



# The Shield

September 2021  
Newsletter Vol. 2  
29th Inf. Div.  
TF Spartan

## Richmond native named honor graduate, Equal Opportunity Leader

Story by Sgt. Marc Loi  
Task Force Spartan Public Affairs

On her first deployment to Kuwait with the 29th Infantry Division in support of Operation Spartan Shield, Spc. Shenika Marable wistfully wished to be an equal opportunity leader (EOL) for the unit. Army regulations that required an EOL be a sergeant-promotable or higher rank dashed her hopes.

Now a staff sergeant and on her second deployment here, Marable not only got a seat in the class, she was also named an honor graduate - a recognition classmates gave her for exhibiting the traits they think most important in an EOL.

A 2015 graduate from Virginia Commonwealth University, Marable said she joined the Army because she wanted to be part of an organization she couldn't walk away from. What began as a hope, however, quickly turned to a reality Marable said she sometimes struggled with.

"Straight out of [advanced individual training] and on my first deployment, I saw a lot of things that made me question why I joined the Army," she said. The way leaders talked to Soldiers, for example, concerned her – and although she grew up in a family that encouraged confidence – she realized others might not have been so lucky. Words had meanings and some of what leaders said, whether intentional or unintentional, had impact.

"I was raised in a particular way - that everyone can eat, everyone deserves a chance. Soldiers who are new to the Army and may not be as strong - reality can hit them hard. So, it's important to instill certain values that Soldiers and



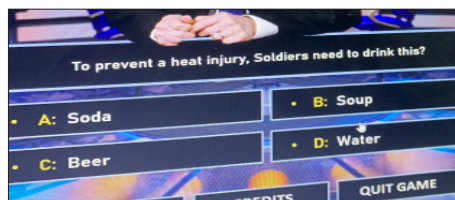
Staff Sgt. Shenika Marable, an equal opportunity leader for Task Force Spartan and 29th Infantry Division, shows off a coin she received in commemoration of her honor graduate status from the Equal Opportunity Leaders Course she recently attended (Courtesy photo)

leaders can live by," she said.

Part of living the values that encourage inclusion, she said, is to break away from traditions that might have seemed innocuous but have the potential to make others feel excluded or uneasy. Examples cited in the EOL class, said Marable, are blood ranks and wings, a tradition in which a

See, "Marable," page 7

### What's Inside



# From the Top

Command Sgt. Maj. Daryl Plude  
Task Force Spartan|29 ID  
Command Sergeant Major



## 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

Master Sgt. Brock Jones  
Staff Sgt. Matt Lyman  
Staff Sgt. Marc Heaton  
Sgt. Marc Loi

318-480-7900  
Camp Arifjan, Kuwait  
APO AE 09306

The Shield is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the PA Officer.

In last month's newsletter, we asked for suggestions on a name of our future newsletters. Your response was overwhelming. We particularly appreciated the excitement and support from readers Tom and Jan Gross, of Seaford, Del., parents of Lt. Col. Susan Lyon. They without reservations endorsed the name we already came up with. Thanks for your feedback, Tom and Jan. You get free monthly subscriptions of "The Shield" from now until we get home!

Right: Staff Sgt. Zac Davidson and Capt. Kyle Spiegel go over last minute operational details as Afghan civilians arrive at the Evacuation Control Center in Kuwait, Aug. 23, 2021. Within days, the ECC processed thousands of Afghans fleeing Afghanistan through Kuwait. Davidson shared the duties of ECC noncommissioned officer-in-charge with Sgt. 1st Class Sean Marks, and Spiegel shared the responsibilities of OIC duties with 1st Lt. George Sanko. (U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Brock Jones)

Greetings, 29th families, friends, and colleagues.

We have completed another month and have settled into the mission. Our Soldiers are working hard every day to leave their mark on Operation Spartan Shield. During the past month, our command team, along with other staff members, visited Soldiers, worked with other units, and engaged our partner nations. What is very clear is the commitment each Soldier has to the mission, the Army, and the Nation.

I am filled with pride, everywhere I travel, that our Soldiers are working hard and accomplishing great things. Whether it's a working group solving a problem or a joint training event with a partner nation, our Soldiers are all in, all the time. With the Task Force comprised of mostly National Guard and Reserve units from across our nation, it is a remarkably small Army. We meet Soldiers from our old hometowns, where we vacationed as kids, or even where our parents grew up. It's been exciting getting to know so many of our Soldiers!

