



# 761ST NEWSLETTER

March 15, 2008

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
761ST TANK BATTALION & ALLIED  
VETERANS ASSOCIATION

Volume 3, Issue 1

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ The 60/30 reunion is coming up. Read all about it on page 6
- ◆ Lieutenant Jackie Robinson to be featured in the spring edition of Prologue Magazine—Page 9
- ◆ Questions about the 761st history? — Ask the Historian—Page 13



**CHRISTOPHER NAVARRE AND HIS WIFE, BERNICE ON THE WASHINGTON STATE SENATE FLOOR**

In the Fall of 2006 CWO Christopher Navarre (RET) was invited by the President of the French Republic to come to France to for a very special award. Chris wrote back to them that although he was very honored, he no longer flies. The President responded , how about a special ceremony in Washington, DC at the French Consulate? Chris wrote back and restated “I no longer fly.” It was important to the French government to accommodate Chris’s every need so they responded with

“we have a consulate in San Francisco.” Chris wrote back and again stated “I no longer fly” to which the French government replied “where?” and Chris replied “here”, I live in DuPont in the state of Washington.

On April 10, 2007 at a ceremony that took place on the Washington State Senate floor, CWO Christopher P. Navarre (AUS Ret), a member of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion, was named a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor and was presented with a commendation by the US Army Freedom Team Salute for his ser-

vice to both France during WWII and America during both WWII and the Korean War.

In his remarks on the senate floor the Consul General of France in San Francisco, Mr. Frédéric Desagneaux made the following remarks:

*“Dear Christopher Navarre,*

*You were one of these heroes. After attending high school, you joined the army in 1940 and were assigned to the 25<sup>th</sup> infantry regiment, first stationed in Arizona, then Louisiana*

and Mississippi. In 1944 you crossed the Atlantic and after spending some time in Wales, you landed in Normandy on D-Day plus six.

You were then a First Sergeant with the 590<sup>th</sup> Ambulance company and your mission took you throughout France, Luxemburg and Belgium, in support of the front line units. It was an extremely perilous task, since you were not allowed to carry arms or fire back while you yourselves were under heavy enemy fire.

It was probably this frustration that prompted you to ask to be assigned to another unit, a combat unit where you would participate fully in the military operations. So you became a member of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion, and remained on the front line as a tank gunner until the end of the war. With your fellow soldiers, you achieved extraordinary results under General Patton's command, inflicting heavy losses to the enemy while your battalion suffered a 50% casualty rate.

You were present at the capitulation of the German armies, thus witnessing the successful outcome of the war, the victory of the allied forces, the defeat of those who advocated hatred and racism.

I know this meant a lot for you as it does for us all today."

"Allow me to add also, as was recalled by Senator Carrell a few minutes ago, that in order to be transferred to a tank unit, Christopher Navarre chose to relinquish his grade as a First Sergeant and to be downgraded to the rank of Private."

"Christopher Navarre, au nom du President de la Re-



CHRISTOPHER NAVARRE SURROUNDED BY HIS WIFE BERNICE AND FAMILY

publique, nous vous remettons les insignes de Chevalier De L'Ordre National de la Legion D'Honneur."

"This award testifies to the President of the French Republic's highest esteem for your merits and accomplishments," wrote Jean-David Levitte, Am-



bassador of France to the United States, in a letter to Navarre.

In accepting the award Christopher Navarre said "I wish to dedicate this distinguished award to my fallen comrades of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion who fought with me dur-

## National Officers

- Mr. Charles Womble — National President
- Mr. John Weston — First Vice President
- Mr. Roscoe Strozier — Second Vice President
- Mr. Kenneth C. Tait — Secretary
- Mr. Gloucester Stephens — Treasurer
- Mr. Edward Walker and Mr. Rufus Taylor — Chaplains
- Mr. Wayne Robinson — Historian
- Mr. William D. Smith — Webmaster
- Mr. Rufus Taylor—Chairman, T.G. Hill Fund

**761ST TANK BATTALION AND ALLIED VETERANS ASSOCIATION**  
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**DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48221**



ing WWII., may their souls rest in peace.

