



**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY**  
Echo Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 79th Field Artillery  
434<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade  
5970 South Boundary Road  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma 73503-6204



ATSF-KG-E

11 August 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR Family and Friends of Class #60-20

SUBJECT: Welcome Letter, Class #60-20

Greetings from the Fires Center of Excellence, Fort Sill, Oklahoma!

My name is Captain Charlie Egan, the commander of Echo Battery, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 79<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment *ELITE*. Your Soldier arrived safely and has begun Basic Combat Training here in the 434<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade.

We are extremely proud your Soldier has volunteered to join a time honored profession of service to our Nation in the United States Army.

Over the next nine weeks your family member will begin the transformation from a civilian to a Soldier in the United States Army. Your Soldier will learn the basic skills required to fight and win on today's modern battlefield. The training will be strenuous and demanding.

The tasks your Soldier performs develop the discipline and self-confidence necessary to be a successful Soldier in today's Army. Your Soldier will conduct physical training daily to build physical strength and conditioning while instilling teamwork, pride, and enthusiasm in themselves and their unit. Your Soldier will learn military customs, courtesies, and traditions as well as policies and procedures on how Soldiers conduct themselves as members of the military team.

Additionally, they will learn how to engage the enemy with a weapon, care for their buddy using first aid, navigate with a map and a compass, all while immersed in an environment stressing the seven Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage; it is these values that shape who and what we are as Soldiers and warriors.

The Drill Sergeants and Cadre training your Soldier are a very dedicated group of professionals, genuinely concerned about the health, welfare, and training of each Soldier. We consider our Soldiers to be the most important asset of the Army's future.

Your Soldier will have the opportunity to call home upon arrival to Echo Battery during the first week of Basic Combat Training. Phone privileges will be extremely limited during Basic Combat Training. Throughout the course, your Soldier may have the opportunity to use the phone as they progress to each phase of Basic Training, primarily on the Sunday afternoons, following the completion of each phase. I do encourage you to write to your Soldier. A little bit of encouragement from home goes a long way in keeping your Soldier engaged and motivated.

While packages are allowed, **PLEASE DO NOT SEND** medication of any kind, food items, magazines, weapons, knives, clothing, or other “contraband” items: electronics, tobacco products, and/or candy. All boxes are opened by the addressee and screened for these items.

Send mail to:

PVT/PFC/SPC (your Soldier’s last, first name)  
5970 South Boundary Road  
1-79<sup>th</sup> FA BN, Echo BTRY, (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup>) PLT  
Fort Sill, OK 73503-6204

Due to Department of Defense COVID-19 travel restrictions and precautions, our Family Day (22 October 2020) and Graduation (23 October 2020) activities will be virtual until further notice. Graduation will be streamed live at [www.livestream.com/firescenter](http://www.livestream.com/firescenter). We will send out a detailed graduation information letter during week 6 of training. The best information is available on our Battery Facebook Page, just search for “*Echo Battery 1-79 Basic Combat Training*”. Updates, information, and photos will be uploaded.

The **Army Family Team Building** (AFTB) training program is an online course designed to give family members that are new to Army life a baseline of Army knowledge and resources to aid in their transition. The training is open to anyone who has access to a computer and the Internet. We highly encourage you to complete the training to learn some valuable information about the Army. Instructions for the training course are below.

Instructions:

- (1) Sign up online through this link for AFTB Classes: <https://www.myarmyonesource.com>
- (2) Register (top right corner), click “**Online Training**”, click “**Computer Based Training**”, on left column click on “**AFTB level I, II, and III Training**”.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Battery with any critical concerns regarding your Soldier. Just understand that we cannot give you specific information on your Soldier as we are unable confirm your identity over the phone. You can ask for me, **CPT Charlie Egan** or the Battery First Sergeant, **1SG Gildardo Ramirez**. Our telephone number is (580) 442-1317(CQ Desk)/1377(Battery Commander Office)/1318(1SG Office). If a true emergency arises at home, i.e. serious injury, illness, or worse, of an immediate family member (spouse, parent, in-law, sibling, or child) please call the American Red Cross (877) 272-7337 in order to quickly get the message to the unit and the Soldier.

