

An American Soldier Study Guide

An American Soldier by Tommy Franks

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Plot Summary

Tommy Ray Franks was born in Oklahoma and raised in Texas, the only child of Lorene and Ray Franks, who adopted him as an infant. Franks describes an idyllic "Tom Sawyer" childhood in small town America. Franks' parents hold a simple, black and white view of the world. Franks' father is a repairman who has trouble making a steady living.

After flunking out of the University of Texas in 1965, Franks enlists in the Army and gets sent to Vietnam. There, he becomes a real soldier, and after facing combat in jungles and rice paddies, he returns home with medals of valor and three Purple Hearts. Franks uses the Army to complete his college education, and then serves in Germany as commander of Howitzer Battery, 1st Squadron, Second Army Cavalry Regiment. The main concern there in 1975 is strategies, should the Cold War against the Soviet Union turn hot. Franks returns to the States and works at The Pentagon, becoming disillusioned by the machinations of politicians.

In the 1980s, Franks works with other officers to develop the 'New Army,' an armed services without draftees. The New Army will be smaller, yet more highly trained; victory will depend more upon the use of equipment like 'smart bombs' and computers than masses of troops. Franks believes that ending the draft eliminates problems like racism, drug abuse and low morale.

In 1990, under the first Bush Administration, Franks becomes a key player in Desert Storm, America's reaction to Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. Using a combination of surprise, deception, and speed, Americans and their allies are able to defeat Hussein in fewer than one hundred days.

By 1997, Franks has been promoted to a two-star general, and he has commanded the Second Infantry Warrior Division for two years; his challenge is North Korea. Franks takes command of the Third Army Forces, Central Command - a three year tour to end in 2000. Under the Clinton Administration, Franks is involved in another bombing of Iraq.

On April 24, 2000 Franks takes over as Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command. CENTCOM is responsible for maintaining stability in a twenty-five nation region that includes the most dangerous part of the world - the Middle East. After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Franks is one of the leaders of the response. Franks helps plan and execute the war in Afghanistan, and then in Iraq. Franks develops a four-phase plan for removing Saddam Hussein from office, removing his weapons of mass destruction, and developing a democracy. Franks retires from the Army after Phase 3, leaving the task of rebuilding Iraq to those who follow.

Franks writes a lot about the art and science of war. Franks gives details about meetings at the highest levels among people like President George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld while they plan the response to world terrorism that threatens the United States.



Prologue

Prologue Summary

Franks is one of only a few top people in the Bush administration who are present March 19, 2003, when President George W. Bush officially decides to declare war on Iraq. Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Power, Dick Cheney and other members of the National Security Council are seated around a table in Washington, D.C. They are hooked up by video camera to Franks, Lt. General Buzz Moseley, and Coalition commanders in Bahrain, a field in Saudi Arabia, and other locations in the Middle East. During this historic meeting, President Bush asks the military leaders if they have what they needed to win "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Franks and the others assure the group in D.C. that they do. Everyone's main concern is the fear that the Iraqis will use nuclear weapons on American troops. Nevertheless, the President gives his okay to start the mission. The President's final words are "May God bless our troops."

Prologue Analysis

Franks starts out very strongly by giving the reader an insider's view of exactly what happened that day. Little details, such as Franks' audio feed shutting off, make the scene vivid and authentic. Franks leaves out his feelings about the mission but writes instead as an objective journalist.



Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

Franks was born in central Oklahoma and adopted by Lorene and Ray Franks. Franks' father is the most influential person in his young life. A former Air Force Mechanic, Ray makes his living as a "Jack-of-all-Trades" who could repair anything. Franks' parents are not well-educated and hold a simple view of the world. For example, his father tells him that the Japanese are bad people who started World War 2, and that people who land up in jail deserve it, a consequence for the wrongdoing. Ray Franks thinks in terms of good and evil, right versus wrong. Franks' flexible job enables him to spend a lot of time with his son, not only as a parent, but also as his Scoutmaster.

Franks learns he is adopted by accident. Franks finds his birth certificate one day and notices that he has a different last name than his parents. Franks says that when he confronts his mother with this news, she confirms that he is adopted, a fact that he has already suspected. Franks and his mother do not discuss the circumstances of his adoption.

Franks writes that his parents are not only uneducated but he also implies that they are racist. For example, he grows up thinking it is normal for Mexican and black children to be educated in separate schools. Franks believes the reason for separatism is these groups are inferior to whites and therefore need special schools.

The family moves to Stratford, Oklahoma, a very small town in a rural area, when Tommy Franks is six years old. Tommy gets into a few scrapes as a child, but describes an idyllic small town childhood, with plenty of freedom to explore farmlands with other boys. Franks tells how his parents always make him take the consequences of his actions. For example, when he swims naked in a pond without permission, he has to go and apologize to the pond's owner afterward. When he steals money for a BB gun, he gets grounded for a month or two.

When Franks is eight, the family moves to Midland, Texas, where he finishes grammar school and high school. Franks takes an active interest in girls and cars, and sometimes participates in drag races. When he is a teenager, he owns both a motor scooter, and later a car. Franks' father always works hard, yet the family remains poor, a fact which sometimes embarrasses Tommy. After high school graduation, Tommy enters the University of Texas at Austin in 1963 with the intention of being a chemist.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Tommy Franks has a father who was available to him throughout his childhood. It is obvious that his father is his idol, yet he glosses over his parents' racism and their inability to talk about his adoption. Franks' mother uses words like "nigger."



In all, his childhood does not seem that wonderful, because of the way his father's income fluctuates. Sometimes his father does well; sometimes the family is bankrupt. Tommy is often embarrassed about the family finances.

There is a possibility that because Franks came from Midland, Texas, he may have had a special rapport with President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura. Both grew up in Midland. Laura was one year ahead of Franks in school.



Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

Tommy Franks becomes an active member of the Delta Upsilon fraternity at the University of Texas where he enjoys a rich social life. Frank spends too much time partying and drinking, and because of this, his grades suffer. Franks goes on 'so pro' or 'social probation' at the end of his freshman year. Meanwhile, his parents financially struggle to keep him in college. They move to Austin, with the idea Tommy could move in with them and thus save money on university housing. Living at home does not improve Tommy's grades. Tommy flunks out of college in May 1965. A few months later, he joins the Army. The idea of wearing a uniform and fighting in a war in Vietnam seems 'studly' to the former frat guy.

Franks' romantic image of Army life changes when he meets Staff Sergeant Kittle and takes part in his first 'GI party'. Franks thinks it will be a real party with sandwiches, but instead the 'party' turns out to be a chance to clean latrines in a group. Franks becomes homesick looking at the row of latrines without any stalls or privacy whatsoever. Franks fails in his first attempts at marching, because his boots are too narrow. Kittle shows him how to soak them in hot water and make them fit.

Franks quickly rises to the top of his platoon in Basic Training. Franks' farm boy experience with guns comes in handy, because he is one of only a few recruits who can shoot straight from the start.

At the completion of Basic Training, Franks goes to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, to be trained as a crypto-analyst or code breaker in the Army Security Agency, a branch of Army Intelligence. Again, he romanticizes himself as the next James Bond. Code breaking school, however, proves to be tedious and based on mathematical probabilities. Franks' classes meet at night and include a lot of boring information about the probability of a certain letter being a certain cipher based on the number of times the letter is used in that language. Franks no longer feels like a soldier, except when he marches in Honor Guard.

After his training as a crypto-analyst, Franks applies to Officer Candidate School. During an interview with a Sergeant named Scagliotti, Franks is told he may make it to Sergeant but "you'll never be an officer worth a damn." Later, Franks considers the remark to have been a compliment. Being a sergeant means you have good, hands-on skills with other soldiers.

Exactly one year after his enlistment, Franks arrives at the U.S. Army Artillery Officer Candidate School in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This training is as brutal as Basic Training, and it involves five-mile runs, push-ups, and 'GI parties', as well as learning all about guns and ballistics. After he gets cocky when his first attempt at firing on a target goes well,



Franks' instructor cuts him down to size. He reminds Franks that it will be ten times harder in Vietnam at night and in a monsoon.

Franks is commissioned Second Lieutenant of Field Artillery on February 14, 1967. Frank's parents attend the ceremony. Franks' first assignment is as assistant executive officer of a 105 mm battery at Fort Sill. Franks will ship out to Vietnam within a year.

At Fort Sill, he meets Cathy Carley, a student at Cameron Junior College. Cathy's father is strict and insists on severe limits on their dating. Nevertheless, the two fall in love. Franks asks Cathy to marry him after borrowing \$500 for a diamond engagement ring. Cathy accepts his proposal.