The Legion of Honor is an order of merit given by the French government.

In the French revolution all of the Orders of the Kingdom were abolished. Napoleon loathed orders of knighthood but he felt the need to reward and commend the civilian and military so the Legion of Honor (*Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur*) was instituted on May 19, 1802, as a body of citizens that was not an Order of Chivalry. The Emperor, in fact, would become angry if it was referred to as an order. It was loosely patterned after a Roman Legion, with Legionnaires, officers, commandants and a grand council.

Before the French revolution orders of the monarchy were limited to Catholics and to be a knight you first had to be a nobleman and military

decorations were the perk of the officers. The legion, however, is open to all military ranks and civilian professions. It is conferred upon men or women, French citizens or foreigners, for outstanding achievements in military or civil life. Only merit or bravery counted. The order's motto is *Honneur et Patrie* (Honor and Fatherland). It is the premier order of France and considered a great distinction.

The Legion of Honor is the only French decoration that has survived the different political administrations since 1802 until today. An important factor may be that the cohabitation of military and civilians in the same order helped ensure its survival.

The order includes three grades, Chevalier (Knight), Officer, and Commander and two dignities, Grand-Officer and Grand-Cross. The

President of the Republic is the Grand Master of the Order and, as a courtesy, foreign heads of state and the wives or consorts of monarchs are made Grand-Cross.

The French citizens are first received in the order to the class of Knight. After a number of years have passed and proof is given that the Knight as provided additional exceptional services to France, a promotion to a higher class is possible. As the Grand Master of the Order, the President of France makes all appointments and promotions by convention, on the advice of the Government. A foreigner is not received in the order; instead he or she is decorated with the insignia.

Similar to our "Stolen Valor Act" proposed recently in the United States, in France it is an offense to wear the decoration of the Legion of Honor without having the right to do so.

The Order has a maximum quota that helps to impose limits on how many of each class there are. The quotas allow a maximum of 75 Grand Cross, 250 Grand Officers, 1,250 Commanders, 10,000 Officers and 113,425 Knights. Since foreigners are not actually received in the order, their appointments are made independent of the quotas as well as several other exceptions. In addition to individual appointments, military units (West Point and Annapolis were so honored), cities and companies have been awarded the Legion of Honor.

Congratulations to Christopher Navarre, not only for the distinct honor the French government has bestowed on him, but also for the tireless efforts over the years Chris has dedicated to helping returning veterans from our current "War against Terrorism."



**BRIGADIER GENERAL SHEILA BAXTER AND  
LEGION OF HONOR RECIPIENT CHRISTOPHER NAVARRE.,**

## 761st 59th Annual Reunion—Troy, Michigan



**THE BUSINESS MEETING WAS ESPECIALLY PRODUCTIVE AMID CONCERNS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE ASSOCIATION  
JOHN WESTON, TJ MANN AND RUFUS TAYLOR IN THE FOREGROUND**

The fifty-ninth annual reunion of the 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association was held August 23—25, 2007 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Troy, Michigan. Members and guest began arriving Thursday from all corners of the United States; Robert Cooper from Florida, Edris and Shauna Dade from California, John Weston from Chicago, Baron and Dorry Bates from New York and on and on.

Traveling across country, even for the seemingly brief time of the reunion, is both a major effort and expense for many of the association members so at the previous reunion in Killeen, Texas, Mr. Steven A. White committed financial support to help relieve the expense. Steven White's feeling was that cost should not be the only reason a member of the association could not attend.

Thursdays are usually the most casual day of the reunion and as arrivals are scattered through out the day. Everyone registered in the main lobby with the association secretary, Kenneth Tait, and treas-

urer, Gloucester Stevens and checked the registration list to see who had already arrived. After checking into the hotel and unpacking, the next stop is , of course, to find the hospitality suite.

Friday morning the first general meeting was held and a Jazz Dinner Cruise was scheduled for 6pm on the Detroit River. During the evening between 6 and 7 pm there were severe storm warnings in the Troy, Michigan area and at the hotel announcements were made over the hotel Public Address system advising everyone to go to the center of the building (the atrium) because of a tornado that had been spotted in the area. Fortunately neither the hotel or the dinner cruise were affected by the storm and everyone had an enjoyable evening.

