Basic Training Information

A/1-79th Field Artillery

"Thunder"

CLASS# 18-18
23 January – 30 March 2018

FROM THE COMMANDER:

Greetings! I am Captain George Smith, your Soldier's Battery Commander during Initial Entry Training into the United States Army. Your Soldier arrived safely at Fort Sill and will begin Basic Combat Training in my unit. During the nine-week training period, your Soldier 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 Soldier develop the discipline and self-confidence necessary to be a successful Soldier in today's Army.

I want you to know that the Cadre who will train your Soldier are a very dedicated group of professionals who 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 basic training experience both challenging and rewarding.

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 Alpha Battery. Afterwards, Soldiers are occasionally afforded the **PRIVILEGE** to utilize the telephone; however, Soldiers may have this privilege revoked for poor performance or misconduct. I ask that you not attempt to contact your Soldier by phone. If there are any concerns regarding the health and welfare of your Soldier, I will personally let you know, or your Soldier will be allowed to call home.

YOUR SOLDIER WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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

Rank Last Name, First Name
A/1-79 FA, # Platoon (Example: 4th PLT), Class# 18-18
6007 Rothwell Street
Fort Sill, OK 73503-5001.

Mail delivery to Soldiers is ***Extremely Slow***. This is a systemic problem and one that I'm sure may frustrate you when your Soldier has sent you letters and states that they have not received any packages from you. I **assure you** that we are doing everything we can to ensure your Soldiers receive their mail in a timely manner. Please be patient.

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SENDING PACKAGES! Your Soldiers only has a small drawer to store personal items, and will not have space to keep items sent from home. **Your Soldier can buy everything he/she needs here at our local Post Exchange.** However, if you choose to send your Soldier a package, please observe the following guidelines:

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

WHAT CAN I DO TO ASSIST MY SOLDIER DURING TRAINING?

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

HOW ARE THEY TREATING MY SOLDIER?

Today's Soldiers are treated fairly, firmly, with dignity and respect. Abuse of any kind is not tolerated. Drill Sergeants are selected from among the best Non-Commissioned Officers in the Army and are highly qualified to train recruits.

MAY MY SOLDIER ATTEND RELIGIOUS SERVICES?

Yes. Soldiers have the opportunity to attend weekly religious services of various denominations and bible study. Soldiers are also permitted to seek counseling from an Army Chaplain who is on call 24 hours a day.

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

If a Soldier fails to meet any of the graduation requirements, every effort will be made for the Soldier to retake the portion he/she fails. In the event the Soldier cannot pass or retake that portion, he/she will be considered for a transfer (recycle) to another unit to complete the remaining training requirements. If a Soldier fails the final Basic Physical Fitness Test (BPFT), every effort will be made to provide that Soldier an opportunity to retake the BPFT. Passing the BPFT is a graduation requirement and if he/she still cannot pass prior to graduation, the Soldier may be assigned to the Fitness Training Unit (FTU). Upon passing the BPFT at FTU, the Soldier will move on to his/her Advanced Individual Training (AIT). We will ensure that your Soldier is afforded the opportunity to call home in order to keep you updated on his/her status.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES

Should an emergency arise, the best means of notifying your Soldier is through your local American Red Cross. 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 (case-by-case basis only). Other leaves of absence during training are not normally authorized.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY SOLDIER IS INJURED DURING TRAINING?

Should any injury occur, your Soldier 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 Soldier who is injured during training and cannot complete the remaining training requirements will be transferred to the Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation Program (PTRP) to recover. Once the Soldier recovers, he/she will be sent to another training unit to resume the portion of training he/she missed.

FAMILY DAY AND GRADUATION INFORMATION

Family Day activities will showcase skills learned by your Soldiers, promotions and award presentations. This is the first time you will be able to see your Soldier and they look forward to it greatly, as I am sure you do. **Family Day will be held at Destroyer Park on the corner of Rothwell St. and Sheridan Avenue Fort Sill, OK 73503** and starts at **9:00 A.M. on Thursday, 29 March 2018**.

Provided your Soldier meets all basic training requirements and is not facing any administrative actions your Soldier will **graduate at 10:00 AM on Friday, 30 March 2018** at the **Cache Creek Chapel Complex** located at **6043 Rothwell St, Lawton, OK 73503**.

I understand that you will want to make travel plans early in order to get the best travel deals. However, please talk to your Soldier at every opportunity regarding his/her graduation status. I recommend that you **DO NOT** make any plans or travel arrangements which cannot be changed or canceled until you have received notice from your Soldier that he/she will graduate. Your Soldier should know his/her graduation status by the end of the 8th week of training (week of March 19th).

As the time gets closer, I will issue a graduation letter that will go into more detail about Thunder Town Hall, Family Day and Graduation. This will be posted on the Facebook page and website listed in this letter.

ON-POST ACCESS PASS

Fort Sill made a change to the requirements to gain access to the installation. Each person over the age of 16 without military I.D. must now individually mail/submit a FS Form 118A for a background check to the Visitor Control Center. If you have a felony within the last 10 years you may be denied on post access.

When filling out this form, please put your Soldier's rank and full name as well as the class number (Class 18-18) underneath "Specify Below" in block IIb (purpose of visit). This will assist the Visitor Control Center in ensuring your pass forms get organized in the right location for pick up. You will want to make the pass request from 28-30 March 2018.

Mail them directly to:
Fort Sill Visitor Control Center
BLDG T6701 Sheridan Rd
Fort Sill, OK 73503

Please do not mail these forms back to the address you received this letter from, as this could result in your pass not being received by the correct personnel to process it.

The Visitor Control Center's phone numbers are: (580) 442-9602; 442-9603; 442-9604; Business hours are 6:00 AM - 6:00 PM Central Time; Sunday-Saturday 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM (hours may change on major holidays)

Once they receive your form, the Ft. Sill VCC will validate them. Failure to mail your visitor request form to them in time may delay your access to post.

IF YOU ARE EXPECTING OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS TO COME AND YOU SUSPECT THEY DID NOT RECEIVE A LETTER, PLEASE MAKE ENOUGH COPIES OF THE REQUEST FORM INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER THAT YOU EXPECT WILL ATTEND.

SHIPPING TO ADVANCED INDIVIDUAL TRAINING (AIT)

Your Soldier will begin to ship to AIT beginning on **March 30th** (the day of graduation) via government-provided transportation. **Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Soldiers who are attending AIT here at Fort Sill will ship to their gaining unit at the end of graduation. Passes are typically granted once AIT assumes responsibility of those Soldiers.**

BATTERY WEBSITE

The Battery maintains a webpage that is updated periodically. The website can be found at http://sill-www.army.mil/434/1-79/alpha/. Also, a Battery Facebook page can be found at https://www.facebook.com/alphathunder179/. There, you can find weekly updates about your Soldiers' training, graduation information, directions, and maps of the Ft Sill/Lawton area. Every attempt will be made to post pictures of all Soldiers during their training. Although it is not possible to identify and label each individual Soldier in these pictures, we will do our best to have plenty of images for you to view.

POINTS OF CONTACT

A great deal of information is published both on the Facebook page and a follow-up Graduation letter will be mailed later in the cycle. If this letter, the Facebook page, or the Graduation letter do not contain the information you need, or if there is a specific issue related to your Soldier, please feel free to contact any of the following people by phone, mail, or email (if you think it can be answered on the Facebook Page, please ask your questions there; if it is personal, please use the Alpha Email address: alphathunder179@gmail.com

Battery First Sergeant
1SG Albert V. Turner
Thunder 7

Battery Commander
CPT George E. Smith
Thunder 6