Franks continues his training at Jungle Warfare School in Panama. In October 1967 he receives orders to report to Travis Air Force Base. From there, he flies to Bien Hoa Air Base in Vietnam. Although he is willing to serve in war, he figures that he will quit the Army after his stint in 'Nam. Franks says he will never be a 'lifer'.

The title of this chapter "Make 'Em a Hand," comes from his father's advice to him. A hand is someone who works hard for his living. Franks' father told Tommy to "make 'em a hand" in the service.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Franks seems to write in a less guarded tone when he reminisces about Basic Training and life in the Army. Franks holds back more when he writes about his parents and early life, but once he gets to the Army, his writing opens up. It is as though he comes into his own as a serviceman. Franks is obviously proud that he is in the top 10% of his class and is able to achieve easily in the service after failing in his university career. Franks enjoys the atmosphere and the way things are done in the Army. Franks likes the pomp and circumstances of Army ceremony. The Army is clearly where he belongs.



Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

This long chapter is about Franks' experiences in Vietnam. Franks calls the chapter "The Crucible." The word 'crucible' can mean not only a pot used to boil metals but also a severe *test*, or a time when great socio-economic forces come together, such as "the crucible of the Great Depression." Vietnam is Franks' crucible.

Franks arrives in Mekong Delta in October, but even in that month, the weather is baking hot and humid. Riding in an open-air truck, he notices peasants in black pajamas, water buffalo, jungle plants, and rice paddies. They come to the 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry base, and are greeted by a sign that reads "Welcome to Beautiful Downtown BINH PHUOC." Franks is assigned to Charlie Company, the 5th of the 60th, but when he asks questions, he quickly finds out that an FNG has no right to ask questions (FNG means "fucking new guy").

Franks is there less than an hour when the ground shakes from a howitzer blast. There is a suspected sniper in the area. Under the Rules of Engagement, an Infantry Officer needs three clearances to fire, meaning the word 'suspected' can slow their response down for hours.

At sunset that day Franks experiences his first 'Mad Minute.' During 'Mad Minute,' the Battalion fires automatic weapons on the sides of the perimeter not defended by the Battery's howitzer as a way to discourage infiltration from the unprotected sides and also to test the weapons.

When Franks tries to sleep, he is kept awake by the effects of anti-malaria pills that give him diarrhea. Franks goes to the latrines only to be overcome by the stench. When he shines his flashlight down a latrine, he sees a big pile of maggots. This sight makes him sicker.

The company slogs across the rice paddies toward the jungle about six hundred meters ahead. While the men advance, Franks has the authority to order artillery fire on the enemy, but he's unsure when to do it. When they reach a dike, it is decided that they should fire on the enemy. It is his first combat fire mission, but they do not manage to kill any enemy or blow up enemy equipment. All they do is destroy four hundred square meters of empty jungle.

On another day, Franks' company is ambushed by the VC when they file across a footbridge. Franks calls for fire support and radios his coordinates. Air support is provided while his men manage to smash a classic ambush. Only two American soldiers are wounded and one is killed.

Franks' battalion continues to conduct sweeps in the area. They often sleep in the jungle. Sometimes they take out a VC unit; sometimes they don't. It is hard duty.



Franks writes that every American there thinks in terms of his DEROS or Date Eligible to Return from Overseas. The troops are a mix of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Most had been drafted and are from blue-collar families. Franks takes the notion of troop cohesion very seriously and writes that he felt "a stab of love - as if these guys were brothers or cousins. We were a family in this alien wilderness."

Franks says that, back home, many Americans believe that the Vietcong are mostly a band of peasants without any real equipment. This is not true. They are well-equipped and well-trained, a very difficult enemy. Franks also says that the Vietcong use the neutral country of Cambodia as a refuge, and vows that, if he is ever in a high military position, he would never put his troops at danger by allowing the enemy to come from a close refuge like that.

One night, he is riding an M-113 in the commander's hatch with his upper body exposed. This is safer than being inside the tank where you are more exposed to mines. Franks has a personal flag inscribed with the words "Balls for the Queen" to advertise the projectiles his track carries. The traditional flag of the artillery is "Queen of Battle." While they move forward, they suddenly are hit by a flurry of machine gun fire. Franks is hit in the leg but does not attend to it until a friend notices a puddle of blood under his right boot.

In the hospital, Franks realizes he is not invincible. Franks is greeted by a beautiful woman who named is Rachel Wells. Later he finds out she was the famous movie star Raquel Welch.

Franks no longer can march in water, because of the risk of infection to his leg wound, so he is assigned experimental duty in an artillery unit mounted on platforms. When he allows his men to take off heavy hot gear, his Captain reprimands him. Franks regards it as a valuable lesson to keep the chain of command.

Next, Franks becomes an aerial observer, riding in a small plane with a daredevil pilot named Lizard. Lizard flies as low as ten inches off the ground and once lands the plane after its wheels are shot off.

Once his leg heals, Franks returns to the 5th Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Eric Antila. Antila is an intellectual who reads Dante and drinks martinis, but Franks particularly admires him as a commander and considers him his mentor.

The company takes a bad loss when the Vietcong plant an old Air Force bomb that explodes an M-113. Franks looks at the peasants and knows they know who did it, but he considers them innocents in the war who are often victims of the Vietcong themselves. Franks wants to be like Antila, an officer who delays his emotions about the loss until an appropriate time. Antila is fearless while they face battle after battle.

In one memorable incident, Antila risks his career for Franks. Antila allows Franks to use his name to okay bombings. One of these air strikes destroys the wrong building and Franks is called in to explain. Antila takes complete responsibility for it, even though he



could have blamed it on Franks. Franks takes this as a valuable lesson for the future as to how he should behave as a leader.

Franks' luck almost runs out when he and the 'Red Baron' get into a helicopter crash. They shoot at the enemy until they almost run out of ammunition. Franks is certain he will be taken prisoner, but they are rescued.

Franks has a week in Australia in the middle of his Vietnam tour. Franks likes it so much he writes Cathy that he wants to break their engagement to move there. Naturally, Cathy is upset.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

Franks is probably being modest about his role in Vietnam. When Lieutenant Colonel Antila meets him for the first time, he says he hopes to live up to the example of courage that Franks and other young soldiers have set. Franks is kind to the men under him, and freely shares whatever he has with everyone. Franks is not a complainer and very aware of what other people do for him, whether it's Antila taking the blame for his mistake or the team that rescues him and the Red Baron.

Franks' subtle criticisms of the way his superiors do things, such as allowing Cambodia to become a refuge for the enemy, foreshadows his own leadership style once he gets into a command position in Iraq where Syria is a refuge for the enemy. Franks takes lessons out of Vietnam, again for use in the future, such as loyalty goes up as well as down.

There is no doubt that Franks is miserable in Vietnam. When he takes his leave in Australia, he is so happy he impulsively wants to move there forever. Franks character shines through as a team player concerned about the welfare of every American who shares the danger, yet he is not a fool who wants to be there fighting a war in an awful jungle.

Part 2, Chapter 4

Part 2, Chapter 4 Summary

Franks returns home to Austin, Texas in November of 1968. Franks relishes simple pleasures like a family barbeque. Franks has changed a lot in Vietnam. When he visits his old frat house, he wonders, "Was I ever that young?" Franks is bothered by the anti-military sentiment in the nation.

Franks finds the courage to phone Cathy, who forgives him for breaking their engagement. They are married in March 1969. Cathy graduates from college, and they make plans for Franks to continue his education. The Army will pay for it if he reenlists. Franks realizes he does love the Army and takes the deal, knowing too that he could never become an officer without a college degree. Franks earns a degree in business from the University of Texas, and this time his grades are honor roll quality.

Cathy and Tommy Franks and their new baby move to Germany in 1973. At this time, the Army is facing problems with draftees who have low morale, some of which is from the anti-military mood of the country. Many are using drugs. Franks instigates drug arrests and receives threats on his life.

As commander of Howitzer Battery, 1st Squadron, Second Army Cavalry Regiment, Franks learns about the 'maneuver' branches of the Army. These combine Armor, Infantry and Artillery and can fight in a more flexible way. They were stationed on the borders of West and East Germany and Czechoslovakia. On the other side of the Iron Curtain are masses of Soviet tank armies. The Army is relying on nuclear missiles in case the Cold War goes hot.

Franks often sticks his neck out to get things done. Franks uses his own money (credit cards, in fact) to buy six CB radios to foster quicker and better communication. Franks goes to bat for a young soldier who is denied leave, even though conditions at his home are drastic. Franks makes it his business to read every individual's file under his command and memorize each soldier's first name, hometown, and something about his family.

In January 1975 Franks is given command of the 84th Armored Engineer Company, which is considered the Regiment's 'basket case.' On his first day there, Franks loses his temper and strikes a soldier. Franks expects to get court-martialed but instead is literally told to "stand in the corner." He gets the unit to look and act like soldiers through rewards and punishments.