The business meetings were especially productive in that a

number of topics came up that would have long range implications affecting the future of the Association. Should there be another reunion? What can we do about the Association's declining membership? What if we no longer had the 761st website? These and many other questions arose.

The consensus about the next reunion was that there should be one and since there were three requests for the location, Detroit, Chicago and Hattiesburg, Mississippi, the decision was made that each location would submit a proposal by December 1, 2007 and the executive committee would make a decision based on the merits of the proposal.

The declining membership was addressed by a change in the Association's bylaws (see *article by Mark Vaz on page 18*) to eliminate some unintended consequences of the current wording and to also broaden the requirements. There have been many membership inquiries in the past, however there was not a solid process in place to address this.



**REBECCA COLEIRO  
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA  
2007 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE  
RECIPIENT**





**ROBERT COOPER, JAMES B. JONES AND RUFUS TAYLOR CATCH UP ON THE LATEST NEWS DURING A BREAK FROM THE BUSINESS MEETING**

There was a lot of discussion about the 761st website and two points became immediately clear. One was that many members did not know or realize the world wide exposure that it gave to the association and the other was that all of these years, and many hours of work every year, it has been maintained by our Webmaster Bill Smith without cost to the association. The membership voted to make Bill a permanent (honored) member of the association and will in the future will pick up all of the out-of-pocket expenses that he has carried for the Association.

Saturday evening, as always, the banquet dinner was held. Instead of a guest speaker the documentary that Steve White, Pete Chatmon, and Wayne Robinson have been working on for several years was shown to the Association members for the first time. The reaction was very positive and enthusiastic. Narrated by the Emmy Award winning actor Andre Braugher, the story told was a very personal one told by many original members of the 761st Tank Battal-

ion. There was some irony in that many of the tankers who appeared in the film are no longer with us, however, they had a chance to speak and their words and feelings are captured for a

long time to come. The documentary has also been shown at the UrbanWorld VIBE Film Festival.

Congratulations are in order for the 2007 Educational Assistance Award winner, Rebecca Coleiro from San Rafael, California. Her goal is to major in Pharmacy and if her physics and biology grades are any indication for future success—Rebecca will succeed in any medical field she chooses.

Nolwazi Landers, a previous Educational Assistance award winner, who has been studying in Thailand gave a delightful speech about her experiences there. The feedback was very positive and the association members, very proud that they contributed to her education.

Our historian Wayne Robinson was selected for the “Man of the Year Award” this year. As the historian, Wayne has worked tirelessly, researching the units history and promoting the Association’s mission as stated in our bylaws. Congratulations to Wayne, Rebecca, and Nolwazi.



**ROScoe STROZIER AND GLOUCESTER STEVENS PRESENT UNIT HISTORIAN WAYNE ROBINSON WITH THE “MAN OF THE YEAR” AWARD**

## 60/30—60th Annual Reunion and 30th Anniversary of the “PUC”



The 60th annual reunion and of the 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association will be held from Thursday August 28 through Sunday August 31 at the **Sheraton Gateway Suites Chicago O'Hare** in Rosemont, Illinois.

The Sheraton Gateway Suites is located in Rosemont, Illinois, and is convenient to many local attractions in Rosemont as well as all that the Chicago metropolitan area has to offer. Your choice activities are so wide and varied it would be impossible to list here and there are so many you would have never thought existed. For those of you that lived in Germany after the war, you would never have thought that the worlds largest public display of Hummel figurines (over a thousand) would be in Rosemont, Illinois or that the 500 acre Cantigny Park is home to two world known museums, the Robert R. McCormick Museum and the Cantigny First Division Museum.

The Robert R. McCormick Museum served as the country estate of the McCormick Tribune Foundation's benefactor, Col. Robert R. McCormick, until his death in 1955. The First Division Museum portrays the history of the First Infantry Division of the United States Army as well as general military history up through the war on terrorism.

