

# The Shield

**TASK FORCE SPARTAN NEWSLETTER | 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION**

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## FROM THE TOP

Another month has passed by as we drive forward in the deployment. Although we have been enduring warm weather, the summer is quickly coming to a close. I think I can almost smell fall in the air...OK, not really. Still, Task Force Spartan has many missions and more training to accomplish as we continue to build relationships with our partner nations and strengthen the U.S. presence in the region.

Recently I saw firsthand the great collaboration between our Soldiers and partner nations. Task Force Xyston participated in Inferno Creek in Oman to enhance staff integration. Task Force Spartan's Senior NCOs continue to meet with the Kuwaiti Land Forces to strengthen our partnerships and build strong soldiers. We are looking forward to Platoon Immersion IV hosted by Task Force Americal and the Royal Saudi Land Forces.

Finally, this month Task Force Spartan will be conducting Eager Lion 22 in Jordan. We continue to march toward the culmination of great partner training and our Soldier's hard work throughout our mission here in Southwest Asia. The stability of the region relies on our ability to strengthen and forge relationships with our partner nations.

The success of the mission rests on the strength and quality of our people. We recently held an Equal Opportunity Leader Course in Kuwait, and I am proud of the Soldiers who volunteered to participate in the course hosted by our Division Equal Opportunity team. These newly trained EOLs will continue to ensure all Soldiers are provided fair and equal opportunities to prove themselves regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or national origin. Soldiers represent the very best of our Nation and American ideals that everyone should be given a fair opportunity to prove themselves and be judged based on their merit alone. We must treat each other with dignity and respect. We must care about our Soldiers.

I encourage all Santa Fe Soldiers to begin planning for redeployment. Whether it is getting back to a civilian career, resuming your education, or seeking a new career, it is important to have a plan to limit any stressors prior to returning home.

In addition, keep your mission focus and continue to work hard. I continue to be amazed and proud of everyone's hard work. However, our job is not done. We must remain vigilant and continue to look out for each other and your battle buddies as well.



**MG WILLIAM BLAYLOCK  
COMMANDING GENERAL**



 **Task Force Spartan**

 **TaskForceSpartan\_OSS**

 **@TFSpartan**

*Win the Day, Task Force Spartan! Santa Fe!*





# FROM THE TOP

## Continued



As we begin to conduct redeployment operations, a lot will be asked from our team. It is important to stay focused on our mission while supporting the effort to get equipment and containers prepared for customs inspections. There are many administrative and logistical tasks to complete, which will be a team effort. Our staff sections can greatly assist with this task, but I ask each Soldier to take ownership and make sure they are prepared to conduct retrograde. Our mission is not complete until we transfer authority to our 28th ID team.

As I continue to circulate around the theater, I cannot say enough about the professionalism and resolve our Soldiers demonstrate. From weapons training at Udari Range, knocking it out of the park in logistics, contracting and maintenance, developing as a team with our partner nations while conducting platoon immersions, or assisting in development of the Non-Commissioned Officers Corp through partnership in numerous countries. Our Soldiers continue to do great things for our nation and its partners.

As our intelligence and communication sections work hard to keep us safe and connected, we need to follow their lead as individuals and teams, by staying resilient and communicating with each other and our loved ones back home. I am sure our team forward, as well as our team at home have learned a lot about facing challenges, overcoming adversity, and celebrating accomplishments while we have been apart. I am extremely proud of all you have accomplished and thank you for the sacrifices you have made for our great country.



**CSM STEVEN STUENKEL**  
**COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR**

# September :

## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

STORY BY SPC CLAUDE NELSON



National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 every year, and celebrates the independence anniversaries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico and Chile, as well as Spain's National Day on Oct. 12.

In the Army and across the nation, the month also recognizes the contributions and efforts of Soldiers and American citizens with Hispanic Heritage. With more than 139,000 Hispanic Americans across the U.S. military, they make up 17% of the total force, and are the fastest growing segment in the Army. Working hard and doing what is necessary for one's self and their team in order to succeed is a sentiment ingrained in Hispanic culture, and has translated strongly in the Army.

"When it comes to the Army, I always try to be better than the person I was yesterday," said Spc. Dennis Nunez, satellite communication systems operator-maintainer for the 35th Infantry Division. "You have to take care of others before yourself."

