



SPARTAN SENTINEL

TASK FORCE SPARTAN | March 2019 | Volume 2, Issue 4



JUST DROPPING IN

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ON THE COVER

Two U.S. Army Soldiers rappel from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during training at the Udairi Landing Zone, Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Feb. 9, 2019. Instructors from the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center, Fort Benning, Georgia, trained and qualified the aircrew assigned to the 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, Kansas Army National Guard, in preparation for an air assault course that took place in Kuwait in February. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Emily Finn with illustration by 1st Lt. Eric Jungels)

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TASK FORCE SPARTAN

Commanding General

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Corell

Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Hjelmstad

Major Units

34th Red Bull Infantry Division
155th Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT)
3rd ABCT, 4th Infantry Division
18th Field Artillery Brigade
20th Engineer Brigade
69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade
1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment
242nd Ordnance Battalion
158th Military Engagement Team



34TH RED BULL INFANTRY DIVISION

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Task Force Spartan is a unique, multi-component organization, made up of active Army and National Guard units, rounded out by U.S. Army Reserve support units.

Through Operation Spartan Shield (OSS), Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen our defense relationships and build partner capacity.

Units supporting OSS provide capabilities such as aviation, logistics, force protection and information management, and facilitate theater security cooperation activities such as key leader engagements, joint exercises, conferences, symposia and humanitarian assistance/disaster response planning.

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SHARED UNDERSTANDING

IT MATTERS

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER OF THE DIXIE THUNDER BRIGADE

With our transfer of authority and redeployment on the horizon, I am prompted to look back over the course of the last nine months we have spent as Task Force Spartan's armored brigade combat team. Our time here has brought excitement and anticipation, but also the monotony of tasks, meetings, and syncs. In the moment, it may seem like all of these things run together in an endless cycle. As I look back and reflect, I am able to say with confidence, *it matters*.

Each rep — whether it is at the gym, the range or a multinational exercise — matters. Readiness and partnership aren't just themes in a campaign plan. They are vital targets to enrich across formations, but most importantly in the individual Soldier. This deployment has provided time and resources for Soldiers to grow stronger physically, mentally and tactically. This is all part of personal readiness. Completing Structured Self Development, working toward a 300 on the Army Physical Fitness Test, or earning Air Assault wings. These things matter, and make better Soldiers and better people. Our collective readiness is

what deters aggression and emboldens our allies. It is what makes the U.S. Army such a formidable fighting force. But no one does it alone.

The partnership exercises here are successful because there is shared understanding. It is not a one-way conversation. It is fellow Soldiers, across the Middle East, sharing experiences and tactics, techniques and procedures that will help strengthen both sides. It is no different at home. The ability to communicate and manage expectations goes a long way in creating mutually beneficial relationships. The ability to offer constructive criticism is valuable, but not nearly as much as the ability to receive it. Communication is critical in every relationship — whether it be a squad seizing the objective or a couple separated by deployment. Don't just look for what can be gained, but rather strive to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. Those insights and relationships can last a lifetime.

It matters. These partnerships matter. This training matters. Increasing readiness matters. I hope each Soldier will seize the opportunity to grow here.

I hope each Soldier will be able to recognize the effect we have on this region as part of Operation Spartan Shield. We may not see all the different areas that have been impacted by our work, but I hope we are able to take a step back, look at everything from an individual task to a multinational exercise, and say with confidence, *it matters*.



Col. Robert D. Ferguson

Commander

155th Armored Brigade Combat Team



Soldiers of the Mississippi National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, take a short halt to check their synchronization with partners in the simulated battle during the culminating event for Inferno Creek 19 in Rabkoot, Oman, Feb. 5, 2019. Inferno Creek is a bilateral training exercise designed to build interoperability between the U.S. Army and the Royal Army of Oman. During the exercise, both militaries developed shared understanding of each other's tactics, techniques and procedures to build proficiency and work together to support long-term regional stability. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Linsey Williams with illustration by 1st Lt. Eric Jungels)

RABKOOT, Oman— Mortars fire, Claymore mines detonate, and a support-by-fire element of infantry Soldiers at the crest of a rocky desert hill opens fire. Two Omani NH-90 helicopters swoop down through the sky and fire at their designated targets. Javelin shoulder-fired anti-tank missiles rocket into the sky. Sniper fire from a hillcrest hits silhouette targets standing in the open valley of sand. This was the final event of the Inferno Creek 19 exercise, an event that culminates three weeks of side-by-side training and many months of planning between the U.S. Army and the Royal Army of Oman.

As the dust begins to spread over the desert, American and Omani Soldiers begin the ground assault toward their objective. From high above, on a hilltop known as Sultan's Perch, high-ranking military officials and distinguished guests watch the maneuvers through binoculars under the shade of camouflage netting.

OUT OF THE INFERNO

U.S., Oman strengthen
military partnership, capabilities

By Sgt. Linsey Williams
34th Red Bull Infantry Division



A Royal Air Force of Oman NH-90 helicopter takes a hard right to maneuver over an objective as part of a live-fire rehearsal in Rabkoot, Oman, between the Royal Army of Oman maneuver rehearsal with 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi National Guard, Feb. 4, 2019. (Below) U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Michael Wickman, deputy commanding general for operations for Task Force Spartan and the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division, visits an Omani commander before the execution of a live-fire maneuver rehearsal in Rabkoot, Oman, Feb. 4, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photos by Sgt. Linsey Williams)



Soldiers of the Mississippi National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team take a short halt with partners in the simulated battle at the culminating event for Inferno Creek 19 in Rabkoot, Oman, Feb. 5, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Linsey Williams)



While the U.S. and Oman are long-time partners, there are still many aspects of combat capability that can be enhanced when exercises like Inferno Creek take place, as U.S. Army Lt. Col. Kenneth Anthony, commander of Mississippi National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, points out.