The Research Center provides resources for the serious study of military history. The McCormick Foundation has donated over a \$1 billion dollars in the last 50 years and in 2006 \$96 million was granted to nonprofit organizations, \$3 million to organiza-

tions that honor soldiers and veterans and their families.

World class museums of many different venues are available, as are entertainment, sports, boating, sightseeing or just plain relaxing and enjoying friends you have not seen for a long time. If you can't find it here— you aren't going to find it.

Early indications are that this will be our largest reunion in a while based on the number of inquiries already made. Everyone, I am sure, is looking forward to renewing old friendships, making new ones and just catching up with the latest news. It is also a very special year in that it will be both the 60th annual reunion and the 30th anniversary of when the 761st was finally awarded the Presidential Unit Citation after a 33 year delay.

**IT WILL BE BOTH THE 60TH ANNUAL REUNION AND THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF WHEN THE 761ST WAS FINALLY AWARDED THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION**

The Association officers are working very hard and are very excited that interest has grown in the association. In addition to hanging out with your friends and taking in the area, there will be a lot of decisions for us to make concerning future directions for the association. There will be will be two general meetings for us to discuss and vote on the future of the association.

At the 2007 reunion there were some significant decisions made and this year should be no less productive. If there are items you want brought up or discussed, please send a not to the association secretary, Kenneth Tait.



If anyone has pictures, newspaper articles, letters, documents or any information about the 761st, please bring it to the reunion. We plan on having a computer and scanner available so that we can capture it in your presence and return it to you. If you cannot attend, consider having it scanned locally and get it to us by e-mail or on a CD. With each image we also want as much information as possible, such as the date, location and who is pictured. That includes pictures taken during the war, and after. We would also like to have pictures taken at earlier reunions. Our goal is to be able to put together a written and photographic history of the 761st, its members and families. As we collect all of this information we will organize it in a format that we can have an evolving history of the 761st that can be viewed on a television or Personal Computer. Another goal is to help ensure that our history does not fade away because so much has been forever lost in time. Please don't send originals because if they are lost or damaged, they are most likely irreplaceable.



**SHERATON GATEWAY SUITES**



## 60/30—60th Annual Reunion and 30th Anniversary of the “PUC”

To help you get started in your planning for the reunion we are including a broad amount of information about the Sheraton Gateway Suites Chicago O'Hare, the surrounding area, and information specific to your mode of travel.

### **First of all the hotel:**

**The Sheraton Gateway Suites**  
**6501 N. Mannheim Road**  
**Rosemont, Illinois 60018**  
**Reservations (800) 325-3535**  
**Direct Phone: (847) 699-6300**  
**Fax: (847) 699-0617**

[www.sheraton.com/gatewaychicago](http://www.sheraton.com/gatewaychicago)

### **Location:**

The Sheraton Gateway Suites O'Hare is located at the intersection of Mannheim and Higgins Road. It is one-half mile from O'Hare International Airport and one mile from the Kennedy Expressway (Interstate 90) to downtown Chicago.

### **Parking:**

Parking at the hotel is \$12 per day if you park in the hotel's lot, however, there is a multilevel lot about 50 yards away that will provide free parking to guests of the hotel. When parking there you will identify yourself as you pull into the building as a guest of the Sheraton and you will receive complimentary parking thru out the reunion.

### **Shuttle:**

The Sheraton Hotel offers a complimentary shuttle for all guest for pickup and drop off at the Chicago

O'Hare Airport. The normal hours the shuttle operates between the hotel and airport are from 6am to 11pm, however if you need transportation outside of those hours you can call in advance and the hotel will accommodate you. The shuttle will also be available to groups of up to 18 individuals to travel within a 2 mile radius of the hotel. In Rosemont the two mile radius includes a lot of destinations that would interest you. More detailed information will be coming out the second half of April to assist you in making this one of your most enjoyable reunions.

### **Hotel Restaurants:**

The Luna Grill is a bright and airy casual restaurant that serves a contemporary and creative American cuisine. Breakfast includes an impressive hot and cold buffet as well as most of your morning favorites cooked to your liking. The hours are 6am to 3pm and 5pm to 10pm.

