

# Ferriter takes command of Installation Management Command

*Tim Hips, U.S. Army Installation Management Command*

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SAN ANTONIO -- Lt. Gen. Michael Ferriter took the reins of the U.S. Army Installation Management Command from Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch during a change of command ceremony Nov. 17 on Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno presided over the changing of the guard for the command, which relocated from suburban Washington, D.C. to South Texas during the past two years as part of Base Realignment and Closure.

Ferriter, a 1979 graduate of The Citadel, came to Texas from a tour as deputy commander for advising and training for United States Forces Iraq, supporting Operation New Dawn. Before that, he commanded the U.S. Army Infantry Center and the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning, Ga.

As well as IMCOM commander, Ferriter is now the Army's Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management.

All three Soldiers served as "battle buddies" at some point during the war in Iraq.

"Both Rick Lynch and Mike Ferriter, I've known for awhile," Odierno said. "Most important, I got to see them operate in combat. These are two Soldiers who not only understand what it's like to take care

of our Families, but they understand what it's like being at the tip of a spear. There's no better person to lead us in installation management than somebody who's experienced both."

Ferriter's combat tours include Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and two tours in Iraq.

"I'm confident that Mike Ferriter is the right man for the job -- a proven leader with the right experience to lead us into the future," Odierno said. "He understands Soldiers and Family and is the right leader at this important time of transition for our Army."

Ferriter and wife Margie have four children who understand Army life: Dr. Meghan Ferriter, Capt. Dan Ferriter, Capt. Paddy Ferriter and 1st Lt. Mary Whitney Whittaker.

"The Ferriters are a great Army Family and IMCOM is fortunate to have them," Odierno said. "Always remember that the strength of our nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our Families. And that's what makes us Army Strong."

Ferriter said, "there are hundreds of thousands of Army Families that are exactly the same, and that's where we get our inspiration."

Lynch, the only commander IMCOM has known, was quick to thank Odierno for his mentorship.

"I've been blessed in my 35 years of uniformed service," Lynch said. "One of the top ... blessings is my relationship with Ray Odierno."

Odierno thanked Lynch for a career well done, capped by the complex move of an Army command from the nation's capital to the heart of South Texas.

"Lt. Gen. Rick Lynch has served selflessly in our Army with extraordinary distinction for nearly 35 years," Odierno said. "He's devoted his career to taking care of Soldiers and their Families. I have watched Rick for years, always step forward, raise his right hand, and say 'Put me in. I want the toughest job. I want the tough jobs and I'll make it work. I'll make it happen.'"

"We thought he was the perfect person to lead IMCOM and transform it into a world-class organization focused on our customers. The customers are our Soldiers and their Families and our retirees."

He cited the 120,000 people who make up IMCOM.

"We are grateful for the dedicated Army civilians and contractors that have made IMCOM such a large

success," Odierno said. "In short, the IMCOM team has been and will remain a key ingredient in our ability to protect and sustain combat forces around the world. I thank each and every member of IMCOM for your untiring effort and commitment to our Soldiers, their Families and the Army."

Odierno commended Lynch for embodying words like courage, confidence, candor and compassion.

"In your 35-plus years, you have made history," Odierno told Lynch. "You have lived in the arena and you have excelled inside that arena. Thank you for your steadfast dedication and loyal service to our Soldiers and our nation."

Odierno applauded Lynch's wife, Sarah, for her dedication to the mission.

"Sarah has been serving alongside Rick every step of the way," Odierno said. "She's dedicated herself to our Soldiers and Families. Whether it be leading [Family Readiness Groups] or working with the Families of fallen Soldiers, Sarah has met and listened to the Gold Star Families to assess how the Army was meeting their needs and helped the Army improve its services.

"I could go on and on, but the bottom line is that Sarah has selflessly given of herself to the Army, to our Families and to our nation. Sarah, you are a true American patriot and hero. We want to thank you for all you've done and sacrificed throughout the years for our Army."

The ceremony also marked the passing of the responsibility of IMCOM command sergeant major from Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola to Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Felt. Felt, top noncommissioned officer for the IMCOM Central Region, will serve until the scheduled arrival of Command Sgt. Maj. Earl L. Rice.

"I want to personally recognize Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola," Odierno said. "He was side by side with me for 15 months in Iraq when I was the multi-national corps commander probably during the most difficult time there was in Iraq. And frankly, I couldn't have done it without him. We were merged at the hip. We were merged in our own minds with each other.

"There is no other finer NCO, no other noncommissioned officer I would have liked by my side than Neil Ciotola. He's a Soldier's Soldier, a combat leader, and the epitome of a command sergeant major."

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