



## Austin leads USF-I into New Dawn

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey  
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs



*Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey*  
Presiding officer Marine Gen. James Mattis, commander of U.S. Central Command, presents the United States Forces-Iraq colors to Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III in the Al Faw palace rotunda during the change of command ceremony, Sept. 1. Austin took command in a ceremony that also marked the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the beginning of Operation New Dawn.

Silence fell across the Al Faw Palace rotunda. The crowd of uniformed service members, civilian dignitaries, and a small army of journalists who filled the main floor focused on the men who had taken up positions beneath an enormous white flag emblazoned with the symbol of United States Force-Iraq. Onlookers crowding the balconies above leaned forward.

As Gen. Raymond T. Odierno transferred leadership of USF-I to Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, the world seemed to be watching.

Under the gaze of Vice President Joseph Biden, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Odierno passed the USF-I colors to the ceremony's presiding officer, Marine General James Mattis, U.S. Central Command commander, and relinquished his command of U.S. forces in Iraq.

Mattis turned and presented the colors to Austin, charging him with the responsibility of leading the U.S. military in a new campaign and a new mission in Iraq.

Austin, a veteran combat commander with a reputation for leading from the front, takes command of USF-I as seven years of combat operations under Operation Iraqi Freedom come to an end and Operation New Dawn re-focuses the efforts of the remaining American troops on stability operations.

The change of command also marked the departure of Odierno, a man who has spent 56 months in Iraq as a division, corps and theater commander. He helped plan and execute the troop surge that turned the tide of the insurgency and gave the Iraqi Security Forces the

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# Chaplain's Corner

## Forgiveness and Repentance are Valuable for All

By Chaplain (Maj.) Howard Fields  
USF-I Jewish Chaplain

The Jewish High Holy Day Season is upon us. The festivals of Rosh Hashanah, Sept 8 -10, the Jewish New Year, and Yom Kippur, Sept. 17 and 18, the Day of Atonement, are called the Ten Days of Repentance.

Although these festivals are Jewish, the themes of forgiveness and repentance these festivals espouse are valuable for all.

At this time of year we are encouraged to look at our behavior. Have we achieved our goals? Have we fulfilled our vows to ourselves of the mundane, such as eating better or working out? Did we promise ourselves to attend worship more often or to be a better role model for our subordinates?

For these types of transgressions we are given this time of year to reflect, to try to improve on our past failings and to build on our successes.

There is another type of transgression that is much harder to overcome: our shortcomings with our fellow human beings.

How do we atone for not treating others as we want to be treated ourselves? We must ask for forgiveness. We must

go up to the individual person and say, "I am sorry I was inconsiderate to you."

We can ask forgiveness for the vows we make to ourselves, let them go and vow to do better next year. That is relatively easy. The Day of Atonement is a stage for us to play this internal drama out.

It is also the stage, hopefully, to work out how we will better interact with those around us. This is difficult. It takes humility and it takes ownership of failure.

It may make us appear to be vulnerable, but asking forgiveness is not a sign of weakness. It is showing your humanness, your willingness to be a full participant in the give-and-take of human interaction.

What happens when forgiveness is not accepted by someone?

If you have sincerely asked an individual three times to forgive a transgression and it is not accepted, you are released from the obligation of asking forgiveness from that person.

One theme of The Ten Days of Repentance that is valid for everyone is that we can and should forgive ourselves, let go and move on. Another is that we can and should ask others for forgiveness and grant others the forgiveness they seek.



Courtesy Image

## SARC Smarts



It is committed in many situations — on a date, by a friend or an acquaintance, or when you think you are alone. Educate yourself on "date rape" drugs.

They can be slipped into a drink when a victim is not looking or put in a drink given to you. Never leave your drink unattended — no matter where you are. Try to always be aware of your surroundings.

Date rape drugs make a person unable to resist assault and can cause memory loss so the victim doesn't know what happened.

**Call the USF-I Deployed Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (DSARC) at 485-5085 or 435-2235 for help.**

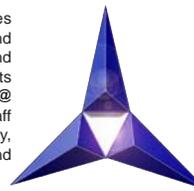
**Army members should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or DSARC.**



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# Fort Hood garage band reunites for “New Dawn”

Story by Spc. Britney Bodner  
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

It’s a memory and a hope for the future portrayed by music.

The RDoFs, a group of Fort Hood service members who reunited in Iraq, arranged and recorded a collection of songs as a dedication to Operation New Dawn.

The compilation of songs revisit service member’s experiences in Iraq as well as taking a look toward the future of Iraq.

The group took its name from the acronym for the Responsible Drawdown of Forces.