### **Lounge:**

The 72 West Lounge is open from 2pm until 12am and is the perfect spot to kick back and renew old friendships. If you can't find them in the 761st Hospitality room — you will find them here.

### **Services:**

Safety deposit boxes are available at the front desk and each room has a foldout bed available.

### **Guest Rooms:**

Of the 296 rooms available smoking is allowed only in rooms on the third floor. The remaining floors are smoke free. All rooms have high speed internet access, cable television with complementary movie channels, hair driers, iron and ironing boards, and coffee makers. Each is a two room suite which makes it easier to entertain guest.

### **Exercise Facility:**

The Sheraton offers complementary guest use of their state-of-the-

-art cardiovascular and weight training equipment as well as their indoor pool, whirlpool and sauna.

You also have access to the Willow Creek Health Club which is a 50,000 sq foot state-of-the-art facility located one half block from the hotel. Located within the Willow Creek Health Club is Touch Companies which provides such services as massages, body wraps, facials, nails, etc.

### **Travel by Plane:**

There are two primary airports in the Chicago metropolitan area: Chicago O'Hare (ORD) and Midway Airport (MDW). The Sheraton Gateway Suites is one half ( ½ ) mile from the Chicago O'Hare Airport.

The O'Hare Airport is about 17 miles northwest of downtown Chicago and Midway Airport is about 10 miles due west of downtown Chicago. Driving distance between the two is about 28 miles. There is regularly scheduled transportation between the two airports. Flying into O'Hare, however, would be the most convenient because of the free shuttle and short distance of only one half (½) mile travel from O'Hare to the Sheraton. If you find it necessary to fly into Midway Airport, you can take a shuttle bus between the two airports for an additional cost of \$14 and an extra hour of travel. When you arrive at the O'Hare airport you can catch the Shuttle provided by the Sheraton.

