



# The Shield

August 2021  
Newsletter Vol. 1  
29th Inf. Div.  
TF Spartan

## 29th Infantry Division assumes authority of Task Force Spartan



Maj. Gen. John M. Rhodes, 29th ID and Task Force Spartan commander, unfurls the 29th ID colors with Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, 29th ID and TFS sergeant major, signifying the official transfer of authority from 36th ID to 29th ID during a Transfer of Authority ceremony July 20 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. TFS supports Operation Spartan Shield, which seeks to maintain a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen U.S. relationships and build partner capacity. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Marc Heaton)

*Story by Staff Sgt. Marc A. Heaton,  
Task Force Spartan Public Affairs*

Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, commanding general, 29th Infantry Division, Virginia Army National Guard, assumed command of Task Force Spartan from Maj. Gen. Patrick Hamilton, commanding general, 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 20. The transfer of authority ceremony was presided over by Lt. Gen. Terry Ferrell, commanding general, U.S. Army Central.

During the same ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, division command sergeant major, 29th Infantry Division, assumed responsibility from Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Horn, division command sergeant major, 36th Infantry Division.

Task Force Spartan (TFS) is a multi-component

organization, comprised of Soldiers from all three Army components: Active Army, National Guard, and Army Reserve. Exercising command and control over Operation Spartan Shield, Task Force Spartan maintains a U.S. military posture in Southwest Asia sufficient to strengthen U.S. defense relationships and build partner capacity.

“Task Force Spartan looks forward to working with the Kuwaiti Land Forces and all of our Arab Gulf partner-nations this upcoming year as we grow, build, and learn from each other,” said Rhodes.

During the ceremony, the outgoing commander and command sergeant major cased the 36th Infantry Division colors, signifying the end of their tour. The 29th Infantry Division colors were then

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# From the Top

Maj. Gen. John Rhodes  
Task Force Spartan|29 ID  
Commanding General



## The Shield

TASK FORCE SPARTAN



Commanding General  
Maj. Gen. John Rhodes

Command Sergeant Major  
Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude

Public Affairs Officer  
Maj. Scott Drugo

Deputy Public Affairs Officer  
Capt. Tim Savidge

Division Public Affairs Team

Staff Sgt. Matt Lyman  
Staff Sgt. Marc Heaton  
Sgt. Marc Loi

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**We get it. “The Shield” is not the most creative name for the newsletter we will deliver to you each month. We selected the name as a placeholder to reflect Operation Spartan Shield. However, there may be other names that better reflect the rich history of the 29th and both the Virginia and Maryland National Guard.**

**Do you have an idea for a better name? Send us your suggestions at [marc.loi.mil@mail.mil](mailto:marc.loi.mil@mail.mil). If we select your suggestion as the official name, we will ensure you get properly recognized for it!**

On July 20, the 29th Infantry Division assumed command of Task Force Spartan, adding another chapter to our rich history. TFS is a 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, engineering and information management, and facilitate theater security cooperation activities such as key leader engagements, joint exercises, conferences, symposia and humanitarian assistance/disaster response planning. The 29th ID served as command for Task Force Spartan in 2016-2017.

In June 2020, the 29th ID began our train-up for the deployment. In November, the 29th ID conducted a warfighter exercise that tested our unit’s ability to conduct our combat missions. Upon completion of the training event, the 29th ID focused on the upcoming OSS deployment. In January 2021, the 29th ID was mobilized to our Nation’s capital in support of the D.C. Metropolitan Police and Capitol Hill Police. In addition, many of Citizen-Soldiers supported our States in COVID testing and administering vaccinations to our fellow citizens.

On May 1, our Citizen-Soldiers and families said their goodbyes to begin our post-mobilization training. After conducting training at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, for two weeks, the 29th ID departed for Fort Hood, Texas, where we conducted theater immersion training. The final phase included a culminating training event simulating real world OSS missions.

Upon completion of our training at Fort Hood, the 29th ID deployed to their designated locations and began transition with our counterparts from the 36th Infantry Division. As we begin our OSS mission, we reflect on the list of the accomplishments by our Citizen-Soldiers. This is testament not only to them but to their families and employers. We will proudly represent our Nation, home States, and the National Guard.

Thank you for your continued support. 🌐

... TOA, from page 1 uncased, opening a new chapter for both the division and for Task Force Spartan.

The foundation the 36th has established and passed to the 29th, must be enduring, said Ferrell, adding that he will forever be thankful for what the Texas National Guard unit contributed to the OSS mission.

This is not the first time the 29th has deployed for OSS. The 29th was the first division to establish Task Force Spartan in 2016-

2017.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Rhodes presented an M1918 Trench Knife as a gift to Hamilton as a symbol of his appreciation for all the 36th had accomplished.



The ceremony included a cake-cutting ceremony with Soldiers from the 29th and 36th Infantry Division. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Marc Heaton)

“Your efforts and contributions will have lasting impact on our partner-nations’ defense and readiness,” said Rhodes.