Franks could have finished with the Army in 1975 but opted to attend the Armed Forces Staff College and serve at the Pentagon. There, he lost a lot of his idealism by observing high-level officers and politicians up close.



In 1981, he returned to Germany as commander of the Second Battalion, 78th Field Artillery.

Franks devotes several pages to a discussion of the 'New Army.' When the draft is abolished in 1973, the Army went to all volunteer. The quality of the troops goes up, as well as the technology of warfare. Strategy is changing to non-traditional approaches. Franks takes part in the changes, once by helping to design a radio-controlled railroad to pull supplies.

In this period, Franks develops the habit of using three-by-five cards to write down the challenges and opportunities of each new day as it begins. Franks' father dies of a stroke in 1986. In 1987, Franks is promoted to Colonel, and he becomes commander of the First Cavalry Division's Artillery. Sadly, five officers from his division are killed in a peacetime helicopter crash. On August 2, 1990, the Iraqis invaded Kuwait. At this time, Franks is the First Cavalry Division Chief of Staff, one of the key players in the first Gulf War.

Part 2, Chapter 4 Analysis

Franks is very modest about his achievements. It is obvious that he rises to the top in the Army because he has an honest character, sincerely likes people, and likes the Army. Franks takes the time to find out about enlisted men's personal problems and to help them solve them. However, he also emerges as a deeply ambitious man

Franks comes home from Vietnam a highly decorated soldier with three Purple Hearts for only those wounds that sent him to the hospital. Franks modestly says they give out medals for valor in Cracker Jack boxes, but that does not seem completely true.

The parts about the all-volunteer Army are fascinating. Franks presents the problems of anti-military sentiment and drug abuse within the ranks in the early 1970s, and shows how the all-volunteer approach solves those problems. Franks pays little attention to the war protests. In the future, he does the same thing when he is in command - he simply overlooks criticism from the press and public.



Part 3, Chapter 5

Part 3, Chapter 5 Summary

When Franks is promoted to General, he discovers that enlisted men expect a lot out of him, and that his rank creates a distance between himself and his troops. Franks knows he does not know all the answers, but that being a General is not about knowing things, rather deciding them. Nevertheless, his men expect him to know everything.

Christmas 1990 is grim in Saudi Arabia because the Americans know they would soon be in combat. They sing some carols and show each other pictures of home. Franks realizes that the Army is a second home to many of these men, especially after one tells him this was the best Christmas of his life.

One of the greatest anxieties of this war held by the Americans in Iraq is the expectation that Saddam Hussein will use weapons of mass destruction on American troops. On January 17, 1991, Operation Desert Shield becomes Desert Storm. The coalition that includes Americans, British, French, Italian, and Arab troops is assembled to defeat the Iraqi Army.

General Norman Schwarzkopf's plan is complex and depends upon deception, surprise, and speed. The enemy must think that the main attack will come up the historic route through the Wadi al Batin. The idea is to pound the Iraqis with air assault while they wait by the Wadi for troops that would never come. Part of the deception is the use of fake recordings of military sounds.

Colonel Randy House is in charge of Operation Knight Strike set for February 20, 1991. Franks troops sweep up the Wadi and convince the Iraqis that this was our main assault. At first things go well, but then the Iraqis execute a well-planned ambush. House orders his troops to fall back. Franks tells him to stay engaged and retrieve the damaged cars. Later, remembering how Antila treated him in Viet Nam, Franks takes responsibility for House's action and praises him.

The main ground attack is February 24. The first Cavalry crosses over 190 miles of desert in thirty-three hours as the Iraqis tries to escape the Wadi.

The plan works: the war is over in less than one hundred days. Franks writes that after this brief war, Saddam Hussein has been contained 'in the box' as Army lingo puts it, but it is a tense and brief containment.

Desert Storm also involves the use of 'smart bombs' which Franks calls "Clever but not really smart." These will hit whatever target a laser beam finds, but humans have to work the lasers.

Franks spends a lot of the chapter talking about the challenges of using high technology in the Army. Speed becomes as important as the number of tanks, ships and aircraft.



Numbers of soldiers are not as important as quality of equipment. Above all, training and expertise is more important than brute force.

This is at a time when the United States is cutting back spending on the Armed Forces. When the Cold War ends in 1989, over 300,000 troops are pulled out of Europe. Franks and others need to explore the possibilities of technology and new procedures and tactics to make the smaller Armed Services as effective as the old bigger model.

Franks goes into the new training methods by electronic simulation. Instead of taking trainees 'on location', the Army explores the use of realistic computerized simulations of war. The traditional 'Command and Control' or C2 model is evolving into 'Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence.' Global Positioning Systems, using satellites, can be used to exactly track enemy positions. Soldiers will be able to see through smoke, clouds, and other conditions and bomb exact targets, pinpointing them with laser technology.

By 1997, Franks is a two-star general who has been commander of the Second Infantry Warrior Division for two years. Franks' challenge is North Korea, which is led by a ruthless dictator who has more than a million soldiers and a nuclear capacity. Franks leads the Infantry in one practice combat after another under the adage "the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war."

In 1997, Franks takes command of the Third Army Forces, Central Command - a three-year tour to end in 2000. Franks moves to Egypt, part of a region that has become more dangerous than ever, because Hussein is defying the United Nations and ceasefire terms. Operation Desert Fox in 1998 involves bombing suspected Iraqi weapons sites. Also in the region is Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda terrorists, based in Afghanistan.

On a personal note, Franks' daughter marries an Army Captain in the same church where Franks and his wife were married twenty-three years earlier. Franks' mother dies of cancer the same year.

Part 3, Chapter 5 Analysis

This is a long, fascinating, but difficult chapter. Franks continues to use a lot of Army terms and abbreviations that are hard to follow, but he gives an insider's view of the first Gulf War, how it was planned and executed.

Moreover, he walks the reader through the challenges of the New Army - a smaller and more high-tech service made up of volunteers. Franks and others at the top of command have to answer questions like: How can the technology best be used? How does time become the fourth dimension of war? What strategies no longer work? Which ones do work? Franks' most overriding concern is how the new technology can be used to save American lives in combat, and implies that politicians' most important concern is how it can be used to save taxpayers money. Franks demonstrates how such creativity

won the first Gulf War in fewer than one hundred days with only a small loss of American life.

It is interesting to note that Franks and every other soldier sincerely believes that Hussein will use nuclear weapons on Americans during Desert Storm.



Part 3, Chapter 6

Part 3, Chapter 6 Summary

On April 24, 2000 Franks takes over as commander in chief, U.S. Central Command. CENTCOM is responsible for maintaining stability in a twenty-five-nation region that includes the most dangerous part of the world - the Middle East. This region has more than five million people, mostly less than twenty-five years old and underemployed. The region has more than 65% of the world's oil reserves.

Franks' predecessor in the job, Tony Zinni, tells him that the real problem is between Israel and Palestine, but there is trouble with Iraq's refusal to comply with the United Nations inspections. Zinni said Hussein is smuggling oil and probably producing chemical weapons. Afghanistan is a training ground for terrorists. Another problem is that American intelligence gathering is of poor quality.

Franks goes through a series of planning meetings in the United States before he first arrives to the CENTCOM region in July. Franks meets with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and tours the region. Franks begins to believe that social problems, such as AIDS and poverty, affect the military stability of the region. Franks comes up with his idea of the five Cs, each C representing a state of the relationship between two countries. The best is *cooperation*, which includes open borders and free trade. *Collaboration* is when two countries work toward cooperation. *Coexistence* is when two countries live in peace, side-by-side but have severe differences. *Crisis* is the beginning of *conflict* or wartime.

When he returns to Washington, he meets with many top people. One of the few that Franks criticizes is Richard Clarke, counterterrorism specialist on the National Security Council. Franks finds Clarke to be a person who is good at presenting problems but not solving them. Franks realizes that a top priority must be getting better facts about things like what bin Laden is doing, where his camps are, and so forth, and better coordination between the FBI, CIA, State Department, and the Armed Services.

On October 12, 2000, the USS Cole is bombed in a harbor in Yemen, leaving seventeen sailors killed and many wounded. A small boat, manned by suicidal fanatics and loaded with explosives, jammed into the Cole, but under the rules of engagement, the Cole is not allowed to defend herself. The Cole was probably attacked by al Qaeda. In Franks' thinking, it is one of a series of attacks that includes those at the World Trade Center in 1993, the attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and al Qaeda's planned, but not executed attacks, using airplanes. Franks knows al Qaeda is building cells, not only in Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East, but also in Europe.

Franks appears before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, which is investigating the incident. The Senators want Franks to admit that the United States should have predicted the Cole incident. After the hearings, the press blames the Armed



Services for the Cole incident. Franks notes that, at this time, the Gore/Bush election is ongoing, and things are in a state of flux.

