

Like Clockwork

Task Force Spartan Soldiers — training diligently, expanding partnerships — a source of power, stability in the Middle East

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The perpetual rotor — a half-moon-shaped oscillating weight hidden deep within the chamber of a luxury watch — rotates back and forth, applying constant tension to the mainspring and providing an endless source of energy. The ingenious mechanism is arguably the most vital component of the traditional timepiece. Without this stable, consistent power reserve, the second hand would tick forward irregularly or — worse — come to a halt entirely.

In the same way that the perpetual rotor is the driving force behind the precision, efficiency and relentless power of a luxury watch, the Soldier remains the impetus of the U.S. Army's capabilities and achievements. In the Middle East, each Soldier assigned to Task Force Spartan — successfully completing individual duties for one of a variety of units synchronized throughout the

region — is contributing to the goals and output of a larger operation.

"Our Soldiers are competent in their craft and professional in their actions," said Maj. Gen. Benjamin Corell, Task Force Spartan commander. "We've entrusted them with planning and executing a number of exercises,



U.S. Army Spc. James Downs, an indirect fire infantryman assigned to Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Armor Regiment, 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Spartan, conducts a mortar live fire training exercise as part of Exercise Eastern Action 2019 at Al-Ghalail Range in Qatar, Nov. 11, 2018. For Eastern Action, the Soldiers of the 2-198 AR of the Mississippi Guard combined with the Qatar rapid reaction force to develop communication and coordination between the two militaries. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jovi Prevot)



training events, seminars and engagements designed to strengthen defense relationships and enhance military readiness with our partners in the region.”

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Brady, of the 65th Field Artillery Brigade (the unit colloquially referred to as “America’s Thunder”), is a Task Force Soldier participating in those exercises.

“Recently, we took part in Black Oryx, an annual live-fire exercise, alongside members of the Jordan Armed Forces,” Brady said. “During the exercise, Jordanians fired rounds from the HIMARS (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System), and we worked to provide Jordan’s 29th Royal HIMARS Battalion with an excellent opportunity to rehearse fire missions, simulate training, and synchronize communication through their fire direction control center.”

Brady and his fellow 65th FAB Soldiers make up one of five Task Force Spartan brigades providing fire support and maneuver capability to the region while training alongside numerous partner nations to improve interoperability and cohesion.

A Mission in the Middle East

Task Force Spartan increases military readiness and capability, in order to maintain regional stability and expand regional partnerships. Additionally, the task force and coalition partners conduct security operations within the region,

enabling land forces to quickly build combat power through multiple mobility options in times of crisis.

“My unit is taking part in collaborative training with members of our partner nations,” Brady said. “We’re focused on training that increases our lethality at the operational level, and it’s exciting to know that we’re part of something much bigger.”

