

Basic Training Frequently Asked Questions

My Soldier will be training in near future, what's his grad date?

It is difficult to definitively say when your Soldier will graduate that far in advance. There are many factors that can move that date. Soldiers are instructed to call the person listed as their next of kin within 24 hours of arriving at the 30th AG Reception Battalion. Your Soldier will be assigned to the company he will train with after a week or so of in-processing at the reception battalion. (The time spent at the reception battalion can vary based upon things such as medical issues.) You will be able to find out the exact dates once you know the training company. Also, Soldiers in danger of not graduating are instructed to notify NOK around weeks 7-9.

Do you have any photos of my Soldier

Short answer is "maybe, but probably not." More than 114,000 Soldiers pass our way each year and each day about 14,000 of them are in training somewhere on Fort Benning – 5,800 in basic training alone. With that volume of Soldiers, who are here for such a short period of time, it would be impossible to photograph them all. However you can get an idea of what your Soldier is experiencing by visiting the Fort Benning photo Website, <http://www.fortbenningphotos.com>.

Official Photos

Contact Leonard Studios, (706) 682-7844 for yearbooks, the official photos, Class A photo, and platoon photos.

GRADUATION VIDEOS

Mahone Video Production
938 Bunker Hill Rd
Columbus, GA 31907-6713
(706) 689-7349

Also, each week the Facebook page hosts "Tuesday Trivia @ 2 p.m." (Eastern). The person whom correctly answers the question first gets to pick any unit (company size and below) for us to go out and take pictures of. It is a great game where our Army Families learn more about their Army, and provides an opportunity for them to see photos of their Soldiers.

I went through basic training XX years/months ago, can I still order a yearbook?

Possibly. The contract has changed hands a few different times. Depending on when you were at Fort Benning you will need to contact either Leonard Studios (706) 687-5509 or Basic Video Productions, (210) 695-4979.

How long will my Soldier be in basic training reception?

The average length of time between home and being assigned to a basic training unit is 7-14 days. During this time your Soldier is traveling for 1-2 days and in processing for 3-4 days. However, keep in mind Soldiers only in process Monday through Friday, so if he arrives later in the week it will carry over to the following week. It's also important to remember that this process can be longer for Infantry Soldiers attending the 14-week One Station Unit Training. This is because those units are filled with Soldiers with the same MOS, whereas 9-week basic training units are filled with Soldiers with a variety of different MOSs.

How often are basic training Soldiers allowed to call home?

Phone call frequency varies by unit and is at the discretion of the drill sergeants. Generally Soldiers are allowed to make a quick call home when they first arrive at Fort Benning and another when they are out of reception and assigned to a basic training unit. These first few calls are often very quick (30 seconds or so) and your Soldier only has time to pass on a mailing address before he is told to hang up. As they move through the basic training process they will earn more phone time. Calls will not be later than 9 p.m. eastern standard time because that is "lights-out" time for basic training Soldiers.

Where can I find more information about my Soldier while he's in basic training?

The Fort Benning basic training Web site provides general details of what basic training Soldiers experience during their 9 or 14-week basic training journey, including graduation dates, <https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/basictraining>.

My Soldier was injured during basic training what happens next?

Depending on the extent of their injuries, Soldiers who get injured during basic training are usually allowed to continue training as part of the rehabilitation battalion until either the injury is healed or they are medically discharged. While in the rehabilitation battalion injured Soldiers will do modified PT so as not to put more stress on their injury. If they remain in basic training they will join another unit at the point where they left off with their original unit. This means they will have a different date for family day and graduation. Please remember this is general guidance, YOUR Soldier will have the best information.

Does my Soldier's basic training unit have its own Facebook page or Web site?

Sometimes, but not usually. Not all units have the time and resources to manage independent Web sites and pages. If your Soldier's unit has these they will be listed in the letter you receive from the commander.

How do I address envelopes to my Soldier in basic training?

Follow what your Soldier told you or what is sent in the commander letter, but as a guideline addresses usually look like this:

PVT Last name, First name
Roster Number
X Co., X-XX Inf. Regt.
Street address
Fort Benning, GA 31905

My Soldier is in basic training, can I send him care packages and if so, what can I send?

The answer to this may seem simple, but it's not. Much like parents, each drill sergeant has a different style so they are the ultimate decision makers when it comes to what your Soldier can and cannot receive. If your Soldier requests an item he can receive it.

Can I send newspaper clippings, pictures or a card that plays music to my Soldier, or just standard letters?

More often than not Soldiers can receive these items. They may "pay" for them with extra push-ups or sit-ups – especially for music/recorded voice cards – but they will get to keep them.

