

Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, USA (Ret.)

General Lloyd J. Austin III culminated his military career serving as the 12th Commander of U.S. Central Command from 22 March 2013 to 30 March 2016. In this capacity, he was responsible for military strategy and joint operations throughout the Middle East and Central and South Asia. He also served as the Combined Forces Commander, overseeing the military campaign to defeat the terrorist organization, ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

A native of Thomasville, Georgia, General Austin attended the United States Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1975 with a commission in Infantry.

During his nearly 41 years of military service, he commanded units at every echelon, with duty in Germany, Panama, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the United States. He also has the extraordinary distinction of having commanded troops in combat at the 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-star levels. After his first assignment with U.S. Army Europe, General Austin was assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., where he commanded a company and served as an assistant brigade operations officer. General Austin then commanded a second company in Indianapolis, IN before earning a Master's Degree from Auburn University and serving as a Company Tactical Officer at West Point.

He was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY, where he served as battalion operations officer and brigade executive officer. He later commanded 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division including deployment for Operation SAFE HAVEN in Panama. He returned to the 82nd Airborne Division and Fort Bragg where he served as the division operations officer and later commanded the 3rd Brigade.

From July 2001 to June 2003, General Austin served as the Assistant Division Commander for Maneuver for the 3rd Infantry Division, helping to spearhead the invasion into Iraq in March 2003. Under his leadership, the division conducted the historic maneuver from Kuwait to Baghdad and seized the capitol city in a record 22 days. From September 2003 to August 2005, he served as the Commanding General, 10th Mountain Division including deployment and command of Combined Joint Task Force-180 in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, Afghanistan. From February 2008 to August 2009, he served as the Commanding General, Multi-National Corps – Iraq (XVIIIth Airborne Corps) during the period when the surge forces were drawing down. Later, he served as the Commanding General, United States Force – Iraq, from September 2010 until December 2011, overseeing the responsible transition of all U.S. military forces and equipment out of the country by the December 2011 deadline. From February 2012 until March 2013, he was the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army.

Other significant assignments include: Chief, Joint Operations Division, J-3, Joint Staff (Pentagon); Chief of Staff, United States Central Command; and Director of the Joint Staff (Pentagon).

Since retiring from active military service on 1 May 2016, General Austin founded and is the Owner and President of Austin Strategy Group, LLC. On June 8, 2016, he was elected to the United Technologies Corporation Board of Directors, effective September 1, 2016. He joined the Board of Directors of NUCOR Steel in September of 2017.

General Austin achieved a number of notable “firsts” over the course of his career. He was the first African American general officer to command a U.S. Army Division in combat (10th Mountain Division/Combined Joint Task Force-180). He was the first African American general officer to lead a Corps in combat (XVIIIth Airborne Corps/Multi-National Corps-Iraq). He was the first African American general officer to command an entire theater of war (U.S. Forces-Iraq). He was also the first African American to serve as the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and as Commander of U.S. Central Command.

He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA), a Master's Degree in Education from Auburn University, and a Master's Degree in Business Management from Webster University. He received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Auburn University Alumni Association in 2012 and is a member of Auburn University Board of Trustees. He was recently named a USMA 2017 Distinguished Graduate Award recipient. He is also a member of the Carnegie Corporation of New York's Board of Trustees.

General Austin and his wife, Charlene reside in St. Petersburg, Florida.

General Austin's many awards and decorations include five Defense Distinguished Service Medals, the country's highest non-combat related military award; three Distinguished Service Medals; the Silver Star, our nation's third highest award for valor in combat; and two Legions of Merit.