Whether it's one's own family or the unit that one may serve, treating those around you as if they are your family is something ingrained in Hispanic culture and is held in high regard.

"I consider everyone who puts on the uniform a member of my family," said Master Sgt. Hector Medina, chief culinary manager for the 35th Infantry Division. "Coming from Hispanic culture, family runs deep. Even if it's other Soldiers, they are as important to me as my family back home. When I know I'm surrounded by family, it makes me stronger and I'm better for it."

Diversity within the ranks is ultimately what makes our Army the strongest fighting force in the world. The unique variety of backgrounds Soldiers come from, creates a force where each Soldier can learn from each other, no matter the rank on one's chest.



# Troops from Oman, U.S. conduct training at Inferno Creek

STORY BY CPT TITUS FIRMIN

SALALAH, Oman - Soldiers from the Royal Army of Oman and the U.S. concluded a two week military exercise in the Dhofar Governorate of Oman on August 24, 2022.

The exercise, named Inferno Creek 22, is an annual exercise between the Omani and U.S. militaries. Inferno Creek focuses on increasing the interoperability of planning processes between the partner nations and culminated in a digital command post exercise.

The training included participants from the 35th Infantry Division with Task Force Spartan, the 3rd Squadron, 3rd Security Forces Assistance Brigade (SFAB) with Task Force Xyston, and members of the South Carolina National Guard.

"Inferno Creek is designed to strengthen the Omani-U.S. partnership and build toward further exercises where we can learn from each other," said Maj. James Tenney, chief exercise planner, U.S. Army Central Command.

For most of the individual Omani and U.S. troops, it was their first time working together, side-by-side and learning about each other's military planning processes and cultures.

"This is my first time working with the American Army and doing a command post exercise, so this has been very educational," said 1st Lt. Abdul Aziz Al Hadidi, 11th Infantry Brigade, Royal Army of Oman.



"Our unit has not participated in an exercise with Omani Soldiers before this," said Lt. Col. Matthew Delk, commander of the 710th Explosive Hazardous Coordination Cell (EHCC), South Carolina Army National Guard. "The U.S. military does not operate alone or in a vacuum, so it is crucial we can integrate and plan operations with our Omani partners to be successful in the future."

U.S. Soldiers appreciated the opportunity to work and train with the Royal Army of Oman.

"We have very similar processes, which makes it way easier than I thought to integrate," said Spc. Autumn Roach, combat engineer, 710th EHCC. "The Omani Soldiers are professionals and came ready to work, plus communication has been great."

Partner training events such as Inferno Creek provide Soldiers the opportunity to sustain high performance and training capabilities while also forming relationships.





## PEOPLE



## PARTNERSHIPS



## READINESS



**STRONG SERGEANTS,  
STRONG SOLDIERS!**

# USO working to strengthen families through reading

STORY BY SPC JOSHUA BOLDING

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait – Deployments can be difficult on service members for many reasons. One of the biggest reasons tends to be separation from family. Service-members sacrifice time away while they serve their nation.

While deployments are a difficult time for all involved, one organization is dedicated to help make things a little better.

The Bob & Dolores Hope Foundation partnered with the United Service Organizations (USO) to create the Bob Hope Legacy Reading Program. This program allows service members to come to a USO and record themselves reading a book for their children.

This recording will be sent to the service-members family via email and a copy of the book will be mailed to the family. The family will be able to watch their parent read and read along themselves.

Keturah Oberst, Duty Manager for USO Camp Arifjan, feels that this is very important for families in staying connected.

"I have a background in child-development and I see how important it is for parents to read to their children," said Oberst. "It also allows families to bond despite one parent being far away. This program is vital for the health of service-members and their families."

Service-members and their families sacrifice so much for their nation. With this program, they can connect for a moment and bond over reading.

"I come from a family of readers and I want my children to know the beauty of reading as well," said 1st Lt. Megan Myer, of the 35th Infantry Division. "This program helped me connect with them while I am away."