"We've met, we've conducted classes and academics. We've also conducted seminars, and jointly have planned operations," said Anthony. "Through that we've figured out how we can get through the difficult task of communicating, accomplishing our goal and meeting our training objectives."

Inferno Creek is an example of military interoperability at all levels. Battalion staff worked through the Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP) in planning operations that would take place over the course of the multi-week exercise.

"How do we really do operations together? There are a lot of things that you don't think about. How do we talk on radios together? How do we bring in air [support] together? How do we do fires together? We've been able to work on some of those things," Anthony continued. "We've expanded on it with a combined air assault operation that was not planned during the initial planning conferences. When we got here, as we built the partnership, the partnership strengthened and we

built trust—we decided this would be something we could do in addition to what we had planned."

Infantrymen in the 11th Brigade of the Royal Army of Oman had not conducted an air assault before this exercise. Task Force Spartan, a multi-component organization based in Southwest Asia designed to strengthen defense relationships and build partner capacity, assigned an aviation planner to the exercise to participate in MDMP.

"Once it was determined that they really wanted to do an air assault, it really changed the focus to doing the MDMP with both the Army and the Air Force to bring both services to the table in order to plan and go through all the steps in order to be successful," explained U.S. Army Maj. Bernie Williamson, aviation officer with the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division. "I think the initial air assault was a great first step. ... The dialogue between the Army and the Air Force has been fantastic. They're extremely eager to work with us and work with each other. They've had discussions concerning future air assault planning and operations as well as developing programs to train the army in utilizing the helicopter both as a close air support and air assault platform. Things look really good for the future of their interoperability."

At the company level, Soldiers spent day after day working on their company-level and below maneuvers while also taking



WHEN WE SWEAT TOGETHER, AND WE DO TRAINING EXERCISES LIKE THIS, WE ALL WIN.

MAJ. GEN. BENJAMIN CORELL
COMMANDER, TASK FORCE SPARTAN



Soldiers of the Mississippi National Guard's 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, get on line just before seizing their objective at the culminating event for Inferno Creek 19 in Rabkoot, Oman, Feb. 5, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Linsey Williams with illustration by 1st Lt. Eric Jungels)



Maj. Gen. Ben Corell, commander of Task Force Spartan and the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division, listens to remarks at the mission brief before the culminating event of Inferno Creek 19 in Rabkoot, Oman, with the commander of 11th Brigade, Royal Army of Oman, Feb. 5, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Linsey Williams)

some range time to practice other tasks. At a known-distance range, the forces took time to operate each other's weapons systems. Near a wadi (valley) system in Rabkoot, they set up a hasty entry-control point and practiced vehicle interdiction. They also had a day of load training with the Royal Air Force of Oman's helicopters.

"All in all, they're soldiers just like we are," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Timothy Millican, a dismounted squad leader in Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Armored Regiment. "We have done a lot of rehearsals for the culminating event and essentially it's a rehearsal for combat. ... In comparison to other exercises that we've done, I think Oman is my favorite and I think the 'Joes' would agree with me."

Between each individual Soldier and their counterpart in the Royal Army of Oman and Royal Air Force of Oman, there was a unique camaraderie built over the course of the exercise. While the strategic partnership was being strengthened through training, friendships were formed through all of those long hours under the desert sun together.

"In conversation with the Task Force Spartan 155th [brigade] Soldiers, they indicated that this was some of the best training they've had since they've been in theater. That tells me we

made a difference. As I talked to the brigade commander of the 11th Brigade of the Royal Army of Oman, he too felt that he has increased the proficiency of his Soldiers throughout the exercise of Inferno Creek," stated Maj. Gen. Ben Corell, commander of the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division and Task Force Spartan. "It's a sharing event. We wouldn't come into an exercise and expect that we know everything, because we don't. Every Soldier that participated in this exercise has increased their knowledge of how to be a Soldier and how to be a Soldier in a different environment."

Though one might argue that once you've trained in one desert, you've trained in all of them, there was a unique permissiveness to the ranges of Rabkoot. There were rock-crested hills and valleys of sand that the Soldiers navigated each day. The troops were able to conduct either live or simulated munition engagements during much of their training in Oman.

"When we sweat together and we do training exercises like this, we all win," Corell continued. "To build strong relationships... You've got to train together, you've got to sweat together, you've got to participate in the exercise, and that's what we've done here. To me, that was magnified tenfold as I saw the life-fire event and the culminating event for Inferno Creek 19." 🇺🇸



CHOPPERS ON DECK

Aviators with the Minnesota, Texas and Utah National Guards, led by the Kansas National Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, practice landing and taking off during deck landing qualification training aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) in the Arabian Gulf on Feb. 4, 2019. (U.S. Army National Guard photo illustration by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper; portions blurred for operational security and dust)

U.S. Army, Navy partner for joint aviation training in Arabian Gulf

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper and Spc. Samantha Petersen
34th Red Bull Infantry Division

Aviators with the Minnesota, Texas and Utah National Guards, led by the Kansas National Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment, practice landing and taking off during deck landing qualification training aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) in the Arabian Gulf on Feb. 4, 2019.

