

Marking Milestones in Iraq

The VFW remembers the official end of the Iraq War

Dec 15, 2022

WASHINGTON — The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) joins a grateful nation in remembering the end of the Iraq War and honoring the service and sacrifice of the veterans of the conflict.

On this day 11 years ago, then - General Lloyd J. Austin III cased the colors of the U.S. Forces – Iraq, officially marking the end of Operation New Dawn. The ceremony was a significant milestone for America’s military operations in the Middle East, which, including Operation Iraqi Freedom, wrapped up 8 years, 8 months and 26 days of persistent conflict in the country of Iraq. The combined toll of casualties from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn far exceeded that of the much longer and more widespread Operation Enduring Freedom. More than 32,000 U.S. service members were wounded in action in Iraq and its surrounding area, and 4,486 made the ultimate sacrifice, a total almost double the number of lives lost worldwide in the Global War on Terrorism. On Dec. 18, 2011, the last convoy of American troops left Iraq and after more than 21 years since Saddam Hussein ordered his forces to invade Kuwait, it seemed as though our nation could finally shift our focus away from Iraq. However, it only took three years before we were sending the U.S. military back in country to combat the terror group ISIS, marking another milestone in Iraq – the beginning of Operation Inherent Resolve.

In a Dec. 10, 2022, press release, Combined Joint Task Force – Inherent Resolve marked the “fifth anniversary of Iraq’s liberation and victory over ISIS control.” Since the U.S. ended its combat role last December, American forces “Advises, Assists and Enables” the Iraqi military until they can independently defend themselves from ISIS and provide long-term, stability and security for the Iraqi people. Until that day comes, U.S. service men and women will continue with their mission in what has become a more than 32-year-overwatch of the nation of Iraq.

Please join the more than 1.5 million members of the VFW and its Auxiliary in honoring the veterans of the Iraq War and remembering the ones still deployed to the region, as we wait to mark the final milestone when everyone finally comes home.

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