My Soldier told me to put a colored dot, symbol or some other marking on the outside of his mail why do I have to do this?

This is done to make the sorting of mail easier. Thousands of Soldiers receive thousands of letters each day so anything to ease the process will help. Yes, your Soldier will get his mail if you forget to put the symbol or color, but remember he may pay for your mistake with extra push-ups or sit-ups, so follow your Soldier's instructions carefully. If your Soldier didn't tell you to do this you don't have to put anything.

My Soldier said he isn't receiving my letters. Do drill sergeants hold mail?

No, drill sergeants do not hold mail. The most common reason your Soldier may not be receiving your letters is because he's only been in the system for a couple of weeks. Be patient, with thousands of letters going to thousands of Soldiers, it takes time to get everything to everyone. He will get your mail. Another possibility could be you addressed it incorrectly. If a number is wrong it might reach the Soldier, but it might get returned back to you.

If I overnight mail to my Soldier in basic training will he get it faster?

It is not recommended that you overnight anything to your Soldier. Paying the additional fees to overnight a package will only guarantee that the package arrives at Fort Benning overnight, the mail process is still the same – it takes time to get thousands of letters to thousands of Soldiers.

My Soldier took his cell phone to basic training. Will he be able to use it?

Although many recruiters tell Soldiers not to bring their cell phone to basic training, many Soldiers are allowed to use them when they earn phone privileges to call home. Cell phone use depends on the drill sergeants. Some drill sergeants allow them, others do not. If Soldiers are allowed to use them they will not have them at all times. The phones will be locked up with the Soldier's other personal belongings and distributed when phone privileges are earned.

I have a family emergency and need to reach my Soldier in basic training, who do I call?

If it is truly an emergency a Red Cross message can be sent to the Soldier. Red Cross emergency communications services keep military personnel in touch with their families following the death or serious illness of an immediate family member, the birth of a Soldier's child or grandchild or when a family faces other emergencies. The West Central Georgia chapter of the Red Cross services Fort Benning, <http://www.wcgreddcross.org/>.

My Soldier is in basic training and I have a question about his pay or another financial issue, who can I call?

Due to the sensitive nature of financial information, it is advised that Soldiers takes care of pay issues rather than spouses or parents. If you experience an issue, explain the situation to your Soldier the next time you speak with him and he can then tell his drill sergeant he has a financial issue and he needs to rectify it. Red Cross messages cannot be sent for pay issues.

What time is the turning blue ceremony/family day/graduation ceremony?

The times for these ceremonies will vary by unit. Your Soldier's specific information will be in the commander letter. If you are unclear YOUR Soldier is the best source for this information.

Can I take pictures/video at my Soldier's graduation and around the installation?

You are authorized to take pictures and video around Fort Benning unless otherwise posted or you are specifically asked not to take pictures/video. The one caveat is the gates. Please do not photograph or video any of the access control points as this could be a security threat.

What should I wear to my Soldier's graduation ceremony?

While there isn't a dress code and you will see the entire spectrum of clothing options, it's generally recommended that you wear Sunday church attire.

Is there a limit on the number of people who can attend a family day or graduation ceremony?

No there isn't a limit. Soldiers may have as many guests (family and friends) as they want attend these events. No tickets are needed.

Can I purchase souvenirs from Fort Benning and specifically from my Soldier's unit?

Most, if not all, basic training units sell t-shirts and other souvenirs at the graduation ceremony. Families are also allowed to purchase items at the National Infantry Museum gift shop.

Spending time with family after graduation

Soldiers are generally given a pass to spend time with Family however, the availability and amount of time is determined by his chain of command. You will find out more details during Family Day.

After basic training can my Soldier ride/fly with me to his next duty station and who pays for his ticket?

Toward the end of training, usually about two weeks before graduation, Soldiers will decide if they need government transportation to their next duty station if they're active duty or home if they are National Guard or Reserve. This does not apply to Soldiers taking leave or participating in the Hometown Recruiter Assistance Program, those Soldiers can arrange their own travel plans through family or airlines. Reimbursement for Soldiers for their travel home or to the next duty station is on the basis of mileage from Atlanta to their next assignment. It may or may not be equal to what they actually paid for their travel. They get reimbursed at their destination, for active duty that means direct flight to their next duty station and NOT transportation for leave (vacation) or hometown recruiting. If a Soldier's plans fall through they can still receive government transportation to their next duty station up until graduation day. Also, up until graduation day, a ticket can be returned to the travel section if the Soldier decides to change his travel plans and go with family. No charge to the Soldier or Army Reserve if we turn the ticket back in.