"It's always great to work with our joint partners out here," said the executive officer of the Mitscher, U.S. Navy Cmdr. Matt Cox.

"As a Navy destroyer, we rely on all services to get the mission done. Any time we can integrate, any time we can work together on our [tactics, techniques, and procedures], improve those things, it's always a good day for us."

"One of the things that was very good about today was that it was an opportunity for us to execute joint operations, working with our Navy partners," said the commander of the Kansas National Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment "Task Force Javelin," U.S. Army Lt. Col. Todd Loughney. "It was an

outstanding opportunity for our crews to get our deck landing qualifications and currencies completed, and also a great opportunity for us to demonstrate interoperability and joint service operations."

Task Force Javelin provides expert aviation support and movement capabilities to U.S. Army Central's Task Force Spartan, which is a unique, multi-component organization made up of active Army, National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve units.

Through Operation Spartan Shield (OSS), Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen our defense relationships and build partner capacity.

Units supporting OSS provide capabilities such as aviation, logistics, force protection and information management, and facilitate theater security cooperation activities such as key leader engagements, joint exercises, conferences, symposia and humanitarian assistance/disaster response planning. 🇺🇸



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Minnesota, Texas and Utah National Guard aviators, flying UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, practice landing and taking off during deck landing qualification training aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57) in the Arabian Gulf on Feb. 4, 2019. The aviation crews supporting operations in U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility are led by the Kansas National Guard's 1st Battalion, 108th Aviation Regiment. (U.S. Army National Guard photo illustration by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper)

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Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Daniel Linsalata signals commands to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter assigned to Task Force Javelin on the flight deck of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57). Mitscher is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations in support of naval operations to ensure maritime stability and security in the central region, connecting the Mediterranean and the Pacific through the western Indian Ocean and three strategic choke points. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jacob Milham)

Soldiers with the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division visit the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum in Kuwait City Feb. 20, 2019, surveying the damage inflicted on a house by heavy weaponry, including an Iraqi tank, during a battle in the Gulf War that occurred Feb. 24, 1991, between members of the Al Messilah Group (Kuwait forces) and Saddam Hussein's forces. The Soldiers partnered with their Kuwaiti hosts to learn about the history of the invasion of Kuwait and the national and international response that liberated the nation. (Below) The Soldiers, currently deployed to the region as Task Force Spartan, also visited a nearby military base where Kuwaiti soldiers walked through the broader picture of the conflict on an immense sand-table of the country. (U.S. National Guard photos by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper)





A squad leader for Jordan Armed Forces' 10th Border Guard Force bellows the command for one of his teams to bound forward as others provide cover fire during a joint training exercise of the Jordan Operational Engagement Program on Feb. 18, 2019, on a range outside of Amman, Jordan. (U.S. National Guard photo by Sgt. Bill Boecker)



Soldiers with the Jordan Armed Forces' 10th Border Guard Force, alongside their U.S. Army counterparts from the California National Guard's 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment, drop 81mm mortar rounds into the smooth bore, M252 81 mm mortar system during the Jordan Operational Engagement Program on Feb. 13, 2019, outside of Amman, Jordan. The M252 mortar system is a medium weight, high-angle-of-fire weapon used for long-range indirect fire support. Training events conducted between the JAF and U.S. Army have demonstrated the importance of the Jordan Operational Engagement Program, which supports an ongoing and strong partnership through shared tactics, techniques and procedures. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Bill Boecker)





A soldier of the Jordan Armed Forces' 10th Border Guard Force bounds as part of a team toward a target on a range outside of Amman, Jordan, during a joint training exercise of the Jordan Operational Engagement Program (JOEP), Feb. 18, 2019. The soldiers are taking part in JOEP training events with the California National Guard's 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment. Training between the partner nation forces is focused on sharing techniques and procedures for enhanced interoperability. (U.S. National Guard photo by Sgt. Bill Boecker)

THREE PHOTOS. THREE SNIPERS.
THINK YOU CAN FIND THEM?
ANSWERS ON PAGE 38!



Snipers of the Jordan Armed Forces' 10th Border Guard Force take up firing positions during joint concealment and stalking training with counterparts of the California National Guard's 1st Squadron, 18th Cavalry Regiment on Feb. 19, 2019, at a range outside of Amman, Jordan. During the Jordan Operational Engagement Program training, soldiers were tasked with stalking an objective to within 500 meters, neutralizing the target, and exfiltrating, all while remaining undetected. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Bill Boecker)





Air assault students practice rappelling out of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on day nine of Air Assault School's Class 301-19, Feb. 14, 2019, at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Conducting this sort of training while deployed to U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility gives Soldiers the opportunity to develop additional skills and warfighting acumen. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. Christopher Lindborg)





More than 6,800 pounds of unserviceable ammunition explodes on Udairi Range in Kuwait, Feb. 27, 2019. The controlled detonation was organized by the 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, Task Force Hellhound, Task Force Spartan. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. Zach Mott)

big BANG

JOINT EFFORT HELPS DESTROY UNSERVICEABLE AMMUNITION

Story by **Sgt. Zachary Mott**
U.S. Army Central

A bright, orange rose blossomed as 6,800 pounds of unserviceable ammunition was destroyed through a controlled detonation in Kuwait's Udairi Range complex, Feb. 27, 2019.

Service members from six different units and two services joined together to deliver, unload, stage, prep and ultimately destroy the nearly three-and-a-half tons of ammunition ranging from 40 mm grenades to two mine clearing line charges.

