



**Department of the Army
Echo Battery, 1st Battalion, 79th Field Artillery
434th Field Artillery Brigade
5970 South Boundary Road
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503-4558**



Family and Friends of Echo Battery:

Greetings from the Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, home of the Field Artillery. The Trainees of Echo Battery are proving their toughness every day. They have become more knowledgeable, motivated, and fit to be an American soldier. We are coming to the end of the training, and now it is time to look forward to graduation. The last graduation requirement is called the FORGE and is set to be completed this coming week. Your Trainee will have the opportunity to call home and communicate their graduation/recycle status to you. There is no need to call asking for information.

The Family Day Ceremony will occur on Thursday, November 14th, at 9:00 am. Guests will be able to pick up their Trainee at Echo Battery. The address is 5970 S. Boundary Road, Fort Sill, OK 73503. You will access the Post through Key Gate East. Gates will open for access at 7:00 a.m. **Your Trainee's pass will start at 9:15 a.m., and they will need to return to the battery before 8:00 p.m. Key Gate East is closed in the evening. When you are returning to Fort Sill to drop off your Soldier, you will enter through Key Gate West and proceed to the Battery.**

While on pass, please ensure your Trainee maintains their military bearing during their time with you. Trainees will not travel beyond the limits of Lawton, Elgin, Cache, and Medicine Park. Please remember that your Trainee is no longer only representing themselves, but this unit, Fort Sill, the United States Army, and this nation. Do not purchase contraband items for your Trainee, or allow your Trainee to purchase, or consume, these items while on the pass. These items include but are not limited to tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, electronics, body spray, perfume, body piercings, tattoos, and pornographic material. Do not allow your Trainee to drive any vehicles. Do not use a cell phone while driving on the installation. Your Trainee is not allowed to use their cell phone while walking in uniform. Your trainee is not allowed out of uniform. Do not take your Trainee to gamble in any casinos. **All Trainees will be held accountable for their actions. If you encounter any issues or if an emergency arises preventing your Soldier from returning on time, please contact the Battery at (580) 442-1317. We will cover all additional requirements and stipulations at the Family Day Ceremony.**

The Graduation Ceremony will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m. on November 15th, 2024, at the Fort Sill Polo Field. You will access the Post through Key Gate West. We highly recommend that guests carpool to mitigate limited parking. **Please dress and prepare accordingly for the weather.** Following the outdoor graduation ceremony, guests will be allowed to spend time with their Trainee on the Polo Field until noon. We encourage families to bring food, chairs, coolers (no alcohol), and umbrellas for shade for post-graduation activities. Trainees will depart back to their unit area of operation to prepare to ship to their Advance Individual Training location.

Split-Ops Trainees (i.e. those trainees returning home to complete Highschool) will out-process the unit and prepare for departure home via commercial means purchased by the government or with family if arranged. Again, Split-Ops Trainees have the option to travel home

with their families **at their own cost** (air or ground) **OR** they can travel home via government purchased air/bus fare. If your Split-Op trainee is traveling home with you, they will be available to leave the afternoon of August 16th immediately after graduation. **I would like to make this crystal clear to both the trainees and families – for Split-Option trainees the US Government will transport them to their home of record for free, OR the trainee can waive that option and travel home with family at their own cost. There will be no reimbursement for gas, airfare, etc.**

FAMILY TRAVEL TO AIT IS NOT AUTHORIZED. Your trainee will take government procured transportation to AIT, regardless of location.

If inclement weather occurs, we will conduct in-door graduation at the Cache Creek Chapel Complex, with the specific time published on the 434th Brigade Facebook Page. Immediately following indoor graduation, families will be provided the opportunity to spend time with family members in the general vicinity of the Chapel Complex but are not authorized to depart beyond the immediate area.

For Friends and Family unable to personally attend the graduation ceremony at Fort Sill, the ceremony will be live-streamed at: <https://firescenter.ravnur.com/> **This is the only valid link to watch graduation virtually and it is free of charge.** Do not follow any other links on Facebook claiming to live-stream the ceremony!

During Family Day and Graduation, the Department of Emergency Services will conduct in-lane vetting. Vetting can **ONLY** happen through Key Gate East and Key Gate West. Attendees 18 and older (16 and older if driving) will need to show a valid state ID or U.S. passport at the entrance to gain access to the installation. If you have military identification, you can use this card for post access. In-lane vetting will last from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. You do not need to go to the visitor center for a pass on base. If you have a felony or warrant, please reach out to the Visitor Center for post access approval. Their number is 580-442-9604.

If any information gets updated, it will be posted on the Battery Facebook page. Your Trainee will also be able to call with any updated information. We look forward to meeting you and hope you can attend your Trainee's graduation. Thank you for your continual support!

VICTORY THROUGH EXCELLENCE!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Williams', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Tucker J. Williams
CPT, FA
Commanding