While our Soldiers have immersed themselves in learning and mastering their assignment, they've also been working on their fitness and completing the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), which is required of each Soldier by August 31. The test is made up of six events, and each event is scored to create an overall score. Our Soldiers are doing a great job and having fun while doing it.

I close with a heartfelt thank you to each of you. As I talk to Soldiers, I share that deploying is the easy part. The true work is getting kids to practice, school events, or mowing the grass, all while still working, making dinner and accomplishing numerous other things that have to happen on the home front. None of those tasks stop, and we want to say, "thank you."



# TFS, Jordan personnel participate in joint live-fire exercise

**Story by Sgt. Marc Loi**  
**Task Force Spartan Public Affairs**

More than 50 Soldiers from the Kansas Army National Guard's 130th Field Artillery Brigade, deployed in support of Task Force Spartan, took part in Redleg Tempest, a bilateral training exercise between the Jordanian and U.S. armed forces, Aug. 7-12, in Amman, Jordan.

In just its second iteration, Redleg Tempest is a live-fire exercise that seeks to improve military readiness between the two nations and is a result of months of planning.

"One reason this exercise was such a success is that we worked with our Jordanian counterparts for months to plan for every aspect of the exercise," said Maj. Chris Wille, deputy chief of Task Force Spartan's G37 Training and Exercises section. "This not only allowed the war fighters on the ground to perform their tasks optimally, but also allowed planners from both sides to sharpen their skills."

Highlights of the exercise included F-16 fly-by demonstrations by the Jordanian air force and servicemembers from both armies qualifying on the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS).

"A key aspect of security and stability



**Above: An F-16 fighter jet flies by Aug. 13 in Amman, Jordan, during joint live-fire exercise Redleg Tempest.**

is denial of access through the air," said Wille. "Both the Jordanian and U.S. forces clearly demonstrated that, which will lead to a stronger partnership between our nations."

**Below left: A High Mobility Artillery Rocket System fires during joint exercise Redleg Tempest Aug. 12 in Amman, Jordan.**

The exercise ended with a ceremony and gift-exchange between Jordanian and U.S. leaders, with Brig. Gen. Joseph DiNonno, TFS assistant division commander for operations meeting with leaders from both nations and thanking them for doing their part in ensuring regional stability, security, and readiness.

**Below: An American Soldier goes through the loading and unloading procedures of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System during live-fire exercise Redleg Tempest Aug. 13 in Amman, Jordan.**

Military readiness isn't the only aspect of the U.S.-Jordan partnership. The two nations have been long-time partners in trade, humanitarian and international development operations.

(U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Kyle Burks)



# Resilience, self-care key to mission success

**Staff Sgt. Christina McDermott,  
Chaplain Operations NCO**

For some of us, the last 18 months have been a whirlwind. The continuing COVID-19 pandemic, D.C. Capital mission, pre-mobilization, full-on mobilization, and all the responsibilities that come along with our civilian lives have consumed us.

The challenges I've listed, for the most part, are things I have no control over. However, there are areas of my life I do control and have the freedom to do as I please. How I utilize my time is one of the things that I can control. How I plan to use free time while I'm while deployed is important to me because I don't want to reflect on my life in Spring 2022, as we make our back home, and realize that I have not improved, grown, or developed the areas of my life that I have control over. With that in mind, I decided to set goals and milestones, to hold myself accountable and use existing opportunities for self-improvement.

I know events beyond my control will occur and will most likely interfere with my own personal plans; I also know that when this happens, I may grow frustrated. That's not only expected, but it's natural. Accepting there is only so much I can control and planning for it is the first step of creating sustainable goals. It allows me to remain creative and flex-

ible. Rollo May, an American existential psychologist, wrote, "Freedom is the man's capacity to take a hand in his own development. It is our capacity to mold ourselves."

During this deployment, I encourage you to take advantage of the freedom to define what you want to accomplish and who you want to become. This freedom to dream, to envision, to imagine is the key that unlocks your mental and physical ability to control your own growth and progression. Once you realize you have that freedom, you find it easier to determine what you value, what you hope to accomplish and what it will take for you to complete what you wish to do.

For the duration of this mission, when you are struggling to juggle shift work, attend meetings, and respond to the unexpected, remember to be flexible. Give yourself grace. Be patient. These are your goals.

Remember the reasons you set the goals and why they are of value to you. Professionals who specialize in positive psychology believe there is an increase in motivation and commitment when goals are set. I hope that no matter the difficulties, you remain focused and motivated.

There is only one you; you are the writer, the creative director, and CEO of your life. Take control and think about areas where you can improve and use your time wisely to plan for a better you.