(Opposite page, left) Brigadier Gen. Charles Kemper, deputy commanding general of Task Force Spartan, right, speaks with 1st Lt. Daniel Dixon of the 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company about the ordnance included in a shot pit prior to a controlled detonation of more than 6,800 pounds of unserviceable ammunition on Udairi Range in Kuwait, Feb. 27, 2019. Kemper assisted in priming the charges for the four separate shot pits. (Opposite page, middle) Soldiers from Task Force Spartan and Airmen from the 407th and 386th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadrons work together to apply sheet explosives to 40 mm ammunition so it can be disposed of during the controlled detonation. Properly disposing of unserviceable ammunition allows local ammunition holding areas to store more ammunition that can be used in local training events or other contingencies as they arise. (U.S. Army Reserve photo by Sgt. Zach Mott)



Soldiers from Task Force Spartan's 705th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, 637th Chemical Company, along with the Air Force's 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron and 386th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron worked to arrange and prep the munitions after Soldiers from the 1245th Transportation Company brought the munitions and the 890th Transportation Company unloaded the ammunition.

"I enjoy it. I've seen quite a few (controlled detonations)," said Sgt. Barry Craig, an EOD team sergeant with the 705th EOD Co., Task Force Hellhound. "The (white phosphorus) always makes for a good shot. We're actually kind of excited about this one. This one should be pretty loud."

Disposing of unserviceable ammunition is a regular mission for EOD techs with Task Force Spartan. During this deployment alone, the 705th EOD Co. has safely destroyed more than 30,000 pounds of ordnance.

"This provides a great training opportunity for the Soldiers to hone their skills," said Sgt. 1st Class Kody Williams, operations noncommissioned officer and range officer-in-charge, 705th EOD Co. "This is our bread and butter. This is what we do."

With several controlled detonations occurring during their time here, the 705th EOD Co. is able to rotate Soldiers through the different roles as well as integrate with other units and sister services.

"From top down, it provides a lot of opportunity. It gives guys the ability to plan not only the convoy for the mission to come out here but also the ability to be an NCOIC or an OIC so you have a chance to take charge and see how a lot of moving parts can really affect the mission," Craig said.

Additionally, by incorporating the Ohio Army National Guard's 637th Chem. Co., the active duty Soldiers from the 705th EOD

Co. are able to build a working relationship within the same task force.

"We like to bring them out and give them an idea of how we work and the stuff that we do," Craig said. "There are times we actually do respond to a chem incident so we might actually work with them in the future on something that is more in their realm. Building that relationship with them prior to an actual serious incident is important."


Incorporating Air Force EOD technicians also allows the 705th to share best practices and rekindle working relationships that were established in training years ago.

"The EOD community is pretty small and we all go to school together. From day one we're pretty much stuck with the environment with each other," Craig said. "It's nice to come out here and see some familiar faces that you saw maybe two, three or more years ago. We try to keep that relationship as well. It's really important for the EOD community to stay tight."

Additionally, by safely disposing of unserviceable ordnance, the 705th EOD Co. is able to free up space within local ammunition holding areas.

"We've cleared out the ASP [ammunition supply point] here on [Camp] Buehring," Williams said. "I deal with the ASP manager quite a bit and this is the first time it's been cleared out in a long time."

When the dust settled from the detonation, the EOD teams combed through the site to ensure there was nothing left that could cause damage to anyone who happened across it - all part of a day's work as an EOD tech.

"EOD is a great job and I enjoy every minute of it. It's a chance to learn about explosives and who doesn't like that?" Craig said. 





DROPPING IN

Task Force Spartan Soldiers participate in helicopter rappel and sling load training

By Sgt. Christopher Lindborg
U.S. Army Central

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait – “Air assault!” shouted air assault students during the first half of a cool February day at Camp Beuhring in Kuwait. “Air assault!”

Nearly 200 service members serving in U.S. Central Command’s area of responsibility earned the right to wear the Air Assault Badge on Feb. 15, 2019. Air Assault Class 301-19 began with 240 students on day zero of the 10-day course — the first of its kind to be offered in Kuwait since 2017.



(Left) Spc. Christopher Michael of the Mississippi Army National Guard’s 150th Brigade Engineer Battalion, prepares to rappel out of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on day nine of Air Assault School’s Class 301-19, Feb. 14, 2019, at Camp Buehring in Kuwait. (Right) Air assault students practice rappelling from helicopters while deployed to U.S. Central Command’s area of responsibility. The course offered to forward deployed Soldiers afforded an opportunity to develop additional skills, including moving equipment and rappelling. (U.S. Army Reserve photos by Sgt. Christopher Lindborg)

“You’re setting a Soldier up to be successful in a combat environment,” said Staff Sgt. William Ramos, an air assault instructor with the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Service members were offered an opportunity to attend the rigorous school to develop additional skills, including moving equipment and rappelling, while deployed in a combat environment.

“Sling loading has been the hardest part,” said Pfc. Clarence Allen of 1st Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment. “I can now confront issues with my unit while I’m deployed, especially with sling loading in a forward operating environment.”

Students also developed skills in cooperation and leadership through the school.

“You encounter so many people,” said Cpl. Adam Johnson, also an air defense artillery Soldier. “You have to work together in cohesion.”

Several students were assigned to leadership positions at the school. Sgt. Eric Irizarry, a welder assigned to the Connecticut National Guard’s 1109th Theater Aviation Sustainment Maintenance Group, was assigned to act as the “student first sergeant” at the school. He was responsible for ensuring Soldiers were on time and prepared for the day’s training.

