundation you're building will serve you—and those you lead—for years to come. You're preparing not just for your next position but for a lifetime of meaningful service. Stay the course, and remember that you're joining a network of incredible leaders ready to support each other wherever we are in the world.

International Officer Cultural Festival



International Military Students of AWC and ACSC and their families treated the Maxwell community to a taste of their culture



Food, music, national dress, camaraderie... all were proudly on display. All were well received.



"This is my fifth time attending this outstanding event. It is easily my favorite day of the academic year." - Lt Col A. Searor, USAF



SAVE THE DATE



The 2025 International Alumni of Distinction Seminar at Maxwell Air Force Base will be held 14-17 April 2025. This event brings together international Air University PME Alumni to explore timely and relevant strategic topics on shared security challenges and regional stability



SNCOA Graduations:

25B on 13 Feb 2025

25C on 28 Mar 2025

25D on 18 Jun 2025

25E on 26 Aug 2025

25F on 10 Oct 2025



Air War College

Graduation:

14 May 2025

Air Command and

Staff College

Graduation:

15 May 2025