“The eight songs we recorded are inspired by service in the Army, seeing Soldiers in action, giving positive encouragement during the hardships of deployment, and memorial songs,” said Col. Mike Lembke, United States Forces-Iraq Chaplain.

The four members formed the band to record songs written by Lembke, who played lead guitar and provided vocals. Capt. Ben Johnston played accompaniment guitar and the piano, while Col. Mike Shenk, USF-I inspector general, was on drums. Petty Officer 2nd Class Brian Kemp, a religious programs specialist who has since redeployed, played bass guitar.

Before deploying, Lembke, Shenk, and Johnston played together in a band called The Phantoms at Fort Hood, Texas.

It was neat to find out that a few members of the band were deploying together, said Johnston, deputy chief of operations with the 36th Engineer Brigade at Joint Base Balad.

Although it wasn’t entirely clear where everyone would be stationed during the deployment or what schedules they would end up with, they all hoped the group could meet at least once to play together.

An opportunity came in June for the group to get together, said Lembke. With Operation New Dawn and the spiritual resiliency initiative, it became an opportunity to record something for the Soldiers to relate to.

Both Johnston and Shenk said they were excited when Lembke approached them about getting together to record a selection of songs. They finally met at the end of June to record the music in the broadcast studio in Al Faw Palace.

“You can’t just give classes on resiliency,” Lembke said. “We’ve got to do more and music is a universal language we use to reach out to others with a positive message.”

People listen to different kinds of music as well, so the track list is a mix of different music styles including rock, blues, and folk, Lembke said.

The songs really make service members reflect on the changes that happened during their deployment and the U.S. military’s time in Iraq, Shenk said. There are also songs that talk about the responsibility of service members to take care of one another when times get rough.

The title song for the collection was a gift from the band to the Iraqi people, Lembke said. It’s about hope for the Iraqi people and the rebuilding of their society as well as the trust created between each other and U.S. Forces.

“New Dawn is an appropriate title on many levels,” Shenk said. “Both from the obvious change of mission perspective and the individual change in attitude perspective; it really provides an opportunity for the listener to define the meaning of a New Dawn for themselves.”

“It’s exciting to be a part of something that is so symbolic of what we’ve come to as an Army and helping rebuild in Iraq,” said Johnston. “Plus the songs are pretty eclectic and all very positive.”

“You hope that tunes like these might inspire somebody, comfort them, give them something fun to listen to, give them something to think about so they might seek help,” Lembke said. “It’s just another way for us as Soldiers to give back to others.”

The music can be downloaded at [www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net) under the title Spiritual Fitness Now.



*The members of the RDoFs perform a song during a recording session for a collection of songs known as “New Dawn” at the broadcast studio in Al Faw Palace, June 24. Each song take a look at the struggles Soldiers experience during deployment and celebrates the change over from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn. (Courtesy Photo)*



*Photo by Spc. Kelly Morehouse*

*Gen Lloyd J. Austin III (Left) accepts the United States Forces-Iraq colors Marine General James Mattis, commander of U.S. Central Command, at the USF-I change of command ceremony Sept. 1. Austin who relieved Gen. Ray Odierno (Right) has the responsibility of overseeing Operation New Dawn and Stability operations.*

## **New Dawn, from Page 1**

breathing room to develop and led to the improved security that allowed the U.S. to draw down its forces to fewer than 50,000.

“This change of mission, to state the obvious, would never have been possible without the resolve and tremendous sacrifice and competence of our military, the finest, if our Iraqi friends will forgive us, the finest fighting force in the world,” Biden said, as he opened the ceremony.

Following the symbolic hand-off of the colors, Gates welcomed Austin to his new job.

“As America was fortunate to have General Odierno in the wings two years ago, we are fortunate to have Lloyd Austin ready to take the baton from him one more time today,” Gates said. “Whether leading troops at every level of command or more recently as the director of the Joint Staff, Lloyd Austin, like Ray Odierno, has always led by example.”

Austin will lead USF-I as it focuses on the mission of advising and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces,

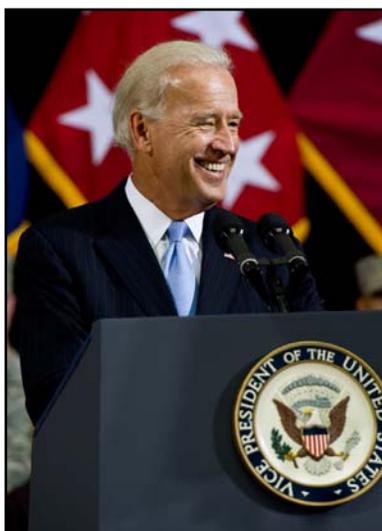
protecting and supporting the efforts of civilian, military and non-governmental agencies to build the civil capacity of Iraq, and in partnering with the Iraqi military in operations aimed at maintaining pressure on terrorist networks.