Franks has a good rapport with President Musharraf in Pakistan, whose military background matches his own. They speak about Musharraf's necessary cooperation with the Taliban and their mutual interest in containing al Qaeda. Musharraf asks for economic help, which, of course, Franks has no power to give.

The Bush administration comes into office in January 2001. Franks is impressed with Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld. Franks describes him as an unusual man, someone with great leadership skills and a creative mind that makes most military men uncomfortable. Franks gives briefings not only to Rumsfeld but also to President Bush. Franks' assessment of the dangers in the CENTCOM region is sobering. Franks notes that al Qaeda has trucks and such, but it is only a matter of time before they fly airplanes equipped with bombs into their targets.

In an eerily prescient moment, Franks tells the press on September 7, 2001, that he is most afraid of an al Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center. Franks says the Army is trained to fight foreign armies, but the Army is not a domestic police force.

Part 3, Chapter 6 Analysis

Franks reacts with a soldier's heart at the death of the men on the Cole. Franks has little use for the political game of blame and pointing fingers at people. If he has any bad guys, it is the people at the CIA, especially Richard Clarke, and their failure to give the military good information.

Indeed, one of the themes of this chapter is the political approach compared to the military approach. Franks warns that the military is not equipped to handle terrorists but rather foreign armies, and that the American people would not put up the loss of freedom at home if the terrorists strike. Franks is briefing Bush and Rumsfeld in this way before the Trade Center attack of 2001. That he could predict the 9/11 attack so accurately may have helped his career.



Part 3, Chapter 7

Part 3, Chapter 7 Summary

Franks and his wife are on their way to Pakistan when they watch the Trade Center collapse on television on September 11, 2001. Franks knows immediately that it is the work of Osama bin Laden, an enemy he considers to be intelligent, courageous, and deadly.

In the first communications with other military leaders, Franks warns that Hussein will want to take advantage of the situation. Franks' other immediate reaction is that this is an act of war, not merely terrorism. The United States should get together a coalition to fight al Qaeda. Then he rues the fact that he has no real idea where al Qaeda camps are located, because of the ineffectiveness of the CIA.

When Franks returns to the United States, he finds others are thinking along the same lines. Franks spends the week after the disaster in planning sessions, and then makes a presentation to President Bush on September 20. Franks is worried that the United States will repeat the military mistakes the Soviets made in Afghanistan.

The Afghanistan campaign would have four phases. Phase 1 is laying the groundwork and getting the coalition together. Phase 2 is conducting initial combat operations and getting the aircraft into place. Phase 3 is bringing in the coalition troops to eliminate the al Qaeda cells in Afghanistan. Phase 4 is a four-to-five year plan of humanitarian effort and other initiatives to prevent terrorism from reoccurring in Afghanistan.

Franks expresses some irritation at having to brief Rumsfeld, along with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, because he knows that the meeting will leak to the press. At the meeting, Franks' ideas are second-guessed and shredded. Franks argues that they have to work as a team and not be so centered in their own egos and jockeying for power. They don't like his concept of a joint effort on the part of all three branches of the Armed Services. Finally, Franks gets Rumsfeld to clarify that he works for the President, not the Joint Chiefs.

In a two-hour meeting with President Bush, Franks gets approval for his plan. Bush is clear that the war is to eliminate the terrorists; we are not fighting the Afghanistan people. They decide to wait a few weeks to make sure the coalition is in line, even though the mood of the American public is to 'strike now.'

Part 3, Chapter 7 Analysis

One of the reasons that this book became a best-seller is this section on 9-11 and its aftermath. In his position as CENTCOM, Franks tells us that not only were he and others fully aware of the threat of al Qaeda to the United States, they could anticipate the use of planes and an attack on the Trade Center.



The problem is, as Franks puts it, the Armed Forces are trained to fight foreign armies, not terrorists. Terrorists usually are in the domain of police and FBI. The title of this chapter, "A New Kind of War," reflects that fact. President Bush wants it clear that there is no war against the Afghanistan people.

Franks reveals his temper in this chapter when he gets angry at the Joint Chiefs of Staff for holding him back. Franks accuses them of being ego-driven but does not see the same flaw in himself.



Part 3, Chapter 8

Part 3, Chapter 8 Summary

On October 7, 2001, Franks is at CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida. Franks attends a video conference that includes Vice President Richard Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and others in Washington, as well as Generals in position in Arab countries. The war begins when Franks tells his Generals, "Accomplish the mission and protect the force." President Bush announces to the world that Americans have begun their strikes against al Qaeda training camps and Taliban military establishments in Afghanistan. It is called 'Operation Enduring Freedom.'

Franks describes his pleasure at watching the high-tech weapons at work. Franks has an 'Olympian' view of the battlefield as advanced weaponry like TLAMs and JDAMs blast buildings around Kabul and Kandahar. Remembering 9/11, he does not mind that people are killed and thinks to himself, "Crush the bastards." The first strikes and the first contacts with the enemy go very well.

Franks describes how he uses an Army lawyer to determine whether it was legal or not to blast certain targets. Whenever she says, "Valid target," Franks orders the hit. At one point, Franks knows a leadership conference is meeting at a mosque. Franks orders a smart bomb hit on a car parked outside the mosque. People leave and go into cars and drive to a different building, which may or may not be a mosque. Franks orders a hit even though there will be collateral damage. Franks becomes angry when he is told that the principles left before the hit.

In the first ten days of the war, Franks is frustrated by the slow pace of things. Franks worries that his men will face the Afghanistan winter. They were already facing terrible weather in the form of dust storms. Rumsfeld phones him on a schedule of twice a day. Rumsfeld is impatient and relentless, but not personally abusive. Franks is worried that the press is pounding them with pessimism and criticizing the humanitarian food drops, because villagers are running into land mines when they pick up rations. Nothing seems to be going well.

When Rumsfeld complains that nothing is working, Franks offers to resign.

Things take a turn on October 19 when the Special Forces can finally get into Afghanistan and lead the way for the deployment of regular troops. Franks wants to get into the heartland of Afghanistan and demonstrate that "we could strike anywhere at any time of our choosing." The Taliban tries to protect the south and Kandahar while the Special Forces teams invade the north.

Franks leaves Florida for a meeting with Crown Prince Abdullah in Saudi Arabia who assures him that, in the past, Moslems have gone to war during Ramadan. Franks also meets with President Musharraf, who tells him he does not know where bin Laden is.



Next Franks negotiates with Mohammed Fahim Khan, the man who assumes control of the Northern Alliance after Massoud is assassinated. General Fahim outlines a plan in which the American Air Force continues bombing so that his forces take northern cities where the Taliban is based. Franks promises not to enter Kabul without permission. Fahim demands seven million dollars a month. Franks gets him down to five million a month. Fahim promises to get Franks an airport big enough to land C-130s.

Fahim keeps his word and conquers the vital towns to the north. The Green Berets manage to destroy the Army that "the Soviets failed to dislodge with a half million men."

On November 27, Rumsfeld discusses 'options for Iraq' with Franks. Franks says that there is a plan from 1998 (OPLAN 1003), but it is out of date. Rumsfeld asks him to update it.

In Afghanistan, Franks and his wife attend some ceremonies. They take note of the progress made for Afghani women who can now attend school and choose not to wear the burqa without risking public flogging.

Part 3, Chapter 8 Analysis

There are some of the most fascinating sections of the book in this chapter. Franks pulls the reader right into the problems the Bush Administration faces in the Middle East, such as conducting a war during the holy season of Ramadan and dealing with the emotions post-9/11. Franks does not look much at critics in the press or public: he looks down on those who only complain and present problems when he and others are trying to solve them.

Franks evolves into a more commanding personality. Franks plays up his own role and downplays the contributions of others, like those on the scene in Afghanistan. Franks has a shorter temper with subordinates and expresses feelings of revenge about 9/11. Franks is proud of the high-tech weapons and how well they work. Franks is a different person than the farm boy in the first chapters.



Part 4, Chapter 9

Part 4, Chapter 9 Summary

Only seventy-six days after combat begin on October 7, the country of Afghanistan is 'liberated' and Afghan troops are closing in on what is left of the enemy. Franks believes only 10,000 American troops will be needed to maintain stability. The mood in the country is festive.

Franks and his wife take a truck to Bagram, because it is considered unsafe to fly. Within five days, they visit three countries, seven military bases, and eight Navy ships, spending Christmas aboard a ship.

Franks has to turn his attention to building a new plan in case of war against Iraq. On December 7, a teleconference meeting takes place between him, Rumsfeld, General Pete Pace, and Under Secretary of Defense Doug Feith. Franks says he assumes the objectives of the war will be to remove Hussein, and to leave Iraq without capacity to threaten its neighbors. They go over the intelligence that indicates Iraq harbors terrorist camps. In particular, Abu Musab Zarqawi is there training others to use WMD (weapons of mass destruction) in Europe, France, and the former Soviet Union.