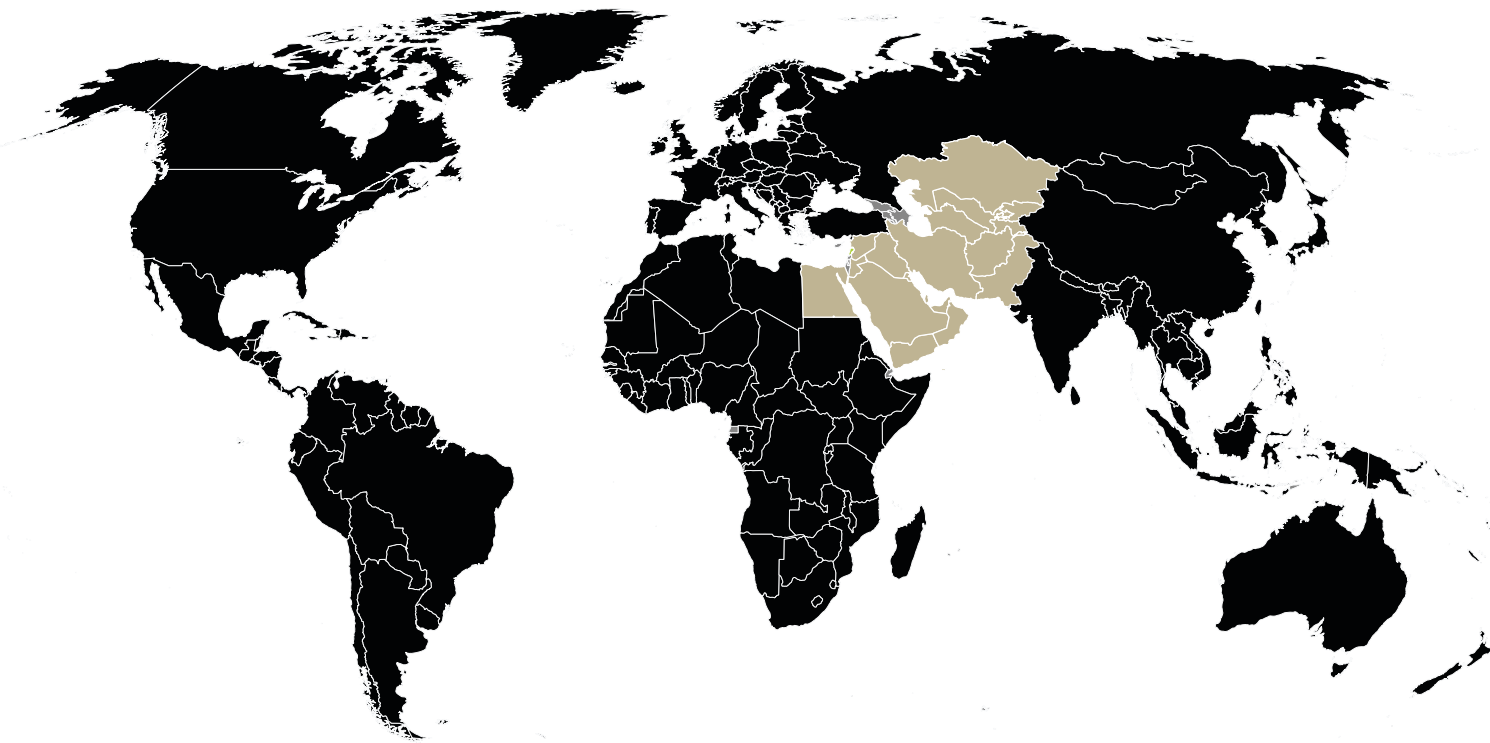
Recently, the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division, led by Corell, assumed command of Task Force Spartan – the forward engine powering Operation Spartan Shield. With oversight from U.S. Army Central, Operation Spartan Shield contributes to the mission of U.S. Central Command, which builds cooperation among nations throughout the Middle East – responding to crises, deterring and defeating threats and increasing regional stability.

“U.S. Soldiers assigned to Task Force Spartan are working side by side with regional partners to increase cohesion, promote security and achieve mutual goals,” Corell said. “Through strong partnerships, and with integrated military capabilities, we will be ready to act together quickly in times of crisis to ensure the continued security and sovereignty of our partner nations.”

While Brady takes part in exercises in Jordan, other task force Soldiers are currently operating and taking part in training exercises and partnership-building engagements across 8 other countries in the region.



Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Brady, 65th Field Artillery Brigade (right), and Wakil Mahmoud Khalaf Al-Qudah, Jordan Armed Forces, take part in a noncommissioned officer seminar held at the Jordan Armed Forces Field Artillery Schoolhouse, in Amman, Jordan, Aug. 23, 2018. The seminar focused on the NCO Corps heritage of both units. (Courtesy photo)



U.S. Central Command Area of Responsibility

U.S. Central Command is one of 10 Department of Defense combatant commands. Each command has a geographic or functional mission that provides command and control of military forces in peace and war. CENTCOM is a geographic combatant command with an area of responsibility that stretches from Northeast Africa across the Middle East to Central and South Asia.

In charge of U.S. military activities in one of the most volatile and contested regions in the world, CENTCOM leads operations across 20 countries, through six time zones. This area is populated by more than 550 million people and contains at least 22 different ethnic groups speaking more than 18 languages.

Like all combatant commands, CENTCOM constitutes a headquarters element without any military units permanently assigned to it. CENTCOM operates with Component Commands – one for each of the U.S. armed services – along with a joint special operations component and a number of subordinate joint task forces. U.S. Army Central, which operates as CENTCOM’s Army component and is providing oversight for Operation Spartan Shield, also serves as the Coalition Forces Land Component Command.





Fire erupts from the barrel of an M1 Abrams main battle tank, as Soldiers of the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Spartan, engage targets during the Bright Star 18 combined arms live-fire exercise at Mohamed Naguib Military Base in Egypt. The tanks were part of the combined Egyptian, Greek and U.S. armed forces, which demonstrated their ability to work together in the field. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler)

Synchronized capability development

As the U.S. Army builds a more modern, lethal, agile and resilient force, the organization's continued development and enhanced capabilities benefit partner nations. Task Force Spartan enables this rising tide by coordinating intentional transfer of knowledge and skills between regional cohorts. Synchronization across the task force — at all echelons — and with multiple partner nations is aimed to provide collective growth in trust, readiness, compatibility and lethality.

Maintaining a lethal force to deter regional aggression is a common task force objective among exercises scheduled to kick off in December 2018.