“It is my sincere honor to return to this great country to serve once more with my Iraqi friends,”

Austin said in a deep voice that resonated in measured tones throughout the palace. “And to all the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines, Coast Guard and civilians serving under United States Forces-Iraq, it is indeed my honor and a distinct privilege to serve with you as we undertake the next phase of our effort in Iraq.”

Austin’s command of USF-I marks his third tour in Iraq. He first came here with the 3rd Infantry Division during the 2003 invasion and, as assistant division commander for maneuver he earned a Silver Star for valor while leading the division’s march to Baghdad.

He returned in 2008 as the commander of XVIII Airborne corps, and relieved Odierno as the commander of MNC-I. At the time, U.S. and multinational forces were beginning to



*Photo by Lee Craker*

*Vice President Joe Biden speaks to the audience at the change of command ceremony.*

drawdown from the height of the surge and the mission of the U.S. military began its gradual shift from combat to stability operations.

Biden welcomed Austin to his post, but paid tribute to his predecessor as well.

“On the last day of his command, I’d like to especially thank General Ray Odierno,” Biden said. “This man is not only a warrior, but a diplomat in the best American tradition.

“I want to thank him for his exceptional, and I’m not exaggerating, exceptional service. More than four years leading forces here and working closely with Iraqi political leaders, many of them sitting here today. I think they will all acknowledge that they had absolute, complete faith and trust in this man.”

Odierno has been the towering figure many have seen as the face of America’s recent strategy in Iraq.

“If there’s one lesson I’ve taken from our involvement here,” Odierno told the crowd in his farewell address, “it is the sheer magnitude of what we are capable of when we trust in ourselves, remained focused on our commitment and work side by side, arm in arm with our Iraqi partners and our civil military team.”

Odierno saw the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime as the commander of the 4th Infantry Division in 2003. That December, Hussein was caught at Adwar by Soldiers of his division’s 1st “Raider” Brigade.

He returned to Iraq as the commander of III Corps in Dec. 2006, and took

command of MNC-I. He worked with Gen. David Petraeus, who took command of Multinational Forces-Iraq the following February, to develop and implement the surge.

After a seven month break from Iraq, Odierno returned to relieve Petraeus as commander of MNF-I in Sept. 2008. Since then he worked to implement the requirements of the bi-lateral security agreement; overseeing the withdrawal of troops from the cities, the consolidation of MNF-I and five other major

commands into USF-I and witnessing the success of the Iraqi Security forces as they proved their mettle by securing 7,599 polling sites during the parliamentary elections in April of this year.

Odierno credited all troops who served under him for making those accomplishments happen.

“We stood together through difficult times, we fought together, we laughed together and sometimes we cried together. We stood side by side and shed blood together,” he said. “But it was for the shared ideals of freedom, liberty and justice.”

Before leaving the stage following a standing ovation, Odierno expressed his faith in the man who was taking over for him.

“I remain supremely confident that General Lloyd Austin will carry on our legacy of positive change for the Iraqi people,” he said.

“His incredible reputation of professionalism and dedication precedes him. And U.S. Forces -Iraq is in great hands at this important juncture. There is simply no one more qualified.”

As the ceremony drew to a close, Austin spoke realistically about the challenges that lay ahead, and reaffirmed the dedication of U.S. forces to help Iraq develop into a stable and secure nation.

“Although challenges remain, we will face these challenges together. Iraq still faces

a hostile enemy who is determined to hinder progress,” he said. “Iraq’s enemies will continue to seek opportunities to pursue their objectives, but make no mistake, our military forces here, and those of the Iraqi nation remain committed to ensuring that our friends in Iraq succeed and we will demonstrate our commitment through a continued partnership with the Iraqis. We will help the Iraqis develop their capability to provide for their own national defense.”



*General Ray Odierno receives a standing ovation following his remarks at the USF-I change of command ceremony. Odierno, who has commanded USF-I, and before that MNF-I, relinquished command to Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III.*

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Dey

# OPERATION NEW DAWN

## VICTORY VOICES

What does "Operation New Dawn" mean to you?



*"A positive change for the Iraqi people and a step closer to drawing down our forces in Iraq."*

Air Force Staff Sgt. Kelsy Lambert  
447th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron



*"A new life for the Iraqi people."*

Staff Sgt. Juan Ramon Rivera-Rivera  
III Corps Special Troops Battalion



*"It establishes a long term partnership and solidifies Iraq as our ally."*

Air Force Capt. Lorena Bell  
Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement  
Transition Team



*"It allows the Iraqi Government to progress its country into a democratic society."*

Pfc. Nathan Craven  
108th MP Company

# Wear Eye Protection



## Eye Hazards

- Harmful dust particles
- Chemical splashing or spraying
- High-intensity heat or light
- Direct or reflected sunlight
- Flying objects and projectiles

More than 90 percent of the Soldiers who sustained an eye injury either wore no eye protection at all or did not wear the appropriate eye protection for the mission.

