



Department of the Army
Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 79th Field Artillery

Welcome to Basic Combat Training

Greetings from beautiful Fort Sill, Oklahoma! CPT Higginbotham and 1SG Barnwell will make up the Command team for your Trainee during their time in Basic Combat Training. As you already know, your Trainee has safely arrived, in-processed, and has started their 10-week journey towards becoming a Soldier.

During the ten-week training period, your Trainee will learn the basic skills that are required to survive and win on today's modern battlefield. The training will be very strenuous and demanding, but the tasks performed will help each Trainee develop the discipline and self-confidence necessary to be a successful Soldier in today's Army.

I want you to know that the Drill Sergeants who will train your Trainee are a very dedicated group of professionals who are genuinely concerned about the health, welfare, and training of each Trainee. We serve as coaches, teachers, mentors, and leaders whose mission is more than just making sure your Trainee graduates BCT. Our goal is to provide our Army with well-trained, motivated, and disciplined Soldiers who respond to leadership, are focused on teamwork, embrace the Warrior Ethos and the Army Values, demonstrate a winning attitude, and are mentally, physically, and emotionally prepared for the rigors of combat to fight and win on the modern battlefield.

YOU WILL HEAR FROM YOUR TRAINEE SOON!

By now, you should have already received a phone call from your Trainee. Your Trainee is extremely busy, so do not expect regular communications. Written communications are often more reliable than phone calls. Trainees are afforded 30 minutes on Sundays to use their cell phones to contact whom they choose; however, this is a PRIVILEGE that can be revoked for poor performance or misconduct. I ask that you do not try to attempt to contact your Trainee by phone. If there are any concerns regarding the health and welfare of your Trainee, I will personally let you know, or your Trainee will be allowed to call home.

YOUR TRAINEE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Whether or not this is your Trainee's first time away from home, I am sure that your Trainee will miss you a great deal. I strongly encourage you to write at every opportunity. Your Trainee will have time to write you as well. When writing your Trainee, use the following address.

Rank Last Name, First Name
Alpha Battery, 1st BN 79th FA
PLT, Class # 55 - 22 (Platoon # should be given to you by your Trainee)
5970 South Boundary Road
Fort Sill, OK 73503

Packages are not generally necessary because your Trainee can buy everything they need here at our local Post Exchange. However, if you choose to send your Trainee a package, please observe the following guidelines:

- ✓ No alcohol or products containing alcohol, tobacco, or narcotics
- ✓ No weapons
- ✓ No radios, televisions, cameras, or other electronic devices
- ✓ No pornographic or morally questionable materials
- ✓ No magazines or books
- ✓ No liquids, food items, candy, cookies, snacks, etc. (this attracts rodents and can cause a disease outbreak)

The following items are authorized and great items to send:

- ✓ Stamps
- ✓ Paper and envelopes
- ✓ Unscented hygiene items
- ✓ Special laundry soap
- ✓ COVID-19 mask (solid, black only with no logos)

PLEASE LIMIT SENDING PACKAGES! Your Trainees only have a SMALL drawer to store personal items, and will NOT have space to keep items sent from home. Everything they need on a day-to-day basis is provided.

WHAT CAN I DO TO ASSIST MY TRAINEE DURING TRAINING?

The best thing you can do is write as many encouraging letters as possible. Trainees look forward to the mail call. Small, tasteful photos are also a great motivator for Trainees.

HOW ARE THEY TREATING MY TRAINEE?

Trainees are treated fairly and firmly with dignity and respect. Abuse of any kind is NOT tolerated. Drill Sergeants are selected among the best Noncommissioned Officers in the Army and are highly qualified to train recruits.

MAY MY TRAINEE ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES?

Absolutely! Trainees have the opportunity to attend weekly religious services of various denominations and bible study. Trainees are also permitted to seek counseling from an Army Chaplain, who is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY TRAINEE FAILS A PORTION OF BASIC TRAINING?