### **Transportation Between O'Hare and Midway Airports:**

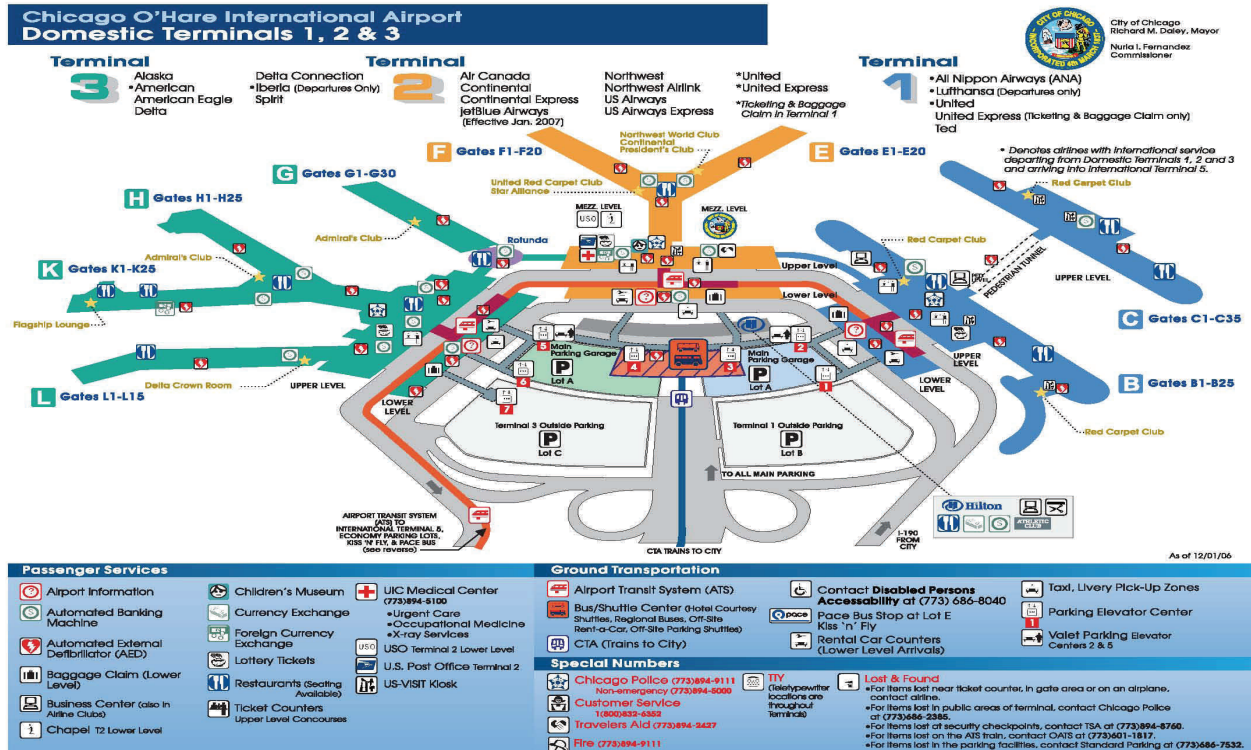


**THE LUNA GRILL**



**72 WEST LOUNGE**

## 60/30—60th Annual Reunion and 30th Anniversary of the “PUC”



### O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

**Coach USA Wisconsin** offers hourly service between O'Hare International Airport and Midway Airport from 6:30 a.m. until 10:30 p.m. for \$15 for a one-way fare or \$27 round trip. Pickup is at O'Hare at the Bus Shuttle Center and at Midway on the lower level. Allow at least 1 hour travel time between O'Hare International and Midway Airports. They may be reached at 1-800-236-2028 toll free or at 262-542-8861.

**Omega Airport Shuttle, Inc.** Travels between Midway and O'Hare from 7am until 10pm every hour on the hour. The one way fare is \$16 and round trip fare is \$32. They may be reached at 773-734-6688 or on the internet at [www.omegashuttle.com](http://www.omegashuttle.com). Omega has a \$3 fuel surcharge for each way which became effective 3/16/2008, however, I have been told by Omega that this does not apply to the Midway to O'Hare route.

The **CTA** (Chicago Transit Authority) is an economical mode of transporta-

tion between O'Hare International and Midway Airport but is also the more time consuming at close to two hours. The CTA Blue Line serves O'Hare (located at the lowest level of the Main Parking Garage, next to elevator center 4, and is accessible by pedestrian tunnels located in Terminals 1, 2, and 3), and the Orange Line serves Midway. Clark and Lake is the free downtown transfer stop between the two lines. The one way fare is \$2.

**Taxi Rates:** Currently average taxi rates between the two airports are in the range of \$55 to \$60 and can vary with traffic conditions. There is no extra charge for baggage or credit card use. Credit cards will be accepted. Taxi vans for the disabled are available upon request—just notify the taxi starter.

#### Travel by Car:

Get a good map, allow plenty of time and make frequent stops. If you have time, get off the interstate and see how many "Historical Markers" you can stop to read. The hotel has easy access

to several interstate exchanges and parking information at the hotel is earlier in this article under the hotel information topic.

#### **From the West:**

Northwest Toll way (I-90) East to 190 West O'Hare turnoff: exit Mannheim Road North, ahead two blocks and the hotel is on the right.

#### **From the North:**

Tri-State (294) South to 190 West O'Hare turnoff; exit Mannheim Road North, ahead two blocks and the hotel is on the right.

#### **From the South:**

Tri-State Toll way (294) North to 190 West O'Hare turnoff; exit Mannheim Road North, ahead two blocks and the hotel is on the right.

#### **From the East:**

Driving across Lake Michigan is not recommended.



## 60/30—60th Annual Reunion and 30th Anniversary of the “PUC”



**CHICAGO MIDWAY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**



**CHICAGO AIRPORT LOCATIONS AND INTERSTATES**

### Travel by Train:

Amtrak has a station near downtown Chicago. Union station also is the station that the Metra Commuter trains use. There are several ways to get to O'Hare Airport from Union Station. The most expensive would be to take a cab but if you do that you may as well go directly to the hotel. The cost would be \$40 to \$45.

### **Union Station to O'Hare by Metra:**

Metra North Central Service goes from Union Station to O'Hare in about 30 minutes, but service is infrequent. Fare is \$3.45 (assumes you buy a ticket at the Metra windows at Union Station); if you pay on the train without buying a ticket before boarding, there's a \$2 surcharge.