Commanders and leaders must ensure all personnel are provided proper PPE, to include eyewear, for each job or mission. Personnel must understand "stylish" eyewear might not meet strict DoD standards that provide maximum protection. We cannot afford any more senseless accidents. The proper protective equipment is provided, WEAR IT!

### VBC Facility Operating Hours

**Sports Oasis DFAC**  
Breakfast 5:00 - 8:30 a.m.  
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Dinner 5 - 8:30 p.m.  
Midnight chow 11:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.  
Sandwich Bar open 24 hours

**Education Center**  
8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

**Camp Liberty Post Exchange**  
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

**Camp Victory Post Exchange**  
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

**Paul Smith Gym**  
Open 24 Hours

**Victory Main Post Office**  
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Saturday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

**USF-I Unit Mail Room  
Customer Services/Mail Call:**  
Daily 3 - 6 p.m.

**Al Faw Palace Post Office**  
Wednesday and Sunday  
12:30 - 5:30 p.m.

**Golby TMC Sick Call**  
Monday - Friday 7:30 - 11:30 a.m.  
Saturday & Sunday 9 - 11:30 a.m.

**Mental Health Clinic**  
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

**Pharmacy**  
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;  
1 - 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

# {SUICIDE}

IS 100% PREVENTABLE

SPEAK UP  
REACH OUT

## SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

To learn the warning signs visit:

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)  
or [www.militaryonesource.org](http://www.militaryonesource.org)

### Websites

Check it out:

**USF-I Web pages**  
[www.usf-iraq.com](http://www.usf-iraq.com)  
[www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq](http://www.flickr.com/photos/mnfiraq)  
[www.twitter.com/USF\\_Iraq](http://www.twitter.com/USF_Iraq)

**Facebook -**  
United States Forces-Iraq  
U.S. Army III Corps  
Phantom Battalion  
III Corps Fort Hood

# Gates recognizes Soldiers in special awards ceremony

Story by Master Sgt. Vanessa Peeden  
United States Forces-Iraq Public Affairs

Twenty-four personnel were recognized at an awards ceremony Sept. 1 for significant accomplishments during the Responsible Drawdown of Forces from Iraq.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of United States Forces – Iraq presented the awards in the Al Faw Palace ballroom prior to the change of command ceremony.

“We’re here at this particular moment to award a group of individuals who provided significant contributions to the responsible drawdown of forces,” said Brig. Gen. Gus Perna, Director of USF –I Logistics/J4. “These individuals are people who were selected from unit commands across USF-I who contributed to the eventual draw down of over 1.5 million pieces of equipment, 25,000 pieces of rolling stock, and the closing of countless bases.”

“These are people who accomplish their mission without a lot of fanfare,” he said.

Since Oct. 2007 more than 90,000 military personnel and their associated equipment have left theater in one of the most complex and wide-scale military movements in recent history.



Awards for twenty-four United States Forces-Iraq personnel who were instrumental in the success of the Responsible Drawdown of Forces are ready to be presented by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.

“Without these people, without the work that they did in the planning and rehearsing and execution of the drawdown of equipment, closing bases, retrograding personnel, we would not be able to take the next step,” said Perna.

Three different awards were presented during the ceremony, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Army Commendation Award, and the Award for Civilian Service.

First Lt. Julianna Regis, West Point graduate, class of 2008,

who serves as the deployment/redeployment operations office in charge at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq received an Army Commendation Medal for her work.

“My Soldiers...I absolutely couldn’t have done it without them,” Regis said. “We had Soldiers from all different MOSs (military occupational specialties) come together and get this done. Between June 1st and about August 20th, we sent home about 20,000 Soldiers.”

She said, “It’s a big honor to me. My Soldiers, they came together. We’re a CSSB (combat service support battalion), this is a non-traditional mission for us, it came together. We built our shop, basically from scratch; I learned the process to send the Soldiers home. To be recognized for that, for our role in that is a big honor.”



Photos by Sgt. First Class Roger Dey

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates presents an Army Commendation medal to 1st Lt. Julianna Regis Sept. 1, for her part in the Responsible Drawdown of Forces. Gates and Gen. Ray Odierno, USF-I commander, presented awards to twenty-four USF-I personnel at a ceremony in the Al Faw palace ballroom just prior to the change of command ceremony.