“It’s been awhile since I’ve done anything like basic training,” said Irizarry.

“So the yelling, the screaming, physical training, waking up very early; it’s all been challenging.”

Irizarry said the most difficult part of the school was doing the right thing all the time.

“I don’t want to get cut, let go or sent home,” said Irizarry.

Leadership skills gained at the school are advantageous down the road, according to Ramos.

“In the future, if they go into leadership positions, they’ll know how to react better,” said Ramos.

In addition to leadership skills, the school is also beneficial for career development.

“This course will help me become a better leader,” said Allen, the youngest student in the class. “Someday I want to be a sergeant major. I look up to Soldiers who’ve done air assault.”

The opportunity to attend the course while deployed is quite rare, but having Soldiers complete the school while they’re already serving on active duty provides cost savings and a great value to the Army. Leaders have described the opportunity as a fantastic use of resources and an excellent opportunity for Soldiers to enhance warfighting skills and practice overcoming adversity.

“I would say I came here physically prepared, but mentally it was a lot harder than I thought,” said Allen.

“Mentally you have to tell yourself not to quit.”

Even though the school was challenging, many students found enjoyment in it.

“The training has been very rigorous but super fun and a great time,” said Spc. Nathan Maxey, an Alabama National Guard infantryman. “We learned about sling loads, rappelling, jumping from an aircraft and cargo loads. I really loved it.”

Instructors who travelled to Kuwait from the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center were key to developing service members throughout the course.

“The instructors communicate very well,” said Irizarry. “They understand this is our first time and they answer every question.”

“They really motivated us,” said Allen. “On the ruck march, they kept telling us don’t fall out, don’t fall out.”

Ramos said if a service member is interested in Air Assault School they should take advantage of it. Soldiers have the opportunity to learn useful skills including rigging equipment, overcoming fear of heights, jumping out of a helicopter, rappelling from a tower and developing camaraderie.

“Some of the best things you’re going to learn probably come from air assault,” said Ramos. “It tests you physically, mentally, and you’re going to push yourself.”



CELEBRATING FREEDOM

Story by Maj. David Adams
34th Red Bull Infantry Division

Task Force Spartan Soldiers experience KUWAIT LIBERATION DAY history

Soldiers with the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division walk through a large-scale terrain model of Kuwait at a Kuwait Land Force compound Feb. 20, 2019. The Red Bulls partnered with their Kuwaiti hosts to learn about the history of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait and the national and international response that liberated the nation. The Soldiers, currently deployed to the region as Task Force Spartan, also visited the Al Qurain Martyr Museum to discover one story of a battle between local resistance fighters and the invading forces. (U.S. National Guard photo illustration by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper. Merged photo panorama) (Below) The director of the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum in Kuwait City guides visitors through the museum and walks them through the stages of a battle that occurred Feb. 24, 1991, between members of the Al Messilah Group (Kuwait forces) and Iraqi invaders, during a tour Feb. 20, 2019. (U.S. National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ben Houtkooper)

The close relationship between the United States and Kuwait spans decades. The “Americani Hospital” was the first concrete building in Kuwait and served the people of Kuwait from 1914 to 1967. In 1951, 10 years before Kuwait's independence, the first U.S. consulate opened in the country. This relationship, spanning over a century, can be seen today in the close partnership between the United States and Kuwait militaries.

Members of the Minnesota National Guard's 34th Red Bull Infantry Division recently joined Kuwaiti hosts to learn more about Kuwait's struggle against Iraqi forces during Saddam Hussain's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The first stop was the Al-Qurain Martyrs Museum in Kuwait City. After the museum tour, the Soldiers headed to the desert for a visit to a Kuwait 35th Armored Brigade compound, home to a large terrain model of Kuwait where the Iraq invasion is recounted by Kuwait military veterans.

At the museum, the Soldiers learned about the struggle of 19 brave Kuwaiti men, armed only with small arms weapons, against far superior numbers of Iraqi troops equipped with heavy weapons including machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and tanks. The museum director walked the visitors through the 10-hour struggle in which 12 of the group members were killed and seven survived. He also talked about the wider resistance movement in Kuwait.

After the Iraqi invasion, 400,000 Kuwaiti citizens left the country. From those remaining, a determined resistance network rose up which had four main focuses. The resistance provided essential services and support to the remaining Kuwaitis; led civil disobedience including public demonstrations and the boycott of most work; worked to prevent the destruction in the oil fields; and conducted critical military operations, both attacking Iraqi troops and gathering intelligence for the allies.

The resistance originated from family and religious groups, which make up the key elements of Kuwaiti life today. These were small, tight-knit groups with no central authority point, where members had to be able to trust each other completely, as betrayal meant a grisly death at the hands of the occupying forces. The decentralization of the multiple, small groups also meant that should one be eliminated the other groups could continue the fight. This led to an agile and deadly resistance movement, which inflicted significant casualties on the better-armed Iraqi occupation army.

This popular resistance movement drew Kuwaitis, and non-Kuwaitis, from all walks of life. Some of the members were police or military professionals, but most were ordinary citizens who bravely choose to stay and fight for their country. The invasion and resistance struggle saw hundreds of Kuwaitis killed and hundreds more remain unaccounted for today as the Iraqi Army took many prisoners north as they fled the city.