Franks outlines three plans. The first is called 'Robust,' in which the United States is joined with every country in the region in the effort - giving the US maximum flexibility to deploy its troops. The 'Reduced Option' is based on operating out of fewer countries and using air power first, and then ground. The 'Unilateral Option' assumes help from no other countries except Kuwait. The meeting ends with Rumsfeld calling for another in a week.

Franks assesses the Iraqi position, noting their army is ten times that of the Taliban and al Qaeda. Hussein has been in power over thirty years and uses extreme force to stay in power. Hussein has stolen billions of dollars from the Oil for Food United Nations program, and he uses that money for rewards and to build palaces and illegal weapons.

Franks draws up a complicated matrix of operations involving things that are keeping Hussein in power like the Republican Guard and WMD infrastructure. Franks also draws up Lines of Operation to be used against the power structures.

At the next meeting, Franks presents his matrix, and he also presents a plan to put American forces into the region without inciting suspicion. Increasing troops in Kuwait will be seen as training exercises. Equipment will come in 'spikes', followed by times of quiet - throwing the Iraqis off in their calculations. Rumsfeld wants to know how much it will cost and how long things will take.

Franks is called to Crawford, Texas for a personal meeting with the President at his ranch. There is another teleconference, this time with Franks, the President, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Condi Rice, Colin Powell, George Tenet, and Andy Card. Franks again



outlines a plan against Iraq with Regime Change and WMD Removal as the working concepts. There will be four phases: Preparation, Shaping the Battle Space, Operations, and Post-Hostility Operations which could last decades. Franks goes through the Robust, Reduced, and Unilateral options.

When the meeting ends, the President takes him on a tour of the ranch. Franks says that he will *not* allow WMD to go into the hands of terrorists. They have a press conference, and Franks goes back to Tampa.

On January 7, 2002, there is another top level meeting. The new plan is called OPLAN 1003V and there are many variables to consider. Rumsfeld is constantly on the phone with questions to Franks and his staff, who consider that to be harassment. Rumsfeld wants timelines and contingency plans for variables such as Hussein's attacking the Kurds again.

The President is clear in his State of the Union message January 29 that the United States will be proactive when it comes to terror because it cannot afford not to be.

On February 1 there is still another meeting. A "Generated Start Concept" is discussed, meaning that the USA would start the war. This would give the Americans an advantage. They discuss what to do if Hussein starts the war instead. Rumsfeld reminds Franks that the President has not decided to go to war.

A week later, there is another meeting. Franks says he believes actual combat should not take more than three months. Some express concern that Hussein will hide military equipment in mosques, schools, and hospitals. There is concern about exposing American troops to toxic chemicals. How could we defeat Iraq without destroying it? - this was another question.

Franks takes up the problem of setting the right time for striking Iraq. From May through September, the Iraqi Army is in training and at their most efficient. On the other hand, from December through February, Iraqi soldiers are more scattered. Iraqi weather is another consideration: you don't want to go into that country when it's 130 degrees. Franks writes about these complexities as well as the complexities of dealing with Colin Powell and Rumsfeld, who do not get along.

Franks moves back to the Afghanistan war. It is March 2002 and Operation Anaconda is ongoing. This was designed to squeeze out all the last of the terrorist groups. Al Qaeda was determined to win this battle but sustained heavy losses during fierce fighting against the Coalition. Franks laments the press coverage of these events. Franks says that he cried after the battle, but felt intensely proud of these "young heroes."

Part 4, Chapter 9 Analysis

Franks' encounters with the Arab leaders can be fascinating. Fahim, for example, gives him a hug and tells him they must trust each other with their lives. It is interesting to watch Franks operate in this culture.



Franks criticizes Feith, a Harvard graduate, as being too theoretical and asking too many stupid questions. The man who flunked out of college seems particularly upset by intellectuals.

In this chapter, Franks really seems 'too big for his britches' sometimes. For example, he writes, "The diplomatic line would involved work by the State Department, the CIA, my personal contracts in the region, and the heavy hitters: President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretaries Rumsfeld and Powell." It is as though the President is working for him. In another point, President Bush invites him to stay for lunch, and he tells the President he is too busy to do so.

Part 4, Chapter 10

Part 4, Chapter 10 Summary

On March 21, 2002, Franks meets with air, naval, ground, and Special Ops commanders in Rammstein, Germany to further discuss Iraq. Franks stresses the need for all branches of the Armed Services to work in one integrated plan. Franks is furious when someone leaks what went on at the meeting to the Los Angeles Times.

Between mid-May and July Franks makes several trips to the Middle East and meets with leaders to discuss the possible plans and arrange for access for his troop movement. Franks moves forces into place and continues meetings with Rumsfeld, Rice, and Powell. Rumsfeld asks if these steps have taken us to a point of no return - Franks says, "No," and then continues to outline another more refined plan for war. They go through many, many contingencies, such as "Catastrophic Success." This means we must plan for the contingency that Iraq falls apart too quickly and we cannot maintain order.

In September, Colin Powell expresses reservations about Franks' plans. Powell is a believer in overwhelming force, especially when you go to invade another country. Powell brings up his reservations at the next big meeting, but Franks refutes him. They keep updating Plan 1003V. The biggest concern remains Hussein's potential use of WMD on Americans troops.

President Bush speaks before the United Nations on September 11, 2002, giving reasons why Iraq is dangerous and why the UN and other countries must act. Franks describes him as 'throwing down the gauntlet.' After the speech Franks wonders if the terrorists don't already have weapons of mass destruction, and writes critically of American intelligence gathering.

Bush announces a doctrine of preemptive war, which is a plus for Franks. This doctrine gives the United States the latitude to use force in anticipation of a threat to its security.

Franks returns to the Middle East in late September, and calls upon leaders in Jordan, Yemen, Pakistan, and Turkey. Franks plants fake information with President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Sanaa - Franks knows for sure that Saleh talks with Hussein, so Hussein will get the deceptive messages. In Turkey, he offers a bribe of economic aid in exchange for military help to General Hilmi Ozkok. The Jordanian President tells Franks that Hussein is a "madman who has WMD - biologicals. He will use them on your troops."

Franks gets a public relations expert to help him handle the press in advance of the war. This person, Jim Wilkinson, talks him into 'embedded media.' The press will travel with army battalions and be 'embedded' in the war itself, thus, giving more favorable coverage to the troops.



In Qatar Franks and others begin computerized simulations of Plan 1003V. They estimate they will have about 210,000 soldiers. Ground forces will be supported by overwhelming air power. Franks sets up a timetable.

Meanwhile, the Iraqis defend themselves on the world stage by saying they have no weapons of mass destruction.

In even more meetings, Franks and others in Washington fret about what to do with Iraq when the war is over. Some hope to find a consensus leader. Ahmad Chalabi is discussed. Some even suggest Franks could become the 'McArthur' of Iraq. Franks suggest Jay Garner should be in charge of Iraqi reconstruction. Franks is irked that by May 2002 his plans are still tentative.

Franks is formally accused of giving his wife special favors and telling her top-level government secrets. The charges are investigated, and Franks is cleared of any wrongdoing.

Part 4, Chapter 10 Analysis

Franks notes in another chapter that the Departments of Defense and State perform work that overlaps. In this section, he presents the picture of a high-level Army General, meeting with heads of state before a war is officially declared. Franks offers the strange picture of Rumsfeld getting "decidedly cranky" when Franks is out of town and unavailable. Franks and his wife have started to go out socially with the Rumsfelds.

It is hard to tell if Franks is exaggerating his own importance as a 'player' or if he really did have the power to tell Rumsfeld and President Bush what to do. In this chapter and others he seems angry when people like Colin Powell cross him.

The plans for post-war Iraq seem silly in hindsight. Franks believes it would be possible to hire ex-Iraqi soldiers to serve in the new government. They talk about installing a consensus leader.



Part 4, Chapter 11

Part 4, Chapter 11 Summary

March 19, 2003 is the day that the Iraqi war begins. It is called 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' and involves a Coalition of 290,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and Special Operators from twenty-three countries.

Behind the scenes, people are feeding Hussein with bad information. One operative called 'April Fool' is a double agent. The Iraqis think April Fool is an American military officer working for them, but he is working for the United States. This 'spy' gives the Iraqis detailed military plans marked 'top secret' that are all bogus.

The first day, the coalition begins massive air strikes, and the next day is the ground attack. Franks and others are fairly certain the Iraqis will not burn the oil fields, because they are stealing fifty million dollars a day from the wells through the UN Food for Peace program.

