



# BASIC TRAINING SURVIVAL GUIDE

WHAT TO EXPECT,  
WHAT YOU'LL LEARN  
AND WHAT IT TAKES



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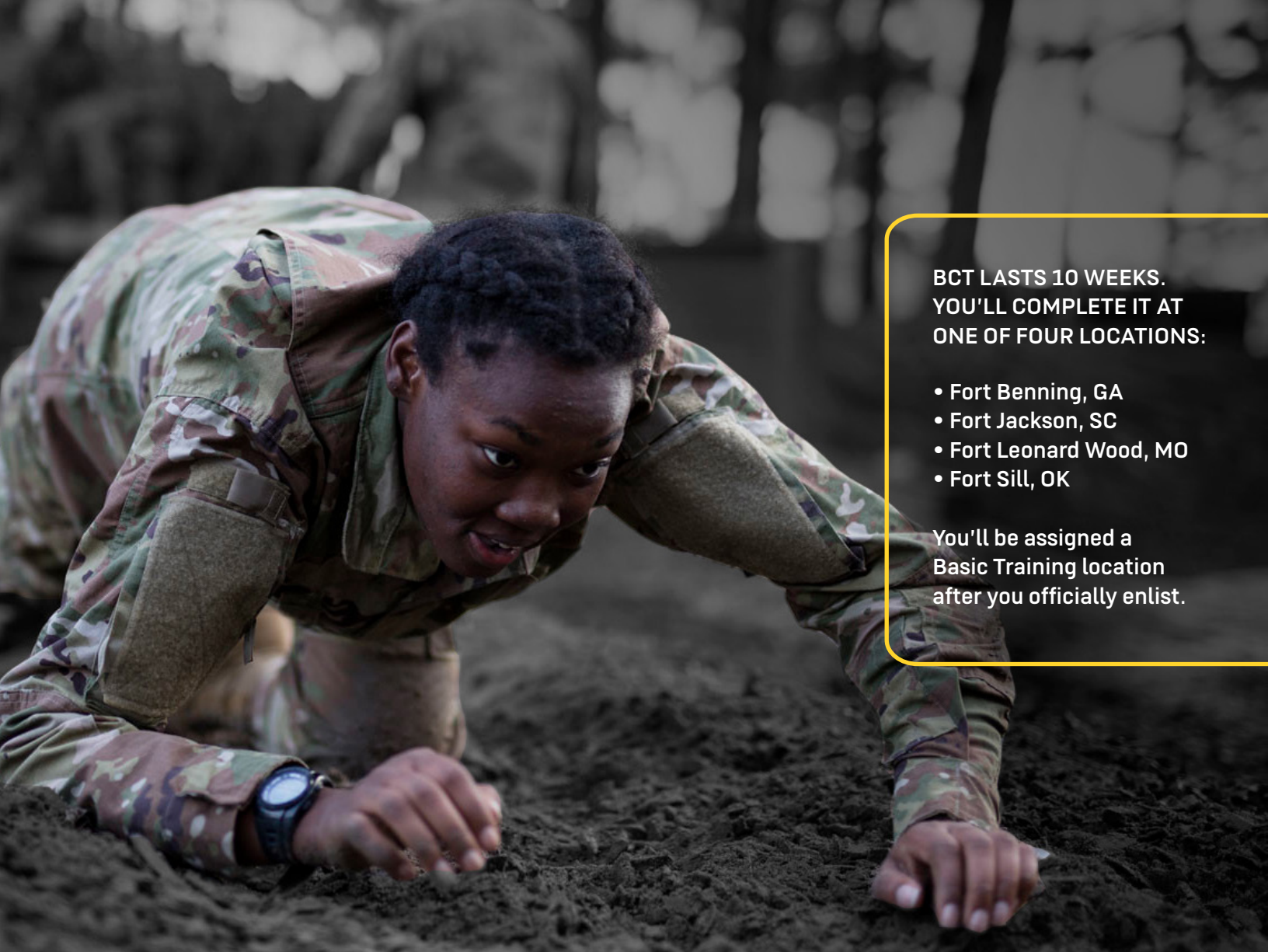
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**BCT LASTS 10 WEEKS.  
YOU'LL COMPLETE IT AT  
ONE OF FOUR LOCATIONS:**

- Fort Benning, GA
- Fort Jackson, SC
- Fort Leonard Wood, MO
- Fort Sill, OK

**You'll be assigned a  
Basic Training location  
after you officially enlist.**

# **10 WEEKS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

Once you've decided to join the Guard, passed the eligibility requirements and taken the oath, the next step on your journey from civilian to Soldier is Basic Combat Training (BCT). While physical fitness training is a big part of it, BCT is not all about push-ups and sit-ups. You'll also learn the benefits of discipline in all you do. You'll learn core Army Values, along with critical combat and occupational skills. You'll learn to depend on your fellow Soldiers. You'll earn their trust as well.