# AROUND THE SHIELD



TF GRIZ PRUDLY SHOWS OFF ONE OF THEIR M88 RECOVERY VEHICLES



SOLDIERS PARTICIPATE IN A MWR COLOR RUN 5K ON CAMP ARIFJAN

MONTANA NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS CONDUCT LIVE-FIRE EXERCISE



SPARTAN HOSTS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LEADERS COURSE IN KUWAIT



35TH ID SOLDIERS CONDUCT PMI TRAINING AHEAD OF WEAPONS QUALIFICATIONS



TASK FORCE GRIZ RECOVERY CREWS CONDUCT A MISSION ON CAMP BUEHRING



1-163 CAV REG CONDUCTS BIG GUN DAY EXERCISE



TF XYSTON CONDUCT LIVE-FIRE DISMOUNT MOVEMENTS WITH THE JORDANIAN ARMED FORCES



TASK FORCE GRIZ CONDUCTS LIVE-FIRE TRAINING WITH AN AT4





## Santa Fe Trail: Alexander Doniphan

STORY BY MAJ ALLEN JONES

The 35th Infantry Division was organized on August 25, 1917, at Camp Doniphan, Oklahoma. The camp was named after Alexander Doniphan. Here is a snippet of his legendary story.

In May 1846, Doniphan received a letter from the Governor of Missouri requesting Doniphan help raise volunteers for the war against Mexico. At 38, Doniphan had a flourishing law practice. Despite this, Doniphan delivered rousing speeches calling for volunteers, and he also enlisted as a Private.

The Volunteers assembled at Ft. Leavenworth and held elections to determine their officers. Doniphan was elected Colonel. On June 29, 1846, the Volunteers began their march to seize Santa Fe, Mexico. The march was grueling. After traveling over 700 miles, the Volunteers took Santa Fe on August 18, 1846. Doniphan was made acting governor and drafted a code of laws for the new U.S. territory. Doniphan's code still forms the basis of New Mexico's Bill of Rights.

Doniphan was next ordered to take El Paso and cross the inhospitable Jornada del Muerto ("Journey of the Dead"). The lawyer from Missouri did not hesitate. They crossed the desert, and then Doniphan bravely led his men in two significant battles—Battel of El Brazito and Battle of Sacramento River. Despite being heavily outnumbered in both, he and his men defeated the superior forces. The Volunteers took El Paso and then Chihuahua. Upon learning of Doniphan's success, President Polk wrote in his journal: "The battle of Sacramento I consider to be one of the most decisive and brilliant achievements of the war."

By June 1847, the war for Doniphan and his men was over, their enlistments were up. Doniphan commanded troops in one of the longest military marches in history (over 5,000 miles). He proved to be an inspiring leader and adept military commander. He complied with all orders. He never wavered. He won the day. Santa Fe!

**ALEXANDER DONIPHAN**

*A. M. Doniphan*



## Making an impact on the deployed

STORY BY MSG NATHAN BODLE

Meet Mohammed Ilyas, owner and operator of the Rug and Furniture Store in Zone 6 on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Mohammed invited me into his shop this sweltering 111° August day. Hailing from Pakistan, he's logged some forty years in Kuwait.

The Kuwait heat does not affect his smile. While interacting inside his shop over bottles of water, he shared his story, speaking five languages while we sat and chatted.

Ilyas began his Army Air Force Exchange Service partnership in 2009. With passion, Mohammed recalled many names of military personnel who've bought various antiques, pieces of furniture, and Turkish rugs. Thousands of U.S. DoD, various allied military services, and government contractors have trusted him to ship to their goods back home.

Beaming with satisfaction, he exclaimed nothing has been misrouted and all of his clients reported back pleased. Mohammed serves those stationed on Camp Arifjan with enthusiasm. His kindness towards me, his gratitude to the many personnel on base, and his ability to endure COVID, heat, and dust, all prove he's our partner.

Mohammed's shop offers unique souvenirs, handcrafted wood keepsake boxes, ornate furniture, and a vast array of Turkish rugs. I left his shop with one trinket, two handshakes, three hugs, and a refresh of spirit. Stop in if you desire any of these.





# Missouri state flag travels the globe

STORY BY CPT ROBERT HUGHES

CAMP AS SAYLIAH, Qatar - One Soldier is making her home proud as she travels the globe with a state flag, sharing a bit of her home state of Missouri with the rest of the world.

"I felt very honored by it...it's pretty prideful" said Missouri Army National Guard 1st Lt. Ashley Estep, Aide De Camp to the Assistant 35th Infantry Division Commander-Sustainment, Brigadier General Martin Clay at Camp As Sayliyah Qatar.