**"During this deployment, take advantage of the freedom to define what you want to accomplish and who you want to become. This freedom to dream, to envision, to imagine is the key that unlocks your mental and physical ability to control your own growth and progression."**

## 29th ID mother, son deployed together

**Story by Sgt. Marc Loi,  
Task Force Spartan Public Affairs**

When deployed Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sandra Williams misses her son, Alex, she doesn't have to do math to figure out what time it is where he is located before calling him. Because they are deployed together in support of Operation Spartan Shield, the mother-son combo not only share the same moon – they share the same time zone.

"It never occurred to me I'd be lucky enough to deploy with him," the elder Williams, a human resource technician based out of Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, said. Although Alex is 50 miles away at Ali Al Salem Air Base, the distance is close enough that on Sunday, Williams is a bus ride away from seeing him for dinner.

Spc. Williams, who serves as a missile and radar technician, said while friends and fellow Soldiers make a big deal out of his mother being on a deployment with him, he does not.

"For me, it's not a big deal," he said. "I feel really lucky, though, and it allows me to focus because she's my anchor."

During a recent visit to Ali Al Salem Air Base, the Williams spent time catching up at a local United Service Organization, played some ping-pong and had fruit smoothies, which Alex insisted he pay for. Yet, in between these light moments also exists a bond for both as they can come to work knowing the other is close by, they said.

His mom plays such an integral part of his life, in fact, that Williams joined the Army because of her.



**Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sandra Williams and her son, Spc. Alexander Williams, share a light moment during a recent visit. (U.S. photo by Sgt. Marc Loi)**

"When I was younger, I saw how busy she was and didn't want to join the Army," he said. "But life changes you, and I saw that serving the Army can be beneficial to me."

"It's comforting to have him in the vicinity," Williams said. "Going through this experience together will be something we can share for years to come."

# Around the 29th



Staff Sgt. Marc Heaton, public affairs operations noncommissioned officer, demonstrates proper photography techniques during a unit public affairs representative class Aug. 3 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marc Loi)



1st Lt. Melanie Johnson, unit ministry team chaplain, leads Task Force Spartan Soldiers in a prayer before a morale event Aug. 20 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Aside from offering counseling and spiritual support, the Unit Ministry Team also travels to various locations to meet with and assess Soldiers' morale during their deployment. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marc Loi)



Brig. Gen. Joseph Reale, assistant division commander for sustainment, speaks with a Soldier during a battlefield circulation at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 12. Battlefield circulations serve as both a morale boost for Soldiers as well as a chance for leaders to assess their areas of operations in person. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marc Loi)



Above: Ebony Golden, fielding for the defense, makes a play during a kickball game between Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion and G-1 Aug. 20. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marc Loi)



Left: Sgt. 1st Class Bobbi Bains assists an Afghan evacuee in Kuwait, Aug. 23. In all, Task Force Spartan Soldiers have welcomed and assisted thousands of Afghan evacuees. (U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. James Mason)



Left: A 29th Infantry Division Soldier, deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Spartan Shield, jumps to make a catch during a morale kickball game Aug. 20 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Below left: Maj. Mike Terry, G-1 Chief, grimaces as he crosses the finish line during a Color Run Aug. 8 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The Color Run is like a normal run - usually 3.1 miles - with a twist in which runners are splashed with various liquids of different colors while running.

Below: Sgt. 1st Class Michelle Thompson, the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense non-commissioned officer in charge, speaks with a Kuwaiti counterpart during a site visit with the Kuwaiti Land Forces Aug. 12 in Kuwait City, Kuwait.

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



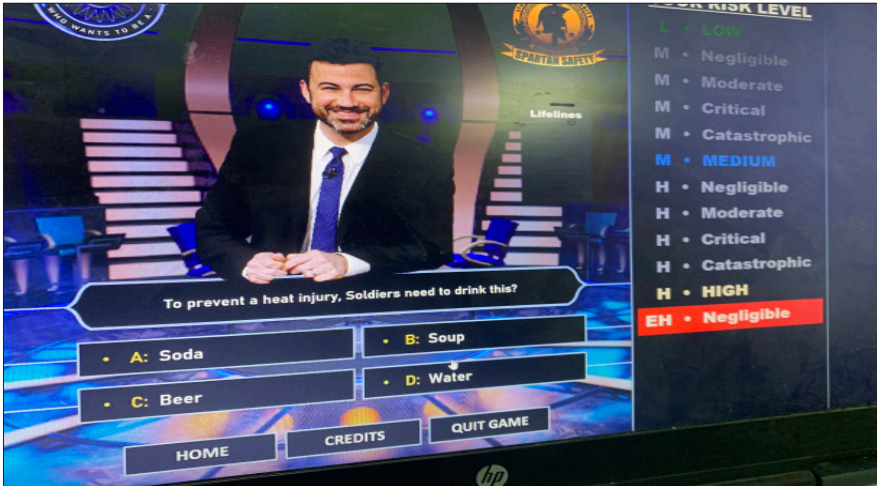
Soldiers assigned to the 29th Infantry Division receive their Shoulder Sleeve Insignia--Military Operations in Hostile Conditions, commonly referred to as the "combat patch," denoting their service in a combat zone, during a ceremony Aug. 9, 2021, at the Joint Training Center, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Lyman)

