

## **Officer Candidate School at Shrivenham, Berkshire, England (1942-1943)**

Not all troops arriving in the United Kingdom had been adequately trained in various aspects of amphibious operations before their departure from the United States. The need for specialized training facilities in the theater became evident as early as 1942.

Units could not be shipped back to training centers in the United States for retraining there. As invasion plans progressed and as new equipment became available, new techniques were learned, and the specific requirements of the invasion tasks were defined, it became increasingly obvious that the theater would have to conduct its own specialized training.

The first step in the establishment of such specialist training in the United Kingdom was taken in 1942 when the American School Center was organized. The theater commander at first authorized the Commanding General, SOS (Services of Supply), to set up two separate schools, one for the training of officer candidates, the other for specialized training which had been neglected in the United States or forgotten through disuse.

After the inspection of several possible sites, the Officer Candidate School and the Supply Specialists School were activated at Shrivenham, in Berkshire, where modern barracks, conference rooms, drill and recreation areas, and space for expansion were available. Colonel Walter G. Layman was named commandant. The two schools were to accommodate 250 students at one time. They began their activities late in 1942 and later were combined and redesignated the American School Center.

The Officer Candidate School was designed primarily to train men whose professional qualifications fitted them for direct commissions, but who lacked the necessary military background and training. Other men, not qualified for direct appointment, had to be sent to officer candidate schools in the United States. The Officer Candidate School at Shrivenham operated for about 15 months. In April 1943 Headquarters, ETOUSA, announced that officer requirements had been met, and the school was discontinued with the last class starting in September and graduating in December.

First class in the United Kingdom started with 50 candidates on September 14, 1942. Training occurred at the American School Center, Shrivenham, Berkshire, England. The school operated for approximately 15 months and graduated seven classes.

## Summary

<b>Year</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
1942	Class # 1	December 9, 1942	45
1943	Class # 2	February 3, 1943	55
1943	Class # 3	April 15, 1943	71
1943	Class # 4	July 1, 1943	71
1943	Class # 5	August 14, 1943	71
1943	Class # 6	October 10 1943	77
1943	Class # 7	December 1943	78
<b>Total Graduates</b>			468