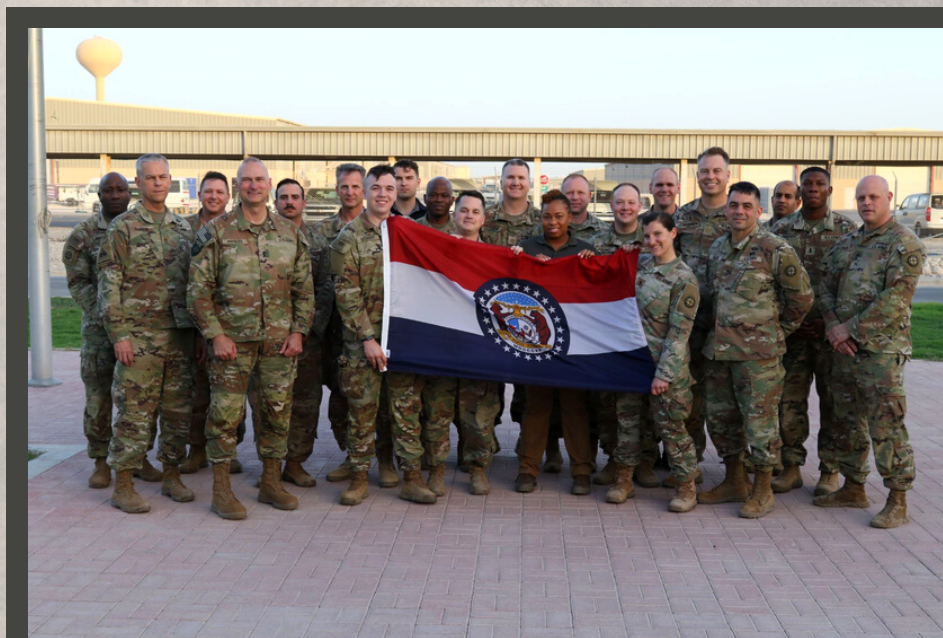
Estep's friend from her home gym, Heather McNelly, is a Missouri state official and nominated Estep to have a flag flown in her honor at the state capital. The flag was sent to Estep in a care package, along with a certificate signed by Missouri Governor Mike Parson.

Estep is now giving back by taking the flag with her during her travels with General Clay around the Middle East and taking photos with fellow Missouri servicemembers.

"I wanted to do something to give back to the Governor, for taking his time to sign the paper, and for my friend," said Estep. "I wanted to do something in their honor, and give them the pictures of where their flag is that they sent me, where it's traveled around the world."

The flag has been to seven countries so far: Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates. Estep is going to send Governor Parson photos of the flag in each respective country, showing him the great things his citizens are doing to represent the Show Me State, and the country.

"To actually have the pictures and have his people holding the flag, in the pictures of the flags, to say this is where our state flag has been, I think that means a little more," said Estep.





# Exercising your right to vote while deployed overseas

*There's still time to participate in the upcoming 2022 Midterm Elections!*

- 1** *Navigate to **www.fvap.gov/military-voter***
- 2** *Select your state on the map for state specific registration regulations*
- 3** *Register and request your absentee ballot with the **Federal Post Card Application***
- 4** *Print the completed application and mail it to your local Election Office*
- 5** *Once your mail or electronic ballot arrives, exercise your right!*



**FVAP.GOV**  
FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



# The Shield

## TASK FORCE SPARTAN

**Commanding General**  
Maj. Gen William Blaylock



**Command Sergeant Major**  
Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Stuenkel

### Division Public Affairs Team

Lt. Col. Matt Keane

Capt. Titus Firmin, Capt. Robert Hughes

Sgt. 1st Class Beverly Stanley

Sgt. Nicholas Ramshaw

Cpl. Evan Anderson

Spc. Joshua Bolding, Spc. Claude Nelson



## SUBMIT YOUR CONTENT TO "THE SHIELD"!

### TASK FORCE SPARTAN PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE



TaskForceSpartanOSS@gmail.com

READY TO SHARE YOUR PHOTOS, VIDEOS, OR HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT PLANNED?  
REACH OUT TO OUR TEAM SO WE CAN SHARE YOUR STORY!

## CONNECT WITH US, FOLLOW OUR STORY.



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