## 29th ID Promotions

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

- Col. Janet Chenault
- Sgt. 1st Class Cody Sawhill
- Staff Sgt. James Foster
- Staff Sgt. Christina McDermott
- Staff Sgt. Christopher Miller
- Sgt. Harrison Stewart
- Sgt. Ronnie DeGuzman
- Spc. Demontre Blowe
- Spc. Kpadeh Kolokollie
- Spc. Regan Goger

# Safety Office: missed workday, injuries preventable through SOPs



To encourage Soldiers to stay safety-focused, the Task Force Spartan Safety Office offers a variety of "edutainment" programs, including a game called, "Who Wants to Be a Safe Soldier?" (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marc Loi)

**Story by Sgt. Marc Loi**  
**Task Force Spartan Public Affairs**

"Soldiers are so eager and willing to be successful and meet and exceed the standards that they forget safety." That's how Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Leary, the Task Force Spartan noncommissioned officer-in-charge, prefers to frame safety problems within the Army.

The Task Force Spartan Safety Office - led by 1st Lt. Vanessa Mery - exists partly to ensure that Soldiers take safety into consideration when performing their tasks and duties. The way to accomplish this comes in multiple folds, including statistical analyses of common trends and accidents, as well as educating Soldiers and leaders on what they can do to prevent accidents.

Although accidents can happen at any time, Mery said they tend to occur more at the beginning and toward the end of deployments. Some of the reasons for this, she added, are that Soldiers are eager to either start their mission at the

beginning, or to accomplish tasks assigned to them prior to going home.

While Kuwait may not be considered a combat zone, and Soldiers do not face hostile enemy actions, deployments can still be dangerous because of the driving conditions. Oftentimes, host-nation driving habits, as well as dust storms and lack of familiarization with the roads, can contribute to accidents.

Additionally, Soldiers may also hurt themselves while trying to stay physically fit during deployments, Leary said.

This often happens when Soldiers - still not used to the climate to which they're deployed, fail to give their bodies enough time to acclimate. This, along with not adjusting their water intake and the amount of sports drinks and sodas they consume, can lead to a litany of problems.

Regardless of the reasons accidents happen, the results can lead to injuries and lost workdays.

"When we hear safety awareness, what does it mean? I had to ask myself the same thing. It's really similar to how we look at security and OPSEC (operational security) - it's an important part of command policy because it keeps us mission focused and mission ready," Leary said.

Ultimately, however, ensuring Soldiers remain safe is every leader's responsibility. It begins with understanding processes and standard operating procedures, Leary said.

"Educate yourself," he said. "This will help you train your Soldiers to do the job properly. The most important thing a leader can strive for is to do [their job] by the book."

To help Soldiers and leaders do their jobs by the book, the Safety Office not only collects and distributes trends, but also helps train Soldiers through various means. An innovation has been safety-focused video games that take after pop-culture.

On both the classified and non-classified Task Force Spartan portals are games like, "Who Wants to Be a Safe Soldier?" in which players answer increasingly-difficult questions on how to keep themselves and fellow Soldiers safe.

The goal, said Mery, is to create a culture in which the safety program is treated as seriously as other equally important programs, such as the Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program.

"Safety should be the first consideration when a mission takes place," she said. "You plan for the crash, not the ride."

## From, "Marable," page 1

person getting promoted receives a new pin-on rank or wings, and a well-meaning Soldier congratulates them by hitting them on the collar so hard that the sharp ends on the rank or wing break the skin,

drawing blood.

"We were told that those days were over because it wasn't right," she said.

As an EOL, Marable's job is to be the eyes and ears of the command and

advise leaders on ways to make their units more inclusive so as to maximize readiness.

It's a goal she's committed to, she said, because the EO program touches every aspect of the Army.