

This was his second visit with deployed 1AD troops. His first visit taking place in Tuzla, Bosnia, in 1998, where 1AD soldiers were also engaged in peacekeeping operations.

"I visited the division on a fairly steady pattern. I've just been fortunate," said Franks. His voice is soft and mellow. The old saying goes, if you want to get someone's attention, whisper. Franks voice and demeanor seem to command, even from those soldiers who didn't recognize him.

"I was filled with great pride, seeing what the soldiers are doing. "Just walking around, walking through the city of Gjilan/Gnjilane and seeing the soldiers guarding churches and schools," Franks said of his recent visit with 2nd Brigade soldiers in Kosovo. "I was just inspired to see what they are doing and what they are accomplishing on point for the nation. I saw great skill and discipline in the NCOs and superb small unit leaders."

The 12 years since he left 1st Armored Division have been memorable, to say the least. After relinquishing command of the division in 1989, Franks assumed command of VII Corps, based in Stuttgart, Germany. For American soldiers everywhere, especially those stationed in Europe, it was an historic era. On Nov. 9, 1989, with very little notice, the Berlin Wall fell, ending the Cold War climate that had dictated the U.S. Army's mission in Germany for so many years.

"[The fall of the Berlin Wall] happened fairly quickly. We, of course, were as happy as anybody else to see freedom come to so many people. I felt

a great pride for all the soldiers and leaders. I was the VII Corps commander at the time. We spent a lot of time training to pursue the goal of peace with freedom. The other thing that we wanted to do was to say to ourselves, 'Now, the situation has changed. What are some new training challenges that we need to turn our attention to in order to operate in this rapidly evolving different set of conditions from what had existed a very short time before that.'

Franks had little time to adjust to the new climate and what that might

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**Gen. (Ret.) Frederick Franks,
former 1AD Commander,
visiting Kosovo**

mean for his command's mission. On Aug. 2, 1990, under Saddam Hussein's orders, seven Iraqi divisions invaded Kuwait.

Franks and his soldiers deployed to Saudi Arabia, where he commanded the U.S. and British VII Corps forces. In the desert, Franks commanded approximately 100,000 American and British soldiers, including the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions, the 1st U. S. Cavalry Division, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the British 1st Armored Division, three artillery brigades and an aviation brigade. It was under Franks' command that Coalition forces launched the main attack resulting in the liberation of Kuwait in February 1991.

"[The 1st Armored Division's] performance was magnificent. The soldiers and leaders took the fight to the enemy day and night, in sandstorms and in the rain, over 250 kilometers in 89 hours. It was not without its cost; think of the soldiers that didn't come back, the families."

"Soldiers and leaders of that time—many of whom are around here now—wrote a proud new page in the great history of this division," Franks said.

Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm was not Franks' first experience in combat. Franks had been a young major, assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. He deployed to Vietnam in August 1969 to serve as the battalion plans, training and operations officer.

In May of 1970, during the Cambodian invasion, Franks was wounded. A grenade explosion mangled his left leg and foot. Franks was medically evacuated. After several months in the hospital, Franks was growing steadily weaker from the constant infection. The doctors had given Franks the choice of whether or not to amputate the leg, although they told him his leg would always give him trouble.

In January 1971, after continued illness from infection, Franks chose to have the leg amputated. After a long convalescence and extensive physical therapy Franks returned to active duty in February 1972, with a prosthetic left leg and foot.

It was this long ago injury that



Gen. (Ret.) Frederick Franks joins Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. during a briefing on stopping illegal border traffic, given by a Russian officer. The sector is patrolled jointly by Russian forces and 1st Armored Division's 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment based in Baumholder, Germany.

brought Franks and author Tom Clancy together. Clancy knew a six-year-old boy who had just lost his leg to bone cancer. Clancy mentioned to a friend of his, Maj. Gen. Bill Stofft, that he'd heard of an Army officer who'd lost a leg in Vietnam. Clancy asked Stofft to approach Franks and ask if he would write a letter to Kyle. Franks wrote a warm letter of support. In doing so, he sparked a friendship with Clancy.

After relinquishing command of VII Corps, Franks was promoted to general and took command of the Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe, Va. Clancy was a frequent lecturer at Fort Monroe, giving he and Franks a chance to get better acquainted.

Franks retired from the Army in 1994. In 1997, *Into the Storm*, by Tom Clancy with Gen. (Ret.) Fred Franks, was published. *Into the Storm* is a non-fiction accounting of the Iraqi ground war during Operation Desert Storm, although the book is largely a biography of Franks. The book has been successful and even made the *New York Times Bestseller*

list, but that doesn't mean Franks has been bitten by the writing bug.

"It took us the better part of two years to write that book and I'm not eager to write another one," Franks said.

These days, Franks works as a senior observer for the U.S. Army Battle Command Training Program, teaching battle command to senior tactical commanders and staffs in seminars and simulated war games. Franks' team travels extensively, giving Franks the opportunity to visit his former units and interact with soldiers, while still playing an active role in their training.

"There are a lot of enduring realities about land combat that are as true today as they were 10 or 12 years ago. Even while soldiers, leaders and units are deployed to Kosovo, they take the opportunity to train on high-intensity combat skills at squad- and crew-level," said Franks, during a break in the BCTP seminar held in Wiesbaden in January. "It was professionally fulfilling to see the continuing focus of General Casey and the other leadership of the division on training,

readiness, development of leaders, while simultaneously being able to execute with such great skill the mission that the division is doing in Kosovo. Obviously, being able to do both is a lot more challenging than in the Cold War days when we just had to focus on one mission."

Speaking to soldiers comes easy to Franks. Whether it's his reputation or his gentle demeanor that draw soldiers to him, Franks is still a fountain of knowledge from which all soldiers seem eager to drink.

"It's the skill and fundamentals that allow you to be successful in war and allows you to be successful in other missions," Franks said, once again reiterating the importance of realistic training. But time and again, Franks has proven that tough training makes the difference, as he well illustrated during that pivotal 89 hours in the desert.

"The emphasis is on training hard, training to tough standards, training out in the conditions in the terrain and the weather. Back here around the 1st Armored Division family, I see that the Army's in great hands."