Next stop on the Liberation Day-focused tour was a Kuwaiti military base deep in the desert. Welcoming the American visitors were a number of veteran Kuwaiti Army and Air Force personnel, eager to use their vast and detailed terrain model of Kuwait to assist them in the description of events that took place during the Iraqi invasion.

On Aug. 2, 1990, at 2:00 a.m. four elite Iraqi Republican Guard divisions and Iraqi Special Forces units sped across

the Iraq/Kuwait border in a multi-pronged assault aimed for Kuwait City.

Kuwait's 35th Armored Brigade responded with a force of Chieftain main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers and artillery pieces. These Kuwaitis attacked the Iraqi armored columns as they approached Kuwait City in what became known as the Battle of the Bridges.

The Kuwaiti Chieftain tanks engaged Iraqi armor and infantry at close range as the understrength Kuwaiti artillery joined the battle from nearby. Iraqi forces found themselves pinched between Kuwaiti battalions, took heavy casualties and withdrew. Despite this success and driving the Iraqis back from the outskirts of the city, the Kuwaiti forces found themselves outnumbered, running out of ammunition and in danger of being encircled as Iraqi forces continued to pour into the area.

Kuwaiti Air Force aircraft engaged the Iraqis in the skies above Kuwait, inflicting significant damage to the Iraqis while losing about 20 percent of their forces.

The Kuwaitis were forced to withdraw south to Saudi Arabia, where they would later add their veteran forces to the allied coalition which would shatter Saddam Hussein's military and liberate Kuwait.

The day was well spent learning more about Kuwait's fight for liberation against a powerful, aggressive neighbor. As always, the Kuwaiti hosts demonstrated the warm hospitality which is a defining characteristic of Arab culture.

“We gained a deeper understanding for the valiant struggle of the Kuwaitis during their fight for liberation. The ferocity

and determination the Kuwaiti Armed Forces and grassroots resistance movement fought with against the overwhelming numbers of the invading Iraqi forces was eye-opening,” said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Colin Fleming, Task Force Spartan and 34th Red Bull Infantry Division staff officer, leading the U.S. group.

Fleming continued, “The Kuwaitis are gracious hosts, fierce warriors, valued allies and friends. During this time of regional turbulence and an ever-shifting future, we are proud to stand with the people of Kuwait during their National and Liberation Days, and we look toward a bright future together.”

More than 500 Red Bulls are currently deployed to the Middle East, leading Task Force Spartan. Through Operation Spartan Shield (OSS), Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen our defense relationships and build partner capacity. Units supporting OSS provide capabilities such as aviation, logistics, force protection and information management, and facilitate theater security cooperation activities such as key leader engagements, joint exercises, conferences, symposia and humanitarian assistance/disaster response planning. 🇰🇼



TEAMING UP

TO DEFEAT

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

U.S. Soldiers share CBRNE techniques and tactics with Kuwaiti partners

By **Spc. Samantha Petersen**
34th Red Bull Infantry Division

Stepping in, zipping up, securing gloves and fastening boots are all steps one must take when getting into a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) protective suit. Task Force Spartan CBRN personnel from the Ohio National Guard's 637th Chemical Company conducted an exchange of information with the Kuwait Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Defense Command on Feb. 14th, 2019, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Lt. Col. Brandi DeGier, a Task Force Spartan CBRN officer, explained, "The WMD Defense Command workshop was an exchange between U.S. personnel and Kuwait's Ministry of Defense, WMD Defense Command, to assist us in understanding each other's ability to counter weapons of mass destruction and respond in the event of an incident."

The CBRN team attended the event as the division's representatives and subject matter experts during the various workshops. The three-week long workshop provided an unprecedented understanding of command structure, personnel, equipment, training and operations to develop effective future engagements and subject matter expert exchanges for partnership building and interoperability in CBRN operations.

This led to the unique opportunity for Task Force Spartan's CBRN professionals to meet and develop relationships with staff across the WMD Defense Command force.

This workshop wrapped up with the Soldiers from the Ohio National Guard's 637th Chemical Company assigned to Task Force Spartan providing a display and layout on the CBRN dismantled reconnaissance sets, kit and outfits. The 637th Soldiers spoke to different levels of proof and experimental establishment, and provided a demonstration. 🇸🇦



Soldiers from the Ohio Army National Guard's 637th Chemical Company, assigned to Task Force Spartan, provide a display on the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear dismantled reconnaissance equipment to Kuwait Weapons of Mass Destruction Defense Command on Feb. 14, 2019 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The 637th Chemical Company is deployed to Kuwait as the CBRN defense response force for the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Grace Jacobs)



Sgt. Amanda Plummer of the 637th Chemical Company takes photos as part of the standard protocol while entering a contaminated area during a demonstration on Feb. 14, 2019, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Samantha Petersen)

OPTIMIZE YOUR HEALTH

LEFT OF **BANG** HEALTH

By **Lt. Col. Sean T. OMara, MC**
Division Surgeon | Task Force Spartan

Hello everyone! I am Lt. Col. Sean OMara, the new Division Surgeon for Task Force Spartan, and I want to help you optimize your lives through biological and medical science.

Many of us are privileged to have something we are passionate about and mine is helping others optimize their health and especially their performance. This may come as a surprise, since I am an emergency medicine physician with more than 20 years of experience in the emergency room — a place with little connection to optimized health and human performance.

