

General Frederick M. Franks Jr.

A consummate leader, intellectual, and combat-proven commander, Frederick M. Franks personified those qualities associated with the ideal Armor officer. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1959. Receiving his commission in Armor, he served in the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment before attending the Infantry Officer Advanced Course in 1963. He received two master's degrees from Columbia University (English and Philosophy) prior to returning to West Point as an instructor. In 1969 he joined the 2d Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, in Vietnam. Severely wounded, he recovered and returned to the field as a squadron commander in the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. During the Training Revolution and emergence of the Army of Excellence, alternating field and staff appointments gave him insights into how the Army managed change and the related impact upon soldiers in the field. General Franks' breadth of experience suited his role as deputy commandant for the Command and General Staff College and as commander of the Seventh Army Training Command. Work with the Joint Chiefs of Staff enhanced his effectiveness as a senior leader in successive command of the 1st Armored Division, the VII Corps, and then the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

General Franks overcame a significant personal challenge. He lost his leg after being wounded in Vietnam, but fought to remain an Armor officer on active duty. His success offered hope to other similarly wounded soldiers otherwise facing discharge or transfer out of the combat arms. During Operation DESERT STORM, General Franks' VII Corps constituted the Coalition main effort that enveloped and destroyed Iraqi forces in a series of fast-paced engagements. The destruction of 14 Iraqi formations in a 100 hour campaign testified to General Franks' leadership and ability to coordinate the actions of a large, combined arms force. As TRADOC commander, he oversaw the transition of the Army into the Post Cold War era and its shift from forward deployment to force projection. Through a doctrinal revision he redefined warfighting doctrine. General Franks helped posture the Army to accommodate and leverage technological change, study emerging concepts through battle labs, and enhance the ability to execute combined arms operations in a joint environment. These actions constituted the foundation of Force XXI and the emergence of a digital force. In retirement, General Franks continued to mentor senior Army leaders and support wounded soldiers.

Decorations

- Defense Distinguished Service Medal
- Distinguished Service Medal (with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters)
- Silver Star
- Legion of Merit (with Oak Leaf Cluster)
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Bronze Star with "V" Device
- Purple Heart
- Meritorious Service Medal
- Air Medals
- Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device