### **Union Station to O'Hare by CTA:**

The most economical way would be to take the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) blue line to O'Hare for \$2 ... (The nearest subway entrance for the blue line is on either Monroe and Dearborn or Jackson and Dearborn) It is about a 10 min walk from Union station and the train ride will be about an hour.

The Amtrak could be a most enjoyable ride and depending on what part of the country you are traveling from an exceptional opportunity. Trails and Rails is an innovative partnership between the National Park Service and Amtrak. It's a program that provides rail passengers with educational opportunities that foster an appreciation of various regions' natural and cultural heritage. The *Texas Eagle*, for example, which travels between Chicago and San Antonio, Texas has National Park Service Guides onboard between San Antonio and Fort Worth. Did you know that Spanish Missions were not churches? They were Indian towns, with the church as the focus, where native people were learning to become a citizen. In the 1700s, in order to become a citizen, they had to be Catholic.

There is a lot to see and learn here. If you decide to travel by train, do some research for gems like this—and enjoy.

### Travel by Motor Home/Trailer:

If you are combining a RV trip with the reunion, parking is scarce for large vehicles in any city this size. Contact Ivan Harri-

son (Newsletter Editor) for additional information and assistance.

### Travel by Motorcycle:

The same as by car—take your time and enjoy the trip.

Rand McNally and Harley Davidson put together a 320 page road atlas that is designed to fit in your saddlebags and made with a protected tear resistive cover. Its not just a map atlas, but there is a wealth of information as well as motorcycle laws by state and province.

### Additional Information:

The next newsletter will have additional travel information and information about the reunion itself.

There is a lot to celebrate, this being the 60th reunion and the 30th anniversary of the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) and a lot of decisions to make affecting the future of the Association so please make every effort to attend.

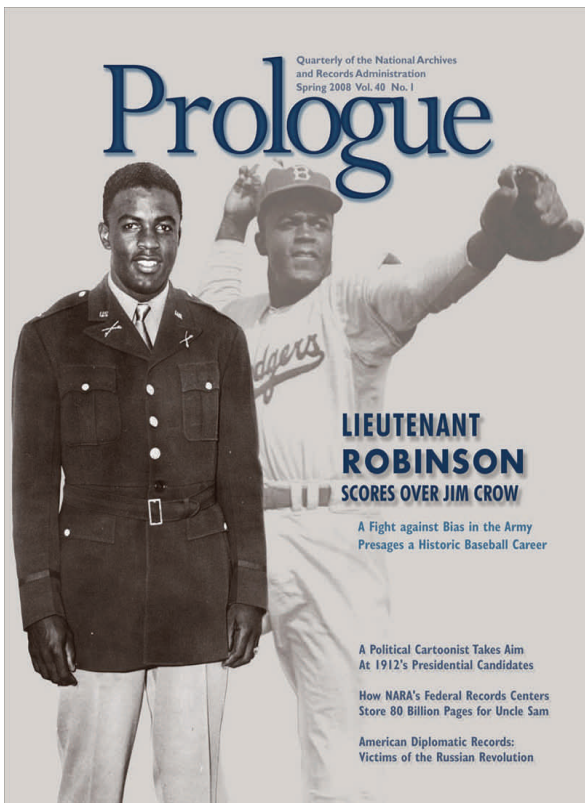
## President's Corner – A Special Message

**IN HONOR OF BLACK HISTORY**  
**MONTH**, THIS M4A1 SHERMAN IS  
 MARKED IN TRIBUTE TO THE 761<sup>ST</sup>  
 TANK BATTALION; THE FIRST  
 AFRICAN-AMERICAN ARMORED  
 UNIT TO ENTER COMBAT DURING  
 WWII. IN GRATITUDE TO SSgt.  
 FLOYD DADE WHO DEDICATED THE  
 LATER PART OF HIS LIFE EDUCATING  
 OTHERS ON THE HISTORY OF BLACK  
 TANKERS, ISSUES OF SEGREGATION  
 AND REMEMBRANCE OF THE  
 HOLOCAUST, THIS VEHICLE IS  
 NAMED "AGNES II", THE NAME OF  
 FLOYD'S OWN A COMPANY  
 SHERMAN.