I will spare you the details contributing to my own decision to increasingly study and pursue a healthy lifestyle, but I will share that the decision to do so has been nothing short of life changing. Formerly overweight, afflicted with clogged arteries, high blood pressure, pre-diabetes, eczema, severe gastro-esophageal reflux (heartburn), obstructive sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome (which ruined sleep for me and my wife), an enlarged prostate (causing me to wake up multiple times throughout the night to go to the bathroom), and a rapidly declining memory — and all this despite exercising 75-90 minutes a day.

All my ailments disappeared within a year of adopting a healthier lifestyle, and I was simultaneously elated and furious — delighted my afflictions were seemingly fleeing my life, but angry that all my medical training and physician practice had no role in my getting better (and moreover, likely proved to help these conditions stay in existence through a conventional approach of only treatment). So powerful and influential was my experience regaining my health and vigor that I set out to study and research just how in Hades it happened.

Eight years of living healthfully and five years into formally researching chronic disease and the processes which cause it, I am on a mission to vanquish the enemy I know as chronic disease. I want to do my part in highlighting and beginning to solve the biggest problem facing the military, our country and every American: chronic disease.

If calling chronic disease our nation's biggest problem seems silly, point to another problem that costs us more than \$3.8 trillion a year to fight. Chronic disease negatively affects and even takes the lives of a staggering number of people each year. What's worse is that chronic disease is a problem that very few have a genuine appreciation for until it is entrenched in their lives and causing more than just casual annoyance.

If you are young, consider yourself healthy and believe disease is of little importance, I want to shake you to your core. Chronic disease is real, it is within you, and it has a predicted outcome that should consume your most ardent attention and purposeful strategies to reverse it before it is too late.

Two critical points I learned from researching chronic disease:

First, it is reversible and therefore should be treated as an enemy and eradicated from existence.

Second, something shockingly happens when you employ real health optimizing measures and interventions effective at reversing disease: you don't just "get better" but actually increase human performance. You perform better (sometimes way better) than a "healthy person," and you get closer to an exciting state of existence I refer to as "super optimal health."

Having introduced myself and background a bit here, I encourage readers to return to this Spartan Sentinel column to learn more about reversing chronic disease and increasing human performance. For those located at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait, I will also be putting on a biweekly program called Health & Performance Optimization. Details about dates and times will be posted around base soon. Additionally, if there is interest, I would be happy to consider speaking to your unit about health and performance optimization.

Next time, I will get into what humans can do to actually eradicate disease and increase their performance at whatever they do. Stay tuned! 🇸🇦

Lt. Col. Sean T. OMara, MC | Division Surgeon | TASK FORCE SPARTAN | sean.t.omara.mil@mail.mil



History of the IG



Inspector General

TASK FORCE SPARTAN

Staff contribution

The U.S. Army Inspector General (IG) System was born during the Revolutionary War. When it was formed in 1775, the Continental Army was a disorganized array of militia from different states with no uniformity in organizations, procedures, drills, appearance or equipment.

On Oct. 29, 1777, General Washington met with 14 general officers and decided that an IG for the Army was desirable. The IG would superintend the training of the entire Army in order to ensure troop proficiency and common tactics. He would be the commander's agent to ensure tactical efficiency of the troops, that of tactical competence. On Dec. 13, 1777, Congress created the Inspector General of the Army.

The first effective U.S. Army Inspector General was Baron Frederick William Augustus Von Steuben, a former captain in the Prussian Army. He was recruited in Paris by Benjamin Franklin in 1777, and was accepted as the Inspector General of the Army on a trial basis by General Washington. He reported to duty at Valley Forge in February 1778. He spoke no English but learned quickly and impressed everyone with his hard work to improve the training, drills, discipline and organization of the Continental Army.

In May 1778, he was officially appointed Inspector General of the Army with the rank and pay of major general. Congress also appointed two ranks of inspectors general under the IG, providing us the first IG organization.

Many of the Continental Army's regimental colonels resented bitterly the efforts of the IG, whose duties as outlined by Congress included "to report all abuses, neglect and deficiencies to the Commander in Chief." Von Steuben's character, tact and genius overcame a great deal of this resistance and as such, set the precedent for the manner and behavior for future IGs. Von Steuben, author of the "Blue Book," is recognized as the "father of the Inspector General System," and significantly influenced our Army's ability to fight and win.

The statutory basis for the current IG system comes from the 1950 Army Reorganization Act. This reorganization replaced the IG Department with The Office of the Inspector General of the Army. The reorganization charged the IG with inquiring into and reporting upon the discipline, efficiency and economy of the Army. Specifically, IGs were to focus their effort on training and combat readiness.

The early 1980s heralded a significant change in the way IGs did inspections.

The new emphasis for IGs was on a compliance-systemic inspection methodology. This focused on causes rather than symptoms, allowed policy errors or omissions to be addressed, traced unit problems to Army problems, emphasized correction at the proper level, and minimized the need for onetime unit inspection preparation. Follow-up inspections were also stressed, to verify that corrective action was carried out and the corrections truly solved the problems. 🇺🇸

(Pictured) Friedrich Wilhelm August Heinrich Ferdinand Steuben (born Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben; September 17, 1730 – November 28, 1794), also referred to as Baron von Steuben, was a Prussian and later an American military officer. He served as inspector general and a major general of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. He is credited with being one of the fathers of the Continental Army in teaching them the essentials of military drills, tactics and disciplines. He wrote *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, the book that served as the standard United States drill manual until the War of 1812. He served as Gen. George Washington's chief of staff in the final years of the war.

ARE YOU BRINGING YOUR Personal Electronic Devices into SECURE Areas?