Both of the divisions trace their histories to the European battlefields of World War I, where each first saw combat

during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive that stretched the entirety of the war’s western front.

In the intervening 100-years, both divisions have participated in a number of conflicts, including World War II, where the 36th became famed for being the first American division to reach continental Europe during the Allied landings at Salerno, Italy, and the 29th for being one of the first American divisions to land on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.

In its role as Task Force Spartan, the 29th will command two brigades and four battalion task forces. ●

## Resilience, self-care key to mission success

*Chap. (Lt. Col.) Jeffrey Hicks,  
Command chaplain*

Analogies in everyday life abound and are often beneficial in bridging practical and profound truths of life for application. Transfer of Authority is complete. 29th ID, now TF Spartan, has a race to run.

We are not running this race alone but together, as a team with all of our partners here and throughout our areas of responsibility, our host nations’ military, friends, family, personnel back home and around the globe.

Our race is not a sprint nor a half-mile run but more like a half or full marathon. With this in mind, let us run with endurance, perseverance and long-range success.

Let us lay aside every weight that so easily be-sets us and let us stay focused, highlighting our subject-matter-expert tasks and contributions, professional and even “personal best” objec-

tives, achievements with lasting benefits from our time serving here in theater.

Please ensure we are looking out for one another while taking care of ourselves spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and emotionally. May we strive together for professional, personal, collective growth and mission success!

To quote from the movie, Secretariat: “... run at life with all you’ve got because you don’t know how far you can go until you’ve tried.”

“Never give up, never give in and never quit,” stated positively, tells us to “be strong, courageous; be steadfast, unshaken, unmovable and live always with hope.”

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” -Hebrews 12:1.●

# Around the 29th



Chap. (Maj.) Jeffrey Hicks, the 29th ID and Task Force Spartan command chaplain, gets promoted to lieutenant colonel at Fort Hood, Texas. (Courtesy photo)



Master Sgt. Victoria Pridemore, the Task Force Spartan command paralegal, is promoted to sergeant major at Fort Hood, Texas. (Courtesy photo)



Sgt. Marc A. Heaton, Task Force Spartan Public Affairs Operations NCO, receives a friendly jab during his promotion ceremony to staff sergeant at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Scott Drugo)



Above: Sgt. Shenika Marable, Task Force Spartan Special Victims Advocate noncommissioned officer-in-charge, is promoted to staff sergeant at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia. (Courtesy photo)



Left: Staff Sgt. Nicole Edgington, Task Force Spartan Civil Affairs noncommissioned officer-in-charge, is promoted to sergeant first class by Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, Task Force Spartan command sergeant major, during a ceremony in Joint Training Center, Jordan. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Lyman)



Left: Brig. Gen. Joseph DiNonno, 29th ID and Task Force Spartan assistant division commander - operations, stands at attention as Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, 29th ID and Task Force Spartan commander, pins a star on his chest, signifying his new rank, during a promotion ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Below left: 29th ID and Task Force Spartan leaders pose for a photo with newly-promoted Brig. Gen. Joseph DiNonno after his promotion ceremony July 29 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. From left to right are Brig. Gen. Joseph Reale, assistant division commander - support; Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude, division command sergeant major, and DiNonno.

Below: Maj. Gen. John Rhodes administers the oath of office to newly-promoted Brig. Gen. Joseph DiNonno, during a promotion ceremony July 29 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

(U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Marc Loi)



Lt. Col. Matanov is promoted to his current rank with Maj. Gen. John Rhodes pinning on his new rank during a promotion ceremony at Fort Hood, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Scott Drugo.)

1st Joel Hutchens is promoted to his current rank with Maj. Gen. John Rhodes pinning on his new rank during a promotion ceremony at Fort Hood, Texas. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Scott Drugo.)



## 29th ID Promotions

Please congratulate the following Soldiers on their promotion. Their new rank is reflected below.

**May:** Lt. Col. Jeffrey Hicks, Lt. Col. Panteley Matanov, 1st Lt. Joel Hutchens, Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Lightfoot, Staff Sgt. Shenika Marable, Spc. Natalia Atehortua.

**June:** Sgt. Maj. Victoria Pridemore, Staff Sgt. Mosco Evans, Spc. Christopher Charity, Spc. Corey Knoedler.

**July:** Brig. Gen. Joseph DiNonno, Sgt. 1st Class Nicole Edgington.

# Fit to Fight!



Soldiers with the Task Force Spartan - 29th Infantry Division command group conducted the Army Combat Fitness Test at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 23. The ACFT has replaced the Army Physical Fitness Test as the Army's fitness. The ACFT consists of six events: 3-Repetition Maximum Deadlift, Standing Power Throw, Hand-Release Push-Ups, Sprint-Drag-Carry, Leg Tuck or Plank, and 2-Mile Run, with a maximum possible score of 600. (U.S. Army photos by Staff Sgt. Marc A. Heaton)