If a Trainee fails to meet any of the graduation requirements, every effort will be made for the Trainee to retake the failed portion. In the event the Trainee cannot pass or retake that portion, they will be considered for a transfer (recycle) to another unit to complete the remaining training requirements. We will ensure that your Trainee is allowed to call home to keep you updated on their status.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES

If an emergency arises, the best means of notifying your Trainee is through your local American Red Cross. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year, at 1-800-RED-CROSS. Follow the instructions for contacting a military service member, in order to quickly get the message to the unit and the Trainee. The field office in your area will contact the Lawton, Oklahoma field office who will, in turn, contact us. In extreme cases, such as serious injury or death of an immediate family member, an emergency leave of absence may be granted, (this is a case-by-case basis only). Other leaves of absence during training are not authorized.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY TRAINEE IS INJURED DURING TRAINING?

Should any injury occur, your Trainee will receive appropriate medical attention from Fort Sill's state-of-the-art medical facilities. Additionally, Drill Sergeants are Combat Lifesaver qualified and carry medical aid kits. Injuries that prevent Soldiers from graduating will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Any Trainee who is injured during training and cannot complete the remaining training requirements will be transferred to the Warrior Training Rehabilitation Program (WTRP) to recover. Once the Trainee recovers, they will be sent to another training unit to resume the portion of training they missed.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY TRAINEE TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 DURING TRAINING?

After testing positive for COVID-19, the Trainee is moved to our COVID Operations unit known as Task Force Phoenix for a minimum of 10 days per Center of Disease Control (CDC) guidance. Once the Trainee is asymptomatic for 3 days, they will return to their unit. Our goal is to get the Trainee caught up on training requirements so they can graduate with their unit however, in some instances depending on the events missed the Trainee might have to be recycled to another unit, which would change their graduation date.

FAMILY DAY AND GRADUATION INFORMATION

Provided your Trainee meets all basic training requirements, they will be able to participate in Family Day and Graduation. Family Day and Graduation have opened back up to IET families. Family Day will be held on July 21, 2022 starting at 0900 (9:00am) and ending at 2000 (8:00pm). Graduation will be on July 22, 2022 at 0930 (9:30am). Your Trainee should know their graduation status by the end of the 9th week of training (week of July 15, 2022). As the time gets closer, I will issue a graduation letter that will go into more detail about Family Day and Graduation. This letter will also be posted on the Facebook page.

The graduation ceremony will be live-streamed for anyone that will not be physically present. I understand that you will want to make travel plans early in order to get the best travel deals. However, please talk to your Trainee at every opportunity regarding their graduation status. If you decide to book travel early, I highly recommend you have travel insurance or not make any travel arrangements that cannot be changed or canceled until you have received notice from your Trainee.

SHIPPING TO ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT)

Your now Soldier, will ship to AIT beginning on July 23, 2022 via government-provided transportation. NO Soldier is authorized to proceed to AIT by any method other than what is coordinated by the government. 13 Series (Field Artillery), 14 Series (Air Defense Artillery), 94M (Radar Repair) 94S (Patriot System Repairer) series Soldiers who are attending AIT at Fort Sill will ship to their gaining unit by the afternoon of graduation day, July 22, 2022 .After graduation, shipping dates to AIT are TENTATIVE due to current COVID-19 procedures.

POINTS OF CONTACT

The best way to communicate with us is through the Battery Facebook page. I highly recommend you use our Facebook for any communication because this allows others to view our communication. The chances are high that others will have the same question, and this will provide me a way to send messages to all family members at the same time. However, if you have an extremely important, sensitive, time urgent message, please look below for our e-mail. We attend as many training events as possible to witness firsthand your Trainees transforming into the Army's next Soldiers, but we do check our email often.

Battery Command: CPT Higginbotham Email: kyle.r.higginbotham.mil@army.mil

First Sergeant: 1SG Barnwell Email: chekima.l.barnwell.mil@army.mil

Graduation Livestream: www.livestream.com/firescenter

Brigade Facebook: www.facebook.com/ftsillbasictraining

Battalion Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/179FABN>

Battalion Twitter: https://twitter.com/1_79thfabn

Battalion Instagram:

Battery Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/alphathunder179>

Website: <https://sill-www.army.mil/434/1-79/alpha/>

In closing, transforming your Trainee from a Civilian into a Soldier is our mission. Without them, we would not be here. We will do whatever it takes to see that your Trainee is successful, but your son or daughter must possess the desire to become part of the U.S. Army. Encourage your Trainee to succeed and they will, just like the many who have come before them.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Higginbotham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

CPT Higginbotham, Kyle
CPT, FA
Commanding