The physical and mental training exercises are rigorous—but the rewards are extraordinary, and they last a lifetime.

Following is some information and insights into the Basic Training experience. We're providing this guide as a source to help you decide whether becoming a Soldier is the right path for you.



# FIRST STOP: RECEPTION BATTALION

At Reception Battalion, also known as Week Zero, your blood, hearing and vision will be tested, and you'll receive immunizations and a dental exam. On-base healthcare professionals also take X-rays and screen for pregnancy and tuberculosis. You'll fill out a pretty significant series of forms, so make sure you've got your Social Security number memorized before you get on the bus to Basic.

At Reception Battalion, you'll receive items such as ear plugs, eyewear and sunscreen that help you maintain a state of medical readiness.



## TYPICAL RECEPTION BATTALION SCHEDULE

### ZERO DAY

#### AMNESTY BRIEF

When you arrive, you'll be told what you can and cannot have at BCT. This will be your last chance to get rid of any prohibited items without being penalized.

#### MILITARY RECORD KEEPING

With the paperwork you brought with you, you'll set up the medical, financial and personnel records that will last for your entire military career.

#### PAY STATION

After getting up at 5 a.m. and eating breakfast in the chow hall, you'll go to the Pay Station to receive your ID card (if you don't already have one).

#### CIF (CENTRAL ISSUING FACILITY)

Here, you'll be issued your first Army equipment, including your uniform. Your civilian clothes will be returned to you after Basic.

#### MEDICAL EXAMS

The general medical exam includes a blood test. Females will have a blood test for pregnancy, and then a regular blood test on Day 2.

#### BRIEFINGS

You'll be briefed on the GI Bill, Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and the Reserve Component. During the required "Moment of Truth" briefing, you must disclose any obligations you haven't dealt with before arriving at BCT.

#### GENERAL ORIENTATION

This station will introduce you to some Army basics, such as the chaplain's role, the Red Cross, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), company policies and managing your personal affairs.

#### PX (POST EXCHANGE)

If you don't have items you need for BCT, you'll be able to buy them here. During in-processing, your feet will be evaluated for the proper type of running shoes. You may be told to purchase a new pair. Your old shoes will be returned to you after Basic.





**‘ I WILL NEVER  
ACCEPT DEFEAT.  
I WILL NEVER QUIT. ’**

**– FROM THE SOLDIER’S CREED**

## **DAY 2**

### **VACCINATIONS**

You’ll receive vaccination shots to immunize you against several viral and bacterial infections, including measles, mumps, diphtheria, rubella and smallpox. (However, the exact number of vaccinations varies by individual.)

### **VISION AND DENTAL EXAM**

You’ll have a general vision checkup and a dental exam that includes X-rays. The mouth guard you’ll receive at the dental exam will be utilized during certain BCT exercises.

### **PERSONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

Here, you’ll review your personal affairs and verify everything is complete. Once you get to your Basic Training company, your access to a phone will be limited. Because your main mode of communication will be writing letters, it will be much more difficult to resolve personal issues.

## **DAY 3**

### **EYEGLASSES/INSERT LENSES PROVIDED**

If you need glasses, they’ll be made on site. You’ll receive two pairs of glasses, plus insert lenses for your protective mask.

### **PHOTOS, YEARBOOK, BCT VIDEO AND RING**

You’ll be photographed in military uniform for the yearbook. At this station, you might be given the option to pay in advance for a yearbook, BCT video or graduation ring.

## **DAYS 4-5**

### **FINAL PROCESSING**

If everything is complete, you’ll get assigned to a unit and ship on Day 4. If you missed anything for any reason, you’ll do it on this day and then ship on Day 5. Before you ship, you’ll clean the barracks, get your ID tags and stencil your name on your bags.



### **THIS IS WHERE HAIRCUTS HAPPEN.**

If you don’t already have a standard military haircut, you’ll get one. You’ll also be issued your your Army Combat Uniform (ACU), another uniform for physical fitness training, footwear and other items—and you’ll learn how to wear all your new apparel properly. It sounds elementary, but you’ll be surprised at what you don’t know about getting dressed, Army-style.

# MAKE A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

The Army has strict rules about appearance that you should know before you show up for BCT. You don't want the first Drill Sergeant you meet to single you out as an example. That almost never goes well. Personal appearance is important from the very first day. It demonstrates pride and self-discipline, and it helps to build camaraderie in your unit. And it won't matter whether you think those statements are true. At this point, it's all about what the Army thinks. Specifically, it's about what your Drill Sergeant thinks.