Flying over the battle space, Franks remembers his other war experiences in Vietnam and Iraq. Franks is confident; he believes his plan will work and that the soldiers will rise to the occasion.

One of the first targets of the war is Dora Farms, a complex near Baghdad owned by one of Hussein's wives. There is some reason to believe Hussein and his sons may be there. The strike is dangerous and effective, but Hussein and his sons escape. Nevertheless, Franks believes the Dora Farms strike must have made Hussein feel insecure that someone had betrayed his whereabouts.

President Bush decides to address the nation about the war. Franks and Rumsfeld carefully word the address so they do not inform the enemy of anything important. Franks speaks to the nation that night that "at this hour, American and Coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq..."

Indeed one of Franks' most pressing duties is to 'feed the beast' as he calls it. Franks has to keep in constant contact with Rumsfeld and others in Washington. Franks says he does not keep a close watch on his generals, but instead, allows them the freedom to attack when they think it is right. They meet via teleconference at least once a day.

The next day, March 21, bombing continues, especially on Baghdad. The United States and British troops advance into southern Iraq.

Franks gives a detailed account of every moment of the first day of war, and includes maps and information, such as troop movements and bombing sites. Franks spends a few pages justifying the decisions he made, such as gradually building up troops, trying to keep an element of surprise, emphasizing speed, and building the coalition. Franks writes about the difficulties of the terrain and the necessity to advance into Baghdad as



quickly as possible. Baghdad is the center of Hussein's power, and as long as his troops control the city, Hussein will remain in power.

Part 4, Chapter 11 Analysis

This chapter may have been written for military historians. It is a detailed account of troop numbers, which missile fired on which target, and why, and includes tactical maps of troop movements. In that way, it is probably most interesting to readers studying military history, rather than a general reader.

Franks seems to come more alive when he is engaged in war. Like an orchestra conductor, Franks needs a big instrument to play his music. Franks can't play his instrument unless there is a war.



Part 4, Chapter 12

Part 4, Chapter 12 Summary

This chapter takes Franks through the end of 'Phase III' of the Iraq War. Franks retires at this point in his career, because he does not want to oversee 'Phase IV' or the 'Post-Hostility' phase, which could last for years and years.

During the first week of the war, the Coalition blasts Iraq in a bombing period known in the media as 'shock and awe.' Franks notes that they are careful to avoid civilian casualties and use their smart bombs to pinpoint places where the Baathists operate. The reports that Baghdad is completely in flames are just wrong. The Coalition is careful in what it did; for example, they tried to leave the electricity working in Baghdad.

There are a couple of nasty surprises. Hussein dispatches paramilitary forces sometimes called 'Saddam's Martyrs' or 'Lions of Saddam' against the coalition as it marches into Baghdad on March 26. These young boys with limited training hide in pickup trucks and ordinary vehicles that the Coalition mistakes for ordinary traffic. These irregular soldiers, also called the Fedayeen, prove to be savage fighters, sometimes charging out of town to fire at moving artillery and using women and children as shields.

Between March 19 and March 21, the heavy bombing of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities continues. On March 26, the war on the northern front controlled by the Kurds opens up when 1000 paratroopers land.

One problem is a huge 72-hour dust storm, or shamal, that occurs the third week in March. Visibility goes down to zero in some areas, and only ten meters in others, making it impossible to use aircraft.

Low-flying Apache helicopters run into another problem. They had practiced flying at night to avoid towns and villages where light would interfere, but they did not anticipate brightly lit farms and houses that rendered their night goggles useless and lit up the Apaches for the enemy. Several are lost to enemy fire, and two crewmen are taken prisoner.

Many of the Baathist leaders and their families seek refuge in Syria, which is proving to be neither friend nor enemy. Franks wonders just what's inside of their SUVs and Mercedes and speculates they are taking gold and treasure with them to Syria.

Nevertheless, Franks is pleased with the way things are going. Franks' men are able to intercept and eliminate any rockets launched against the coalition. Casualties are relatively light, and within three weeks, the organized Iraqi resistance is almost completely defeated. At one meeting, he says "we are getting our asses kicked in the media We are on-plan." The 'armchair strategists' don't matter. "We're killing Fedayeen ... and it's still early in war. Wars take time."



There is a real inability to control the press, which is reporting that the coalition is 'bogged down' or 'stymied', despite its advances. The press emphasizes American casualties rather than American victories. Every hour, on television screens across the world, retired American Generals and Admirals practice Monday morning quarterbacking from their homes or offices. A New York Times story in which General Scott Wallace's words are twisted to sound pessimistic about the course of the war is particularly troublesome to Franks. The press plays up reports about Jessica Lynch's April 2 rescue, which later backfire.

The Coalition finds some evidence of WMDs, including three hundred chemical/biological protection suits and masks. Things like this make Franks believe that the Iraqis will still use WMD on the coalition.

On April 4, the Coalition and American tanks move into Baghdad. Franks orders a 'Thunder Run', which is a high-speed movement of armor and infantry designed to throw the enemy off-guard. They meet with less resistance than they anticipated. On April 9, the world watches as the statue of Hussein comes tumbling down. On April 15, General Jay Garner takes over as an interim leader in Iraq who meets with Iraqi leaders to help form a new government there. Garner is replaced by Paul Bremer on May 12. Franks insists that Garner was not fired, although he acknowledges that things were moving too slowly for the Administration. On May 1, President Bush declares the end of open combat in Iraq, yet violence and riots continue.

Franks takes responsibility for the public relations disaster of May 2, 2003. Franks has advised President Bush to celebrate victory along with the British. The President, wearing a flight suit, lands on the USS Abraham Lincoln, an Air Force Carrier, and declares victory. This move haunts him later as an embarrassing public relations disaster. There are still Americans dying in Iraq, and there is still a lot of continuing violence even after the President declares victory.

Franks tells the President he wants to retire in late April. Rumsfeld offers Franks the position of Army Chief of Staff.

Part 4, Chapter 12 Analysis

Franks glosses over the public relations disaster that occurred when President Bush declares victory in Iraq. Apparently, this was Franks' idea. It seems possible that Franks was asked to leave rather than resigning, although he does not even raise that possibility in his book. After all, Franks made several major mistakes. Franks engineered a public embarrassment for the President. There was a failure to find WMDs in Iraq, and Franks failed predict that the 'post-hostility' phase of the war would be as violent and last as long as it did.



Epilogue

Epilogue Summary

The epilogue, subtitled "Creases in History," gives Franks' summation of the events in Iraq. Franks firmly believes that coalitions, and not national armies, will win the wars of the future.

In looking at Iraq in 2003, after the main combat operations are over, he is angry that so many people are still being killed. Franks does not like the way the press labels the enemy as 'insurgents' and 'resistance,' and considers them to be violent young men who are mostly out of work. Franks believes the solution is to provide them with job opportunities and education, and underscores how the United States is actively rebuilding schools and other infrastructure. Franks does not like the prison abuses at Abu Ghraib, but emphasizes that the Iraqis committed many more murders and atrocities that are not played up in the press.

Franks believes that the Iraqis destroyed their weapon piles and records of them when the coalition was entering that country. Franks says that, while the Coalition did not find stockpiles of WMDs, the soldiers did find a lot of evidence that they had been removed. Here is the most famous passage in the book: "While we may not have found actual WMD stockpiles, what the Coalition discovered was the equivalent of a disassembled pistol, lying on a table beside neatly arranged trays of bullets." Franks believes that removing the Hussein regime has been the right thing to do, even though the intelligence about WMD proved to be inaccurate. Franks believes the Iraqi people will eventually live under a democracy.

In 2004, Franks and his wife tour Israel for the first time, which is interesting to him as an expert on the Middle East. In March 2004, he testifies before the 9/11 Commission, specifically about what can be done to prevent terrorist attacks.

Franks deflects any criticism directed toward himself, President Bush, Rumsfeld, Tenet, and others in the Administration about the war in Iraq and repeats that America did the right thing.

Epilogue Analysis

This is one of the most interesting chapters in this book. Franks has to take on critics who point to the absence of WMDs as well as those who say America is bogged down in Iraq. Franks is always upbeat and positive, and considers the war an achievement, not a failure. Franks points only to the CIA's mistakes in giving out false information. Franks is not apologetic about anything he did.



Characters

Tommy Franks

Cathy Carley Franks

Donald Rumsfeld

Ray and Lorene Franks

Lieutenant Colonel Eric Antila

Colin Powell

Saddam Hussein

Sergeant Kittle

Osama bin Laden



Objects/Places

Stratford, Oklahoma

This is a small town in a rural area where Tommy Franks spends his early childhood.

Midland, Texas

Midland in the 1950s was a small city, wealthy with oil money, where Tommy finishes grammar school and high school. Midland is also the hometown of both President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura.

