



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ALPHA BATTERY, 1ST BATTALION, 40TH FIELD ARTILLERY
6050 NE ROTHWELL STREET
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA 73503

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

13 March 2018

Dear Family Member:

I am Captain (CPT) Orlando I. Peña, your Soldier's Battery Commander for Basic Combat Training (BCT) **Class #29-18** of **434th Field Artillery Brigade, Fort Sill, Oklahoma**. As you already know, your Soldier has safely arrived, in-processed, and has already begun their 9 week journey towards becoming a Warrior in the U.S. Army.

As a member of **Assassins Battery**, your Soldier is in the good hands of our Battery Cadre. These hard working Noncommissioned Officers, Commissioned Officers, and DOD Civilians make up one of the most dedicated and professional team in the United States Army. We serve as coaches, teachers, mentors, and leaders, whose mission is more than just making sure your Soldier graduates from BCT. Our goal is to provide our Army with well trained, motivated, and disciplined Soldiers who respond to leadership, are focused on team work and espouse the Warrior Ethos and the Army Values, who demonstrate a winning attitude, and are mentally, physically and emotionally prepared for the rigors of combat in order to fight and win on the modern battlefield.

We accomplish this mission by providing your Soldier with the most realistic, relevant, and best training available. As you will hear firsthand from your Soldier, this training will be some of the most strenuous, and demanding activities he has ever been through. BCT is not easy, nor should it be. However, every task your Soldier performs will help develop the discipline, self-confidence, and knowledge necessary to be a successful Soldier in today's Army.

We consider our Soldiers to be our nation's most precious resource, and a key asset of the Army's future. Because of this, your Soldier's development only begins with training. What makes the Army a unique organization and culture is that taking care of Soldiers and their families is our foremost priority. Please know that like you, we are genuinely concerned about your Soldier's overall health and well-being and we have a wide spectrum of resources available to alleviate and mitigate any financial, medical or personal issues.

This is not only your Soldier's first Army experience, it is yours as well. With that being said, we would also like to welcome you to the Army family. Like your family's values, our seven inherent Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage are rooted deep in tradition and sewn into the very soul of every American Soldier. Your Soldier is currently learning about these values while living by the American Soldier's Creed.

At times, this experience will seem to be very difficult for your Soldier. For many of our younger Soldiers, this is their first time away from everything they know, to include home, family and friends. Naturally, your Soldier misses you as much as you miss them, so I encourage you to write at every opportunity possible. Simply put, **Soldiers love getting mail**. Their address is as follows:

PVT (Your Soldiers Name)
Alpha Battery/1-40th FA PLT#_____ (the PLT will be 1, 2, 3 or 4)
6050 Rothwell Street
Fort Sill, OK 73503

Your sentiments of pride and encouragement provide a great deal of strength to the morale and motivation of your Soldier. Rest assured that your Soldier will be given ample time to write and read your mail. Please understand that sending and receiving mail is a federally protected right, but access to e-mail and the phone are not. As privileges, access to the phone and e-mail are granted based on good conduct and performance. Every Soldier will get the opportunity to use these communication privileges with a regularity that is not guaranteed.

Our Soldiers are scheduled to graduate on **Friday, May 18, @1000 hrs (10:00am)**, at the **Cache Creek Chapel** located near the Battery Area on base. Family Day activities are scheduled for **Thursday, May 17, @0900 hrs (09:00am)** in the **Battery Area** located on base. I will send you more detailed information explaining the events you can share with your Soldier prior to graduation. I invite you to follow our Facebook page for timely updates on your Soldiers. Remember, Graduation and Family Day activities are fixed events. It is up to your Soldier to meet all graduation requirements in order to move on to their next assignment. There are times when a Soldier does not meet these requirements for graduation and has to transfer to another battery. Under these circumstances, it is the Soldier's responsibility to inform you that they are not graduating. In addition, your Soldier's Family Day and Graduation pass can be revoked at my discretion. For these reasons, I highly recommend anyone coming to graduation to purchase refundable tickets. During the cycle, your Soldier will be going through intense training, so if you want to monitor their status and see their pictures on the internet, you can go to our **FACEBOOK account** and be a part of the **Alpha Battery 1-40th FA Assassins** group.

In order to gain access to Fort Sill for Family Day and Graduation, all visitors require a visitor pass. Because of the number of people attempting to get visitor passes for these events, it is very important that you start this process as early as possible. Information on applying for a pass can be found at the Visitor Control Center's website at <http://sill-www.army.mil/vcc/>. Download the Fort Sill Form 118a, fill it out, and mail it to the VCC at:

**Visitor Control Center
T6701 Sheridan Road
Fort Sill, Okla. 73503**

Please do not send them to the Battery or to your Soldier as we are unable to process them. Once the VCC receives your form, they will conduct a background check and you will be able to pick up your pass much faster at the VCC. Again, it is very important to start this process as early as possible. If you wait to apply for the passes on the day you arrive, you will likely be delayed and miss the Family Day ceremony. If you have any specific questions about accessing Ft Sill or obtaining a visitor pass, the VCC is best equipped to answer them. Call the VCC at (580)442-9603.

Further details about graduation will be mailed to you at a later date and also updated on the Facebook accounts. Also, you can find more information about graduation and pictures of your Soldiers in action at our Brigade website as well (<http://sill-www.army.mil/434/1-40/1-40a.html>).

Lawton-Fort Sill and our surrounding communities offer a vast array of attractions, activities, and accommodations during your stay. As you may know, Fort Sill is located in southwest Oklahoma and is surrounded by the scenic Wichita Mountains. The Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge includes a visitor center and several tourist sites such as the Holy City and historic Meers, OK. Lawton-Fort Sill boasts attractions such as the Great Plains Museum, while offering many restaurants and hotels to choose from. A "must see" is our National Historic Landmark, Old Fort Sill, which includes the original Cavalry Barracks built by the 10th U.S. Cavalry "Buffalo Soldiers" in 1869, and Geronimo's one-time cell at the

Guard House. The Fort Sill Museum also offers many rare artifacts and a “Cannon Walk” with a collection of over 200 historic Artillery Pieces.

As you may know, the security levels have been raised at critical installations throughout the United States, including here at Fort Sill, due to the ongoing Global War on Terrorism. Because of this increased threat level, there are multiple restrictions and prohibitions on where and when you can photograph and/or video activities and sights here on Fort Sill. While you are here visiting, it is permissible to photograph and videotape graduation activities, however this permission does not extend to the rest of Fort Sill. While photography is allowed of ceremonies and family or social events, unrestricted videotaping and photography by the public on the installation is prohibited. Photography is also allowed of historical exhibits at the Fort Sill Museum, including those which are outdoors, but not of nearby family quarters and office buildings. You are welcome to bring a camera to the graduation, but please exercise caution and do not point it in the direction of installation facilities, buildings and military equipment which are not part of the graduation activities. In the 1-40th FA Battalion Area, you may freely photograph or video all family related activities.

I am happy to welcome you and your Soldier to the Alpha “Assassins” Battery and to the United States Army. Graduation details will be mailed to you in a few weeks and I encourage you to follow us on Facebook for updates and photos. Please review it and feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns, I will do my very best to assist you in any matter regarding your Soldier.
ASSASSINS!

//ORIGINAL SIGNED//
ORLANDO I. PEÑA
CPT, FA
Commanding