DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
ECHO BATTERY, 1ST BATTALION, 31ST FIELD ARTILLERY
5955 ROTHWELL STREET
FORT SILL, OK 73503

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

ATSF-KJE

June 2, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR FAMILY OF ECHO BATTERY TRAINEES

REGARDING: Commander Introduction

1. I would like to take a few moments to introduce myself. I am CPT Kyle Loftus, your Soldier's Battery Commander (i.e. Boss) for his/her Basic Combat Training (BCT) experience.

2. Your Soldier arrived safely at Fort Sill and has begun BCT in E/1-31 FA and is part of Class number 56-15. During the 9 week training period (cycle) your Soldier will learn the basic skills that are required to fight, survive, and win on today's modern battlefield. The training will be very strenuous and demanding, but the tasks performed will help each Soldier develop the discipline and self-confidence necessary to become a successful Soldier in today's Army. I want you to know that the Cadre who will be training your Soldier are an extremely dedicated group of professionals and are genuinely concerned about the health, welfare, and training of each Soldier. We consider your Soldier to be the Army's most important asset, and I will personally ensure that we make your Soldier's BCT experience both challenging and rewarding.

3. **Communication.** Do not fear- you will hear from your Soldier soon. By now, you should have already received a phone call from your Soldier. All Soldiers are given the opportunity to call home within the first 72 hours upon arrival to Fort Sill and *normally* once a week after the first four weeks of training are complete. However, please take note: phone calls home are a **privilege** and can be lost for poor performance and/or misconduct. I ask that you not attempt to contact your Soldier by phone – personal cell phones are maintained in storage until authorized call times occur. If there is anything that you should be concerned with regarding the health and welfare of your Soldier, the 1SG or I will personally let you know. Whether or not this is your Soldier's first time away from home, I am sure that your Soldier would love to hear from you. I strongly encourage you to **write** as often as possible. Please keep in mind that it may take longer than expected time for your mail to catch up to your Soldier. Our current mailing address is provided on the last page of this letter.

4. **Packages.** Packages are authorized but *strongly discouraged* - your Soldier can buy everything needed here at our local Post Exchange (shopping store). However, if you choose to send your Soldier a package, please observe the following guidelines acknowledging there is minimal storage for items (large quantities will not be distributed to the Soldier):
   a. No alcohol or products containing alcohol.
   b. No tobacco.
   c. No narcotics.
   d. No weapons.
   e. No radio's, TV's, camera's, or other electronic devices.
   f. No pornographic or morally questionable materials.
   g. No magazines.

h. No food items (It is a health and welfare issue for the Soldier bays and will create insect and rodent problems).

5. **Religious Services.** Your Soldier will have the opportunity to attend weekly religious services and Bible studies of various denominations. Soldiers are also permitted to seek counseling from an Army Chaplain who is on call 24 hours a day. Please note that while the freedom to practice one's own religion is absolutely supported, some practices may be counterproductive in the BCT environment and will be discouraged for health and welfare reasons (e.g. - certain lengths of fasting).

6. **Emergencies.** Should an emergency arise, the best means of notifying your Soldier is through your local American Red Cross (found in a phone book or online). The field office in your area will contact the Lawton, Oklahoma field office, who will in turn contact me. In extreme cases, such as serious injury or death affecting immediate family members, an emergency leave of absence *may* be granted. Other leaves of absence during training are not normally authorized. If your Soldier is injured during BCT, they will receive medical attention from the Reynolds Army Community Hospital located here at Ft. Sill. Additionally, Drill Sergeants are Combat Lifesaver qualified and carry medical aid kits. Depending on the nature and extent of the injury, there is potential for a delay in graduation.

7. **Family Day and Graduation.** Family Day is typically held the day prior to Graduation. There will be a brief presentation and demonstration of key events that occur during BCT. Soldiers will then be released on pass until 2000 hours (8:00 p.m.). The day after Family Day is Graduation. The graduation ceremony typically lasts an hour and is the formal induction of your Soldier into the United States Army. More information about both events will be released as the dates draw closer so you can make appropriate travel plans. I ***strongly advise*** not paying for any travel expenses to Family Day/Graduation too soon; injuries and issues happen which may delay or disqualify your Soldier from those events.