Delta Upsilon

Franks is a member of this fraternity at the University of Texas, where he flunks out in his sophomore year.

Crypto-Analyst

After Basic Training, Franks enrolls in an Army school in 1965 that teaches how to break codes and therefore becomes a "crypto-analyst."

Bien Hoa

Franks is shipped to Bien Hoa Air Force Base in Viet Nam after taking jungle training in Panama.

Mad Minute

Every night at sundown where Franks is stationed in Viet Nam, the Americans fired guns to test them and warn the Vietcong.

ARCENT

ARCENT is an acronym for Army Forces, Central Command. It is the Army component of COMCENT. Franks was ARCENT commander from 1997 to 2000.



USS Cole

On October 12, 2000, al Qaeda suicide bombers attack this American warship in Yemen, killing seventeen American sailors and wounding 39 others.

CENTCOM

CENTCOM stands for Central Command. The United States Defense Department in 1986 created CENTCOMs. Franks was commander of the CENTCOM that was in charge of maintaining stability in a region of twenty-five countries, mostly in the Middle East. CENTCOM has no forces but draws on the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Special Operations to fulfill its mission.

CINCCENT

This was Franks' title in 2000 and means "Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command."

New Army

New Army is a term for the changes that took place in the Army after the draft is abolished in 1973. The New Army will be smaller, better-trained and more high-tech.

Simulation Technology

One of the innovative technologies used by the New Army to train recruits through computerized simulations of battle, simulation technology saves money, because training does not have to be done "on location."

Iraq

This is a country on the Persian Gulf between Iran and Kuwait that has been ruled by a series of military strongmen since 1958; the latest is Saddam Hussein. The United States goes to war with Iraq in 1990 over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and again in 2003 over its refusal to comply with UN inspections of its weapon systems.

Kuwait

A small, oil-rich country near Iraq, Kuwait becomes an American ally during the Iraqi war and allows the Coalition to use its land as a base. Under the first President Bush, Americans and their allies freed Kuwait from an invasion by Iraq.



Desert Storm

This is the name of the first Gulf War, under the first President Bush, in which Americans and their allies free Kuwait from Iraqi invaders.

The Wadi

This is the route that foreign armies have historically used to invade Iraq. Franks' plan is to trick the Iraqis into thinking that the American Army will come that way too in Desert Storm.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

This is the official title of the war against Iraq that begins in March 2003, under the second President Bush. The name is chosen as Freedom for Iraqis and Freedom from WMD for Americans.

Embedded Media

This is a public relations concept for the Armed Forces in which reporters and media people are 'embedded' with the troops. The Armed Forces' public relations experts believe that embedded media will write more favorable stories.

Dora Farms

At the very beginning of the 2003 Iraq War, the Coalition bombs Dora Farms, a compound near Baghdad that Hussein and his sons may be using. They are not at Dora Farms.

April Fool

This is the code name for a double agent who is American but pretending to work as a spy for Iraq, but he is really feeding them misinformation about the coming war.

OPPLAN 1003V

OPPLAN is a military acronym for Operational Plan. OPPLAN 1003V is the revised OPPLAN 1003, a strategy for defeating Iraq. OPPLAN 1003V becomes Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Al Qaeda

A worldwide organization of terrorists, funded by billionaires like Osama bin Laden, al Qaeda are responsible for the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York. They are mostly Muslim extremists, based in the Middle East, who believe Western civilization is corrupt and dangerous to their religion.

WMD

This is the abbreviation for Weapons of Mass Destruction that includes not only nuclear capability but also chemical and biological warfare. The United States does not use these weapons.

Shamal

This is a Middle Eastern word for sandstorm. Some are severe enough to last for days and impact warfare by making it impossible to fly airplanes or conduct battles.

Fedayeen

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Coalition runs up against the Fedayeen or irregular soldiers with little training who proved to be a more difficult enemy than anticipated in war games.

Themes

Coming of Age in the Army

Franks signs up for the Army after he flunks out of college. Franks fully intends to serve only one stint of duty in Vietnam, marry his girlfriend, and return to private life. One of the turning points of the book is when he decides to reenlist and allow the Army to pay for the rest of his education. Even though it is not obvious to Franks that he belongs in the Army, it is obvious to the reader that Franks is meant to be a soldier. Franks likes Army life and the Army way of doing things from the get-go.

Franks changes in the course of the book from a green recruit to the main strategist and chief commander of the war in Iraq. Franks literally grows up in the Army. Franks changes from uneducated small town boy to an international diplomat sent by the President of the United States to confer with leaders of foreign countries. Franks socializes with Donald Rumsfeld at dinner parties and confers with the President at Camp David. One of the themes of the book is his evolution as a person and a soldier.

Changes to the Army as an Institution

Just like Tommy Franks grows and changes as an individual, the Army, the institution that Franks loves, also evolves in the course of this book. In Vietnam, in 1965, there are no high-tech weapons like smart bombs or complex communications available. On the other hand, in Iraq in 2003 there are all kinds of high-tech weapons and vehicles that impact how the war is fought.

Franks receives a lot of criticism for designing a war of invasion in 2003 with a limited number of troops. However, he justifies his decision based on the result that the Coalition is able to topple the Hussein regime in a matter of weeks by using the technology and the elements of speed and surprise, instead of an overwhelming numbers of troops.

Franks writes a lot about how ending the draft and going to an all-volunteer Army is a good move, because it raises the level of the average soldier, improves morale, and does away with problems like drug abuse and racism. One of his main themes is how the new technology necessitates an Army of smaller numbers of troops who are smarter and better-trained.

America's Conflict With Iraq and World Terrorism

Franks serves under three administrations, all of which have to respond to the threat of terrorism and foreign aggression. Franks' area of expertise is the Middle East, the most volatile part of the world from a military defense standpoint. Under the first President Bush, Franks plans and executes Desert Storm, a military operation designed to rid



Kuwait of the Iraqi invaders. Under President Bill Clinton, Franks is dealing with a series of terrorist attacks such as the one on the USS Cole. Under the second President Bush, Franks must plan and execute wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, triggered by the terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001. Although many argue that the United States has no business attacking Iraq in 2003, because Hussein was not responsible for 9/11, Franks argues that the Administration believes Iraq to be a threat, because that country has weapons of mass destruction. The second President Bush's main priority is not to allow terrorists to get those weapons.

Conflicts Between Government Entities

One theme Franks always comes back to is the conflicts between agencies like the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the CIA, and FBI. Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld don't always get along, because their agencies overlap and jockey against each other for power. Powell seeks a diplomatic solution through the United Nations; Rumsfeld looks for a military solution to terrorism.

Franks, an Army General, is sent on diplomatic missions, like discussing the coming war with Arab leaders and trying to get their support behind the scenes. The diplomatic and political aspects of war overlap with the military, causing conflicts. Franks has little praise for the intelligence-gathering agencies like the CIA, although he knows that the Army is dependent on them for good information. Franks' work overlaps theirs when he employs double agents like April Fool. If anything comes out of the war on terror, it may be better lines of separation and better coordination between these agencies.

Style

Points of View

This book is written entirely in the first person and from Tommy Franks' point of view. There is no attempt at objectivity. Franks is a very opinionated person, with clear likes and dislikes. Franks says his father taught him to view the world in black and white, and to a large extent, he does. There are good guys and bad guys. For example, Franks thinks terrorists need to be crushed, not understood. Franks is clear about whom he likes (Rumsfeld, Bush, the average American soldier, etc) and who he does not like (Robert Clarke, the Vietcong, and Hussein, etc). A reader may not always agree with Franks' views, but at least it is clear what those views are.

Franks pulls the reader into the highest levels of power, not only in the United States, but also in the Arab countries. Franks paints portraits of generals, presidents, Arab leaders, and the many others that he encounters in his fascinating career. However, there are many endearing descriptions of the average American soldier at war, whether it's fighting for his life in a rice paddy in Vietnam or celebrating Christmas on a Navy ship in the Middle East.

Setting

This book is set in a variety of places all over the globe, because Franks travels a lot during his military career. The first chapters are set in Midland, Texas, and in Oklahoma. Franks describes the farmland as shaping the characters of the people who live there.

Franks includes many interesting descriptions of Viet Nam, not only of the land, but also the people. Franks gives the reader a good picture of the jungles, swamps, and mud that American soldiers have to contend with, as well as terrified peasants and well-armed enemy soldiers.

Likewise, the parts set in the Middle East are equally fascinating. Franks takes the reader into the battleground of the first Gulf War, and then into the palaces of Arab leaders. Franks has tea with wealthy sheiks who live in lavish homes that have no plumbing. Franks is clear how the land and weather influences war activity, and describes things like the shamals, or Mideastern dust storms, and the vast stretches of desert in 130 degrees temperatures.