During Iron Union 9, U.S. troops will take part in a field training exercise hosted by United Arab Emirates (UAE) land forces. The exercise, which will convene mechanized infantry assets from participating countries, is set to culminate with a combined arms live-fire exercise. Participating forces will operate as a single combined task force, designed to integrate the partner nations and test interoperability.

Simultaneously, Desert Observer 2 will be taking place. This field training exercise, which will include Kuwait and U.S. land forces, is designed to test and refine defense contingency plans. The combined arms live-fire exercise will incorporate armored

units conducting a variety of tactical movements and activities, with a focus on compatibility and unified efforts in operations.

Further, the UAE Artillery Corps, in cooperation with the 65th FAB and the UAE Field Artillery School, will conduct a targeting simulation exercise to build intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance capacity. Goals of the exercise — coined Operation Thunder Cloud — include strengthening interoperability and developing tactics, techniques and procedures for future employment. Throughout the exercise, U.S. and partner forces will simulate counterfire operations to neutralize enemy indirect fire; use joint strike assets to disrupt, neutralize and destroy enemy forces; and conduct deliberate, dynamic and emergency targeting in mountainous and urban terrain.

Deploying unique capabilities

Because military units are not permanently assigned to the Department of Defense's combatant commands, U.S. military units are activated and deployed to lead and support combatant command missions. Such is the case with units mobilized in support of Task Force Spartan.

"We arrived in Kuwait for our Task Force Spartan mission in May, and we hit the ground running," Brady said. "Back



...we will be ready to act together quickly in times of crisis to ensure the continued security and sovereignty of our partner nations.

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Corell
Task Force Spartan Commander

Soldiers of the U.S. Army's Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 14th Field Artillery Regiment and the Jordanian Army's 29th Royal HIMARS Battalion load a High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) onto a C-17 Globemaster III for a rapid deployment July 23, 2018, at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan during Lion Flight, a bi-lateral live-fire training exercise. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ashley Clingeman)





home in Utah, we train all year round, preparing for a variety of contingencies. If we're not training, we're supporting homeland operations or supporting emergency and disaster response efforts."

Just as each perpetual rotor of the world's most-renowned watches undergoes rigorous internal and external testing, U.S. Soldiers are trained, tested, and prepared for optimal performance. And, like the rotors, the task force's Soldiers are highly qualified to perform particular tasks.

Currently, 70 percent of the Soldiers that make up Task Force Spartan, including Brady and his team, hail from National Guard units, which are uniquely suited for the task force's mission. National Guard Soldiers bring a distinctive set of competencies to the area of operations — in warfighting, developing partnerships and protecting the homeland. Guard units also carry a wealth of leadership and management skills.

At home, the Task Force's lead element, the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division, provides training and readiness oversight for 10 National Guard brigades, with a total of more than 23,000 Soldiers across Minnesota, Iowa and seven other states. Building, strengthening and supporting organizational and operational capacity of military units — through leadership,

command, control, and in-depth staff analysis — is nothing new for the Red Bulls.

Through these core competencies and through tested leadership and mission command skills, Task Force Spartan Soldiers continue to execute operations with a collective vision — one outlined by Corell.

"Task Force Spartan operates as an agile force — successful in deterring regional aggression," Corell said. "We accomplish this by increasing collective lethality and unit readiness with our partners throughout the region. We will continue to expand upon existing military capability with our partners through engagements, exercises and operations focused on increasing theater security options. I'm proud of our Soldiers and everything they're doing to add value to our mission and improve as individuals as we provide mission command to Operation Spartan Shield."

As Brady and the rest of America's Thunder prepare for future exercises, Corell and other leaders have confidence knowing that Task Force Spartan Soldiers continue to offer a constant, stable source of power. Like the self-winding energy reserve and backbone of a luxury watch, the task force's Soldiers — the critical component of a synchronized effort — remain committed to precision, power and performance in the Middle East. 🇺🇸



Clockwise, from top left: Sgt. Chandler Morgan, a Soldier with the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Spartan, covers the area with his team as another team of Soldiers bound to the next position during a combined arms live-fire exercise rehearsal at Mohamed Naguib Military Base in Egypt. The training is part of Exercise Bright Star 2018. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Keeler)

A High Mobility Rocket Artillery System fires an M31 Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (GIMLRS) during exercise Black Oryx, in Amman, Jordan, Oct. 24, 2018. Black Oryx, an annual bilateral exercise, is designed to strengthen relationships and military capabilities between the U.S. and Jordan Armed Forces. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Jeffrey D. Belnap)

Four M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles are illuminated by the rising sun in a motor pool located at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 19, 2018. HDR Photo (U.S. Army photo illustration by Spc. Jovi Prevot)