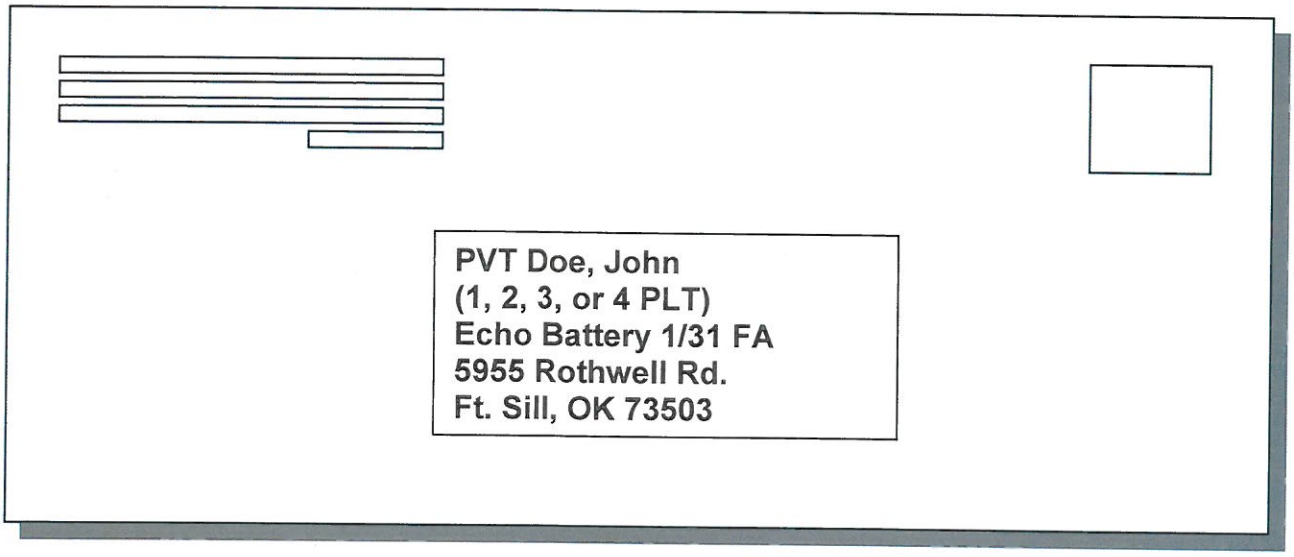
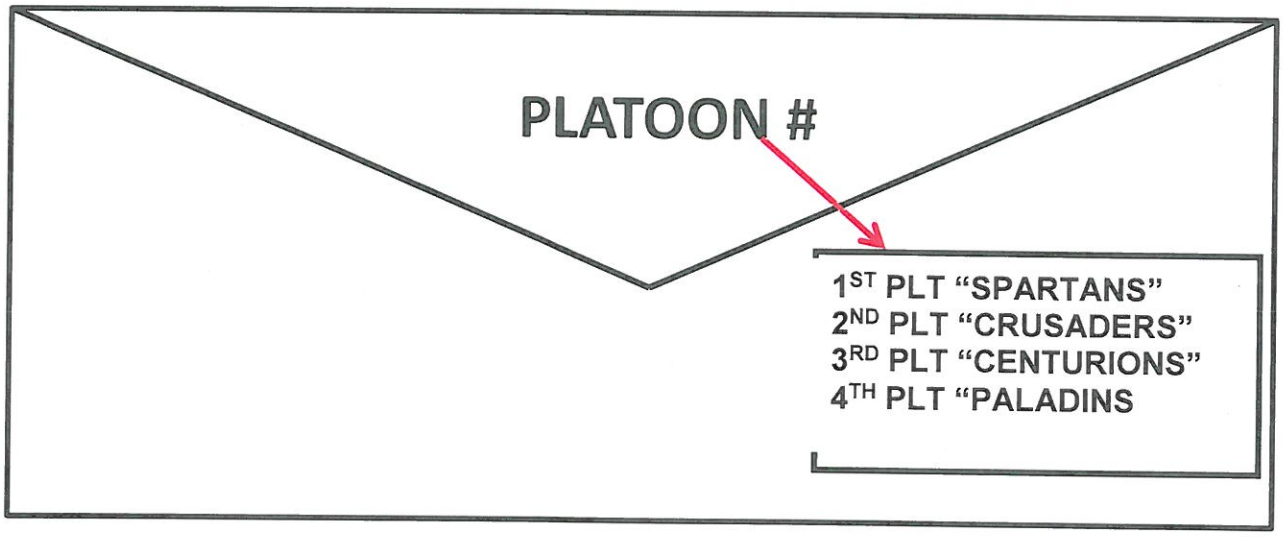
8. **Battery Webpage and Facebook Website**. The Battery Link is:

   https://www.facebook.com/E131Fa434FaBde?ref=hl

   Our Facebook Website feed is on the website as well. Again, I encourage you to share this website with family, loved ones, and anyone else that would like to receive updates on your Soldier's progress through Basic Combat Training. Please feel free to use this as a link to the Battery and the other families. The website is used as a communication tool to better inform families and loved ones about training and upcoming events.

9. **Closing.** Your Soldier's platoon epithets are given on the next page along with information on how to mail letters to him/her. The Battery's epithet is "*Gladiators*". If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to ask. I can be reached during normal duty hours at (580) 442-6859/0110 or through my email address: kyle.a.loftus2.mil@mail.mil.

Respectfully,

KYLE A. LOFTUS
CPT, FA
Battery Commander

ECHO BTRY 1-31ST FA MAILING ADDRESS EXAMPLE