Perhaps the most fascinating parts of the book are set in the White House, Camp David, the Pentagon, and President Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas. This is where the highest powers operate on a daily basis. Franks gives the reader interesting descriptions of getting lost on the roads in Camp David, the high-tech cooling system at Bush's ranch, and what it's like to be present at a teleconference with Rumsfeld, Bush, Rice, and others in power.



Language and Meaning

Franks is an Army officer to his core, and sometimes his use of Army slang and abbreviations makes his writing difficult to understand. Luckily, he includes a glossary at the end of the book, but many of the acronyms and military terms are not in the glossary. This sentence is typical: "CENTCOM's inner planning circle met in the SCIF room. For internal working purposes, the Commander's Concept would be the foundation for a new plan - OPLAN 1003V, the adaptation of 1003 we'd refined through iterations with the SecDef." CENTCOM is Central Command; SCIF is Special Compartmented Intelligence Facility; OPLAN 1003V is a variation of Operational Plan 1003; SecDef is Secretary of Defense. At one point in the book, Donald Rumsfeld begs Franks not to use acronyms

Mixing the military acronyms with Arab words and names also adds to the book's difficulty. For example, Franks meets with the Emir of Qatar, Sheik Hamid ibn Khalifa al Thani at the SCIF. Whew!

On the other hand, Franks can write in an interesting and emotional way about his feelings for his family, the well-being of his troops, and the losses of friends during battles. Franks can be clear and journalistic in his explanations about battle strategy and plans, and he is not afraid to express opinions about people, situations, and institutions, like the press and Department of State.

Structure

The book is written in chronological order starting with Frank's childhood in Oklahoma and Texas and ending with his present life. Franks divides his story into three parts. Part I is "Deep Roots" and begins at his birth and ends after his stint in Vietnam. During these years Franks has no intention of becoming an Army 'lifer' and can hardly wait to go home after he serves in Vietnam.

Part 2 is entitled "Professional Soldier." It begins with his return home from Vietnam and his decision to reenlist in the service to complete his college degree. Then it covers the years 1975 to 2000, when he rises in the ranks to four-star General. During this time, he serves in Germany and in the first Gulf War under the first President Bush. There is a lot of discussion of the 'new army' and high-tech equipment.

Part 3, or "Commander in Chief," begins with his appointment as Commander of CENTCOM and covers his part in the war in Afghanistan after September 11, 2001.

Part 4, or "A Revolution in Warfare," is about the dangers of Saddam Hussein post-9/11 and the detailed planning that goes into the second Gulf War known as Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Quotes

My father always explained things so I could see a picture. This was my first appreciation of war. What I learned was clear: Bad people started wars and Americans had to go to fight. I saw that whenever wars were started, some boys didn't come home. Part 1, Chapter 1, pg. 5

I knew that the city was segregated and that Negroes and Mexicans went to different schools. I'd just assumed this was because they were different and somehow not as good as white people. The only folks I ever met were white. Part 1, Chapter 1, pg. 20

I decided against making a commitment as a lifer - a twenty-year man. I'd be going to Vietnam for a year -- that was certain. And when I came home (when, not if) I'd have only eighteen months left to serve. I planned to go back to college, get a degree, and land a good job. Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 56

In Dad's world, a good "hand" was a man who earned his pay, who hauled his share, who did his duty. Part 1, Chapter 2, pg. 61

I've joked that I shipped out to Vietnam as a rookie of twenty-two and came home twelve months later a fifty-year-old veteran. Some people laugh. But not the guys who served there. Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 63

Watching the troops in the humid morning sun, I felt a stab of love - as if these guys were all brothers or cousins I was meeting for the first time. We were a family out in this alien wilderness, bound by ties as close as blood. Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 80

Back home a lot of people believed the Vietcong were peasant guerrillas, forced to fight with a hodgepodge of old Japanese rifles and French carbines... The truth was they were not part-time insurgents. They were first-rate light infantry. Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 81

As Eric Antila climbed into that jeep and assumed full responsibility for my actions during the Battle of the Y Bridge, I realized that loyalty not only flows up the chair of command: it flows down as well. Part 1, Chapter 3, pg. 106

The whole U.S. military -especially the Army- had been wounded in the jungles and rice paddies of Vietnam. Like the nation it served, it had begun to doubt itself. We had fought a long, costly war to a stalemate, and then had withdrawn claiming "peace with honor." Part 2, Chapter 4, pg 124

"Soldiers have a lot of moving parts," I began. "They require regular maintenance. They are human beings not machines. They will do amazing things if they know you care about them." Part 2, Chapter 4, pg. 127



I had forgotten the simple truth I'd learned in Vietnam: Soldiers have two families, the one they're born into and the other that includes all the men and women with whom they serve. Part 2, Chapter 5, pg 151

"Black Jack Six, I want you to remain engaged, destroy those enemy positions, and retrieve the damaged vehicles." (Franks to House during the Iraqi war) Part 2, Chapter 5, pg 160

I never received a single operational recommendation, or a single age of actionable intelligence from Richard Clarke. Part 3, Chapter 6, pg 227

"We are not police men, sheriffs, or the FBI. If we were ever required to act in that capacity during a major emergency like an attack on the World Trade Center, the effect on America could be devastating. Martial law would not sit well in a free and open society." September 7, 2001. Part 3, Chapter 6, pg. 237

Bin Laden is no coward. He's a deadly adversary, a worthy bold commander of dedicated and capable forces. Part 3, Chapter 7, pg 240

"Yesterday you guys came across like a mob of Title Ten motherfuckers, not like the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Thanks for hearing me out," I said, and then I turned and left. Part 3, Chapter 7, pg. 277

Individual compounds around Jalalabad, as well as the cave complexes of Tora Bora, were taking a pounding from the B-52s. I thought back to the moonscape of bomb craters the B-52s had plowed up out near the Cambodian border so many years before. Then I pictured the unforgettable images of the World Trade Center towers collapsing. *Crush the bastards*, I thought. Part 3, Chapter 8, pg. 288

"This is a great day for Afghanistan," I said...

"This is a great day for the entire world," (Hamid Karzai) replied. "America gave us the tools to defeat tyranny." Part 4, Chapter 9, pg. 325

"Time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." President Bush, January 29, 2002. Part 4, Chapter 9, pg. 365

I sensed the tension between Powell and Rumsfeld. That came as no surprise to anyone who knew them both: these were two brilliant, dedicated public servants, two strong-willed personalities with egos to match their cabinet ranks... They were "gifted"... with equal but totally different bases of experience. Part 4, Chapter 9, pg. 374

In my opinion, it didn't matter how the UN General Assembly or the media reacted to George Bush's speech. He was throwing down the gauntlet, putting the world on notice that the United States would stand up for our own security. Part 4, Chapter 10, pg. 403



The courageous pilots ... had shown Saddam Hussein (and his sons) there was no safe place to hide. Drive a vehicle, talk on the phone, send an e-mail, write a note ... whatever you do, the Coalition is watching. Part 4, Chapter 11, pg. 465

This whole country is one big weapons dump, I thought. There must be thousands of ammo storage sites. It will take years to clear them all. Part 4, Chapter 12, pg.522

I am frequently asked what I found to be most surprising during my tenure at CENTCOM. In each case I answer: the absence of weaponized WMD in Iraq. Epilogue, pg. 546

While we may not have found actual WMD stockpiles, what the Coalition discovered was the equivalent of a disassembled pistol, lying on a table beside nearly arranged trays of bullets. Epilogue, pg. 547



Topics for Discussion

Describe how Tommy Franks changes from a farm boy to CENTCOM commander. In what ways does his personality and self-perception change? In what ways does he remain the same?

Discuss the 'New Army.' What were the expectations for an all-volunteer Army? How is this supposed to solve problems like drug abuse and racism?

Why did the people in charge of America's response to 9-11 go to war with Afghanistan and Iraq? What are the dangers of NOT going to war, from their point of view?

Do you think that Tommy Franks and other military leaders have too much influence over Rumsfeld and President Bush, or do you think that Franks may be exaggerating his own importance in his autobiography? Back up your answer with passages from the book.

How does Rumsfeld, President Bush, and Franks perceive Saddam Hussein? Why is he considered a threat to our nation when there was no evidence that he is directly involved in terrorism?

How do the events and aftermath of 9-11 demonstrate a failure of different branches of government to cooperate? When something goes wrong, the leaders of different branches such as the CIA, Army, or Department of State point the finger at one another. What do you think can be done to fix this problem?

Franks does not seem overly concerned that the American troops do not find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Why isn't he concerned? What do you think about whether or not Hussein had such weapons? Back up your answer with facts.

Rumsfeld, Powell, and Franks have very strong personalities. In what ways do their personality styles affect their decision-making? Do you believe that personality can affect history? Give examples to back up your opinion.