

Fontenot to lead roundtable discussion on the 1st Infantry Division in Desert Storm

By USAHEC staff 05 March 2018



Col. Greg Fontenot commanded a tank battalion in Desert Storm and an armor brigade in Bosnia. The Gulf War veteran will describe how the history of the 1st Infantry Division fits into the wider story of the U.S. Army's transformation between Vietnam

Army Heritage and Education Center presents: "The First Infantry Division and the U.S. Army Transformed: 1st Infantry Division in Desert Storm," with retired Col. Gregory Fontenot on Saturday, March 17, 2018 at 2 – 5 pm, USAHEC, 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle 17013.

When the dust settled after Desert Storm in 1991, the First Infantry Division had engaged and defeated at least twelve Iraqi divisions, taken over 14,000 prisoners of war, and destroyed over 1,000 enemy tanks and armored vehicles. As they rolled into Safwan, Iraq to secure the air strip as a base for later surrender talks, the unit's leaders looked back at a rocky, but ultimately successful, evolution stretching back to Vietnam.

Desert Storm proved that the 1st ID was indeed prepared for modern war.

Retired Col. Gregory Fontenot will be joined by scholars to lead a roundtable lecture to discuss how the First Infantry Division underwent rapid and dramatic change between Vietnam and Desert Storm.

In the two decades between Vietnam and Desert Storm, the First Infantry Division was faced with institutional collapse, required to adapt rapidly to volunteer manning, and dealt with a radical change of mission orientation. The U.S. Army's post-Vietnam leadership rewrote service doctrine and revised unit organization, training, and leader development for all ranks. As a result, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the First Infantry Division began preparing for war, though they were not on the announced troop list. Then the Division spearheaded the rapid ground attack with minimal loss of life. This roundtable event will feature a lecture from Colonel Fontenot, a veteran of Desert Storm, as he describes how the history of the division fits into the wider story of the U.S. Army, the stories and experiences of Soldiers who fought in Desert Storm, and why understanding the experience of the First Infantry Division in the Gulf War is relevant to preparing for the wars of the future.

Fontenot retired from the U.S. Army after 28 years of service as an Armor officer in the United States, Europe, the Balkans, and Southwest Asia. He commanded a tank battalion in Operation Desert Storm and an Armor brigade in Bosnia. A former director of the School of Advanced Military studies and the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies, he is co-author of "On Point: the United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom."

The USAHEC opens to the public at 10 a.m. To check for last-minute changes in meeting times/places, SEE: www.USAHEC.org, or call (717) 245-3972.