## HERE ARE A FEW ARMY POLICIES REGARDING YOUR APPEARANCE

### JEWELRY

You are allowed to wear up to two rings with your uniform, as long as they are tasteful. Some units may allow you to wear a wristwatch. You can wear a religious medal on a chain around your neck if both the medal and the chain can be kept out of sight. Females may wear earrings only as a matched pair, with one stud earring per earlobe. Any earrings must be unadorned and spherical, with a diameter of one-fourth inch or smaller. NOTE: Earrings will not be worn in field environments, combat-related deployments or locations without access to normal hygiene.

### BODY PIERCING

Other than earrings, no jewelry or ornamentation attached or affixed to or through the skin may be worn while in uniform. These accessories are also prohibited when you're on base and out of uniform.

### COSMETICS

Cosmetics will not be applied at BCT.

### FINGERNAILS

Every Soldier is expected to keep fingernails clean and neatly trimmed. For males, the nails should not extend beyond the fingertips. Females should not let their fingernails extend more than one-fourth inch beyond the tips of their fingers. If a commander determines nails present a safety, image or job performance concern, they may require that you cut your nails shorter.

### TATTOOS

Tattoos that can be considered extremist, indecent, sexist or racist cannot be worn anywhere on a Soldier's body. Tattoos or brands, regardless of subject matter, are prohibited on the head; on the face (except for permanent makeup); on the neck (anything above the T-shirt neckline); on or inside the eyelids, mouth and ears; below the wrist bone; and on the hands. NOTE: Soldiers may have one ring tattoo on each hand, on the portion of the finger closest to the palm. Other exceptions only include tattoos previously documented with a tattoo validation memorandum.

Your superiors will study your actions and your ability to follow instructions from the day you arrive. Learning to observe details and adhere to standards will be key to succeeding at BCT.



### YOUR EAGLE CASH CARD

At Reception Battalion, you'll receive a stored value card that includes an advance amount of \$350. You can use the card at Exchange Service sites instead of using cash or writing checks. You're encouraged to spend the full amount before your training is over, but if there's a balance left, it will be returned to you.



### MEET YOUR BATTLE BUDDY

When you arrive at Basic Training, you'll be partnered with a battle buddy. Provide each other with encouragement, and be sure to take the following rules seriously:

- Never abandon your battle buddy—on or off duty
- Never let your battle buddy go into an office or room alone
- Keep your battle buddy safe
- Pass information along to your battle buddy
- Encourage your battle buddy to train harder and do better, and expect the same in return
- Help your battle buddy solve problems
- Inform superiors of any changes in your battle buddy's behavior



# IT'S TIME TO TRAIN

Once you complete the Reception Battalion stage, you'll be assigned to a training company. Drill Sergeants will come to get you and bring you to your assigned BCT company location. Males and females will sleep in separate bays, or living spaces.

At some point, you may be told to line up your bag in a certain way to determine whether you can follow instructions. Then you'll be ordered to empty your bag. If any contraband falls out, you'll learn about how a Drill Sergeant expresses disappointment.



**'YES,  
DRILL SERGEANT.'**  
**'NO,  
DRILL SERGEANT.'**

There's a proper way to address your superiors in the Guard, and you'll start learning it right away with your Drill Sergeants. Remember that they are responsible for shaping you into a Soldier: They'll be a coach, a counselor and a mentor. Show respect to them and their position by always answering them with a strong "Yes, Drill Sergeant" or "No, Drill Sergeant."

## YOUR TRAINING COMPANY: A WHO'S WHO

Your training will include learning the ranks of leadership, identifying your commanding officers and understanding their responsibilities.

Drill Sergeants and cadre (all the non-Drill Sergeant personnel assigned to the company) will in-process you and assign you to a platoon, which is made up of 60 Soldiers and three Drill Sergeants.

The company commander, a Captain (CPT), establishes policy and has legal disciplinary authority over all company personnel.

The First Sergeant (1SG) assists the commander and supervises all the Drill Sergeants, as well as other personnel.

The training officer/executive officer (XO) maintains your training records and coordinates daily training schedules.





# CONQUER BASIC TRAINING IN THREE PHASES

Basic Training is divided into three phases. Each phase includes a physical fitness test and is designed to challenge your body and mind. The completion of each stage is a notable achievement and signifies an important milestone in your young Guard career.

## RED PHASE

In this phase, also known as Patriot Phase, you'll learn the fundamentals of soldiering: things like discipline, values and teamwork. You will participate in physical readiness training, road marches and confidence-building exercises. You'll learn first aid and participate in hand-to-hand combat and guerrilla exercises. Most of your classroom training occurs during Red Phase. You'll study Army heritage, Army traditions and the seven core Army Values. Occasionally, you may be assigned tasks such as guarding your barracks overnight. Red Phase introduces you to the intensity of Army training and prepares you for the challenges to come in the next two phases.