We look forward to meeting all of you and hope you are able to attend your Soldier’s graduation pending the COVID-19 precautions. Thank you for the support of your Soldier!

SEEK, STRIKE DESTROY!  
PEACE THROUGH VICTORY!  
VICTORY THROUGH EXCELLENCE!

////ORIGINAL SIGNED////  
CHARLES J. EGAN  
CPT, FA  
Commanding

## Frequently Asked Questions/Concerns

### **-I have not heard from my Soldier in a few days.**

We try to give Soldiers an opportunity to call home on Sundays after completion of their third week (Red Phase). This is dependent on time and is a **privilege** that is earned, not a right. Training and administrative requirements take priority. Trainees can call whomever they like and the time they have with their phones is limited. If you did not receive a call they may have called someone else in that time.

### **-I have sent mail to my Soldier which they have not received/my Soldier has sent mail that has not arrived.**

The mail system for Basic training runs slower than the typical civilian mail system because the mail must be sorted and delivered to many trainees that are spread throughout the installation. After arriving at the Post Office on Ft. Sill, mail will be picked up and delivered to our higher headquarters then it is picked up by the Battery. This typically adds 2-3 days to the delivery time.

### **-My Soldier has not received their pay.**

All finance issues can be resolved by the Soldier and his/her Drill Sergeants. Following the first pay period the Drill Sergeants will identify issues with Soldiers' pay. Soldiers must bring up issues so it can be resolved efficiently. Keep in mind that it can take up to 45 days for Soldiers to get into the pay system.

**ALL FAMILY DAY AND GRADUATION INFORMATION IS CONTINGENT ON DOD TRAVEL GUIDANCE DUE TO COVID-19. THE INFORMATION LISTED BELOW IS FOR INFORMATIVE PURPOSES ONLY. WE HIGHLY ENCOURAGE THAT FAMILY MEMBERS NOT BUY TICKETS OR BOOK HOTELS UNLESS WE INFORM YOU THAT FAMILY VISITS ARE PERMITTED AGAIN.**

### **-How do I get tickets to Graduation/how many people can come to my Soldier's Graduation?**

The Graduation ceremony is currently scheduled for the Cache Creek Chapel Complex on Fort Sill. There are no assigned seats, so no tickets are needed. Also, there is a limit on space available, everyone is welcome to attend, but space is limited.

### **-I plan on coming to Graduation; can I get a list of hotels in the area and directions to Graduation?**

As mentioned above I will be sending out a second letter as we get closer to Graduation with pertinent information about the event. Also use the website located in this letter. **We do not make reservations for you.** Using online travel search engines is also a great way to find local hotels and rental car agencies.

### **-When will I be able to see my Soldier at Graduation time?**

There will be two opportunities to spend time with your Soldier. The day prior to Graduation is our Family Day demonstration. At the conclusion of this demonstration Soldiers are given a limited day pass to spend with their family. Again, pass is a privilege, not a right. Soldiers must remain in the Lawton Fort Sill area and return to the Battery by 7:00 pm. Again, following the Graduation ceremony Soldiers will be given another day pass with the same restrictions as the Family Day pass and dependent on their ship time.

**-It's the first time my Soldier has been away and I just wanted to see how they are doing/make sure everything is okay.**

We train over 200 Soldiers each Basic Training class. The schedule is very demanding for both the trainees and the cadre training them. We truly do not have the resources or time available to provide individual updates on Soldiers. If there is an emergency or a Soldier is hospitalized we will contact their family.

**-What if I am having trouble with the Fort Sill Visitor Control Center website?**

Please contact the Visitor Control Center for all questions relating to them. The number is (580) 442-9602/9603/9604. Keep in mind that they are very busy especially on Wed, Thurs, and Fri.