

# *When Your Son or Daughter Goes Through Basic Combat Training (BCT)*

## **Overview**

Understanding BCT and supporting your son or daughter through the process.

- Getting ready to go
- While your son or daughter is at BCT
- After graduation
- More resources

After your son or daughter enlists in the U.S. Army, the next step is to complete Basic Combat Training (BCT). These nine weeks are some of the most important in a U.S. Army career. After BCT, a recruit will have the skills, discipline, and confidence to be a full-fledged Soldier.

The demands of Basic Combat Training are intense. Meeting the challenges requires a positive attitude, good preparation, and the will to succeed. The support of loved ones is important, too. Here are some ways you can help your son or daughter excel in BCT.

## **Getting ready to go**

The transition from civilian to Soldier begins in the months leading up to BCT. Now is the time for your daughter or son to work on physical fitness, mental focus, and good study skills. The recruiter will be available as a guide through the process and to answer questions.

- *Go with your son or daughter to talk to the recruiter.* The recruiter is your best source of information about training and U.S. Army life. The U.S. Army recruiting site at [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com) provides a list of questions you and your son or daughter may want to ask the recruiter. (Go to [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com) and click on “Learn How to Join,” then on “Talking to a Recruiter.”)
- *Read “The Guide for Future Soldiers and their Families.”* This guide provides a wealth of useful information that will help your son or daughter prepare for basic training, as well as frequently asked questions from family members and resources for spouses. Go to [www.futuresoldiers.com/html/depguide/guide.htm](http://www.futuresoldiers.com/html/depguide/guide.htm) for a copy.
- *Respect your son or daughter’s decision to enlist.* Acknowledging the importance of your son’s or daughter’s career choice can boost their self-confidence and help them maintain a positive attitude.
- *Support your son or daughter’s fitness regimen.* Your son or daughter will be assigned a physical conditioning program in the months before basic training. This training program is to be done with the recruiter’s supervision. If your recruit lives with you, make sure you have nutritious foods on hand, especially if he or she is working toward a weight goal.
- *If your daughter or son is married, discuss military communication with their spouse.* As the recruit’s next of kin, the spouse will be receiving information from the military relating to the recruit. You will want to discuss ways that the information

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will be shared with you. You can download a copy of *A First Guide for Army Spouses and Family Members* at [www.MilitaryOneSource.com](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com).

- *Discuss how finances will be handled.* Recruits are compensated for time spent in training. Remind your son or daughter to find out how direct deposit arrangements are made.
- *Realize that you may experience stress about your son or daughter's enlistment.* Fear of the unknown is natural, but it's important not to burden your son or daughter with your worries. Prepare yourself to deal with your own stress so you can support your young person's decision.

### **While your son or daughter is at BCT**

At BCT your son or daughter will be involved in field drills and classroom training. Recruits learn and practice marksmanship, navigation, and survival skills, as well as leadership training and team building. The pace is fast and personal time is limited.

- *Write often.* Encourage other family members and friends to write, too. And keep the tone of your letters upbeat. Your recruit will look forward to receiving mail, especially if he or she is homesick. E-mail will not be available and your son or daughter will not have a cell phone during BCT. Recruits spend their free time involved in tasks like uniform preparation, studying, or other types of training. Your son or daughter will need some free time to rest. Don't worry if you do not hear from your son or daughter very frequently.
- *Be assured that your young person is safe.* Safety is a top priority during BCT, and medical care is always available to recruits. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, the Army will notify the recruit's next of kin.
- *Don't send care packages or treats.* Candy, tobacco products, electronic devices, and pornography are prohibited during training. Any food that arrives by mail will be confiscated.
- *Make an effort to attend graduation.* Graduations are important, memorable ceremonies. Completing BCT is a significant achievement, and you will want to share in the pride your son or daughter feels.

### **After graduation**

The daughter or son you sent to BCT will come home after graduation with some noticeable differences. You're likely to see a more focused, disciplined, and perhaps more serious person than you knew before.

The next phase of your son's or daughter's career will be training in the technical skills needed for his or her job. Ordinarily, technical training (also called specialty training or advanced individual training) begins within a few days of

graduation. Your daughter or son will be transferred to the school's location for the duration of the course, which may be from 4 to 52 weeks.

### More resources

#### Goarmy.com

[www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com)

This is the U.S. Army's official site for information about understanding Army career options, making the decision to enlist, BCT, and the Soldier's life.

Contains information developed specifically for parents.

#### Military OneSource

Military OneSource is standing by to help you and your family members from the moment you join the U.S. Army. Whether it's help with child care, personal finances, emotional support, relocation information, or resources needed for any other special circumstances, Military OneSource is here for military personnel and their families at no cost, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- *Future Soldiers waiting to report to Basic Training, ROTC/Military Academy Cadets, and their dependent family members (spouse and children) are eligible for free services from our 24/7 call center (1-800-342-9647) and use of the interactive Web site ([www.MilitaryOneSource.com](http://www.MilitaryOneSource.com)) to view and download educational materials or to order free copies online.*
- *Full eligibility begins when you report to Basic Combat Training (BCT) and includes call-center services, access to the Military OneSource Web site, and face-to-face counseling (up to six sessions per issue).*
- *Soldiers on active duty, in the National Guard or Reserve and their families are eligible for all Military OneSource services at no cost regardless of activation or mobilization status.*
- *Parents and other relatives of Soldiers are eligible for Military OneSource services if the issue being addressed affects or deals with the Soldier in some way.*