### A TYPICAL DAY'S SCHEDULE DURING BCT

Your actual schedule may differ somewhat from the general outline below. But as you can see, this is no 9-to-5 job.

- 0500 – First call
- 0530 – Physical Readiness Training
- 0630 – Breakfast
- 0830 – Training
- 1200 – Lunch
- 1300 – Training
- 1700 – Dinner
- 1800 – Drill Sergeant time
- 2030 – Personal time
- 2130 – Lights out

If you don't recognize these times, it's because they're notated in military time. You'll want to learn this system ASAP.

## WHITE PHASE

Your physical training will continue, of course. In White Phase, you'll also learn rifle marksmanship and qualify with your assigned weapon. You'll learn Warrior Tasks and participate in Battle Drills—becoming familiar with the Soldier skills necessary to meet the needs of the U.S. Army. And, of course, physical training will continue. Put your heart and soul into it, and your confidence will continue to grow. You'll earn your rifle qualification badge when you successfully complete White Phase.

### WARRIOR TASKS AND BATTLE DRILLS

While you're in the Reception Battalion, you will receive a copy of the "Soldier's Manual of Common Tasks, Warrior Skills." Here's an early look at the skills you'll learn in BCT:

#### SHOOT

- Maintain, employ and engage targets with individually assigned weapon systems
- Employ hand grenades

#### MOVE

- Perform individual movement techniques
- Navigate from one point to another using a map and compass
- Move as a member of a team

#### COMMUNICATE

- Perform voice communications
- Use visual signaling techniques

#### SURVIVE

- React to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attack/hazards
- Perform immediate life-saving measures
- Maintain situational awareness
- Assess and respond to threats

#### BATTLE DRILLS

- React to contact
- Establish security in a combat zone
- Perform tactical combat casualty care
- React to ambush

## BLUE PHASE

In the third and final phase, also known as Warrior Phase, you'll throw live hand grenades. You'll learn to operate additional weapons, train in urban warfare and learn to survive in the field for multiple days. You'll continue to build on everything you learned in the Red and White phases, with a special focus on teamwork and discipline. After passing all your BCT tests and meeting all your BCT challenges, you'll qualify to wear the Army black beret as an Army National Guard Soldier.

### SOME THINGS YOU'LL FOCUS ON DURING BLUE PHASE

- Advanced Rifle Marksmanship (including the use of aiming tools such as lasers)
- Maneuvering and engaging targets as part of a team
- Guard ethics and standards, with continued study of Army Values
- Convoy operations
- Additional weapons training: machine guns, grenade launchers and mines
- Defeating improvised explosive devices (IEDs)/mines
- Military Operations in Urban Terrain (aka MOUT, or close quarters combat in hallways, rooms, buildings and stairwells)
- 10-kilometer and 15-kilometer tactical foot marches
- Training exercise in the field (FTX), where you'll tie all your training together
- The End of Cycle Test (EOCT), which you're required to pass, that consists of 212 soldiering tasks
- The Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), which you must pass to graduate from BCT

# BCT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS



## TO COMPLETE BCT, YOU'LL NEED TO:

- Complete the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT)
- Safely handle, provide proper maintenance to and qualify with your individual weapon
- Complete the protective mask confidence exercise
- Demonstrate proficiency in the Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills
- Demonstrate proficiency in basic first-aid techniques
- Complete the obstacle and confidence courses
- Complete combative training
- Throw live hand grenades
- Complete a 16-kilometer foot march
- Pass the four-person team land navigation course
- Complete the tactical field training and/or situational training exercises
- Complete the Buddy Team Live Fire

## ARMY COMBAT FITNESS TEST (ACFT)

You are required to pass the ACFT before you can graduate from BCT. The ACFT consists of six events: 3 Repetition Maximum Deadlift, Standing Power Throw, Arm-Extension Push-Up, Sprint-Drag-Carry, Leg Tuck and 2-Mile Run. It incorporates modern fitness equipment, improves Soldier readiness, reduces injuries and enhances mental toughness.



## GRADUATION

In the final week of BCT (Week 10), you'll clean and turn in gear you received from the CIF, and you'll clean the barracks. You'll also receive a day with your family to catch up on your recent experiences—and you'll have plenty to discuss. The next day, you'll graduate. What follows that depends on your military job. Some combat jobs, such as Infantry, combine both Basic Training and a type of training called Advanced Individual Training, or AIT. When combined, these are called OSUT, or One Station Unit Training. If you won't be in one of those types of combat jobs, the next step after BCT is usually AIT as a separate phase.



## STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

We know you still have lots of questions about BCT, so we encourage you to speak with your Recruiter to get answers.

You can also call  
**1-800-GO-GUARD**  
or visit [NationalGuard.com](https://www.nationalguard.com).



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