By Chief Warrant Officer 3 Chad Wold
34th Red Bull Infantry Division

THE COMMUNIQUE
TASK FORCE SPARTAN
CYBERSECURITY
UPDATE

You may be wondering, after reading the title of this article: Who would do this? We've all been trained, and we all know that bringing a personal electronic device (PED) into a secure area is against Army policy — and who would disregard policy, right? And of course, no one would ever plug PEDs into government computers.

Well, you may be surprised to learn that in the past four months, more than a dozen Task Force Spartan Soldiers have violated this policy by plugging cell phones, other USB devices, and even an Xbox into government computers or networks.

This presents a serious security risk to the systems that Task Force Spartan relies on for mission command. If your PED is infected with malware and you connect it to a government system or network, the PED could transfer the malware into the network. PEDs may show no sign of malware infection, but malware may still be lurking in the background. The internet connection on your PED could become a beachhead for a malicious actor to enter the network and steal, destroy, or tamper with mission-critical information.

Even if you don't connect your PED to the network, bringing it into a secure location is a violation and can be detrimental to our mission. Adversaries have the ability to hack and inject code into your device. They can use it to take pictures, stream/record video, stream/record audio, and upload/download files. That means that an adversary could eavesdrop on any conversation, including conversations about classified information, as if they were in the office with you.

Violation of this policy is punitive. If, at any time, a personally

owned device is discovered connected to a government network, the device shall be confiscated.

Here are the types of devices that are prohibited:

Removable storage media — includes thumb drives (e.g. memory sticks, flash drives, Universal Serial Bus (USB) drives, pen drives), removable desktop or external USB hard drives, PCMCIA media, floppy disks, CD/DVD, photo flash cards that can store data or any other electronic media that can be attached to, inserted in, plugged into or connected via USB, FireWire or wirelessly to a computer system for the purpose of storing and/or transmitting data.

Portable electronic devices — includes but is not limited to iPods, iPhones, iPads, smartphones, mp3 players, fitness trackers, privately owned PDAs, non-government issued Blackberrys, laptops, notebooks, tablets, digital cameras, voice recorders, portable scanners or any electronic device that has a record, store or transmit function.

During our organization inspections and site visits, 34th Red Bull Infantry Division G6 representatives have observed cell phones, Bluetooth devices, USB devices and personal laptops in secure areas.

Bottom line, security is everyone's responsibility. If you see something that is not correct, it is your duty to say something. Warn your buddy before he commits a violation. If the Army didn't issue it to you, don't plug it into a government computer or the network. If it's on the prohibited list, leave it outside the office or, better yet, leave it at home. Your social media can wait. 🇺🇸



SPARTAN NOTES

HAVE A MESSAGE FOR MEMBERS OF TASK FORCE SPARTAN?

Send information you'd like considered for inclusion in the **Spartan Sentinel** to eric.p.jungels.mil@mail.mil.



ONLINE BULLYING

OPERATIONS SECURITY TASK FORCE SPARTAN

Did you know that Soldiers who engage in online bullying are subject to punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice? It's true! Online bullying, hazing, harassing, discrimination or any other misconduct in violation of Army Regulation 600-20, Army Command Policy, can lead to UCMJ action. Avoid adverse actions:

- Do not post derogatory language toward the United States, the government, the military, your unit, your leadership or your peers.
- Do not post offensive language.
- Do not post about negative unit morale.

If you have any OPSEC questions or concerns, email Capt. Jodine Pfaff, Task Force Spartan OPSEC Program Manager, at jodine.l.pfaff.mil@mail.mil.

DID YOU SPOT THE SNIPERS? ANSWERS, FROM PAGE 22-23

SPARTAN SNAPSHOTS



E4I

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR INFLUENCERS



By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Buddy Winn
34th Red Bull Infantry Division

In March of 1836, about two dozen delegates in a small clapboard building gathered to declare independence of the Republic of Texas from the state of Mexico. That vote was the culmination of frustration and disappointment as the increasingly centralized government refused to adhere to the Constitution of 1824 — a liberal document that recognized the rights of both American Texians and Mexican Tejanos who had colonized the sparsely populated region. The revolution, begun in earnest in October of 1835, was coming to a climax in 1836, as General Santa Anna, President of Mexico, moved through Texas with a large army bent on subjugating the people to his powerful central authority.

For the mission in front of them, the defenders of the Alamo were already besieged in the old mission church located in San Antonio, and those men would never hear that they had died fighting for independence - they only knew they were fighting for freedom. On that day in Washington-on-the-Brazos, was sitting the man appointed commander of all military forces, Sam Houston. He would go on to lead the Texas army to victory at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21st of the same year.

Why stop and remember such a day? In a word — freedom. I believe that God created the soul with the insatiable desire to live free. Yet, how often is this freedom taken away by the tyrants and evils of each generation?

As we finish the battle to completely and totally defeat ISIS, there will be in the future yet another powerful monument serving as a witness to how important it is for free people to fight for those who can only dream. The millions of people who were trapped by Daesh have been given the chance to dream again of life, laughter and love in peace, because of the efforts of Task Force Spartan and our many partners and allies!

Remember the Alamo! And remember, this is for freedom!



To receive E4I on a weekly basis, send an email to encouragementforinfluencers@gmail.com

E4I ENCOURAGEMENT FOR INFLUENCERS

"If you are a leader, you should never forget that everyone needs encouragement. And everyone who receives it — young or old, successful or less-than-successful, unknown or famous — is changed by it."

– John Maxwell





SPARTAN SENTINEL

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