Sherman Tank on display at the Planes of Fame Air Museum in Chino, California  
<http://www.planesoffame.org>

## One of Our Very Own



NATIONAL ARCHIVES QUARTERLY "PROLOGUE"  
 COVER FOR SPRING 2008

The spring edition of Prologue Magazine will feature an article about Lt Jackie Robinson when he was member of the 761st Tank Battalion.

Prologue Magazine is a quarterly publication by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) The NARA is the government agency that preserves and maintains records and materials of legal and/or historical significance and makes them available for research. Chances are you will find records and material about yourself, your ancestors, and the community you live in.

The 15 hour World War II documentary by Ken Burns that aired on PBS last fall relied heavily on still pictures, films and original documents from the NARA to really bring the film to life.

The Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, FDR's "Day

of Infamy" speech and a letter from Jackie Robinson written to the President are all to be found here.

When Robinson retired from baseball and worked as an executive for *Chock Full of Nuts* he continued to champion the cause of civil rights. Robinson wrote letters to Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon while they were President to express his frustrations with how slow they were moving to advance the cause of civil rights. The letters are all in the Archives.

April 1, 2008 subscription rates to Prologue will increase. The annual rate will go from \$20 to \$24 and the single copy rate will go from \$5 to \$6 (plus \$3 shipping). To order you can call 1-800-234-8861 or 202-357-5482 or go online to:

<http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/>



# Charles M. King

## Ex-Cleveland among soldiers from U.S. killed Saturday in Iraq

Wednesday, October 18, 2006 John P. Coyne Plain Dealer Reporter

A former Cleveland serving in Iraq was among three servicemen killed Saturday when a roadside bomb exploded near their armored vehicle.

First Sgt. Charles M. King, 48, was a career soldier who was scheduled to return home next month, said his mother, Gladys King, who, with her husband, Charles, still lives in the same Lee-Miles neighborhood where their son grew up.

The soldiers were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas. The unit was deployed to Iraq last November.

King was the senior officer in a convoy on a resupply mission when the vehicle was hit near Baghdad. His sister, Gail King,

said she was told by an Army captain that because of his rank, her brother did not have to accompany the convoy, but felt obliged to offer his experience to the younger soldiers.

"He said he could not in good faith send his soldiers on a mission unless he did it himself," said King's fiancée, Dana Canedy, a former Plain Dealer reporter now working at the New York Times. "He made sure every one of his soldiers took leave before he would take his leave," she said.

King, who joined the Army in 1987, also served in Iraq in 1990-91 as part of Operation Desert Storm.

King attended Cuyahoga Community College and received an associate of arts degree from Chamberlain Junior College in Boston. He also attended the Art Institute of Chicago.

He worked as a fashion illustrator in Montgomery, Ala., and as an



**FIRST SGT KING AT 761ST MEMORIAL DEDICATION NOVEMBER 10, 2005, FORT HOOD, TEXAS**

ad illustrator for a newspaper in Mobile, Ala. before joining the Army in his late 20s, his sister said.

While in the Army, he became intrigued by the heroism of the 761st Tank Battalion, an all-black unit that served in World War II. His interest in the unit prompted him to create several illustrations depicting it in battle.

A collection of his work was part of a Black History Month display at the Pentagon in 1998. More of his artwork is now being exhibited at military museums at Fort Lewis near Tacoma, Wash., and at Fort Knox, Ky.

King and Canedy, who lives in New York, have a 6-month-old son, Jordan Canedy King, whom King saw for the first time last month. He also has a daughter, Christina, 15, of Killeen, Texas.

"He wrote a 200-page journal to the baby while he was in Iraq, telling him everything he thought he would need to know to grow up," Canedy said. "Everything from his favorite Bible verses, why he wanted to have a baby, why he wanted to be a soldier, and how to treat women."

"He started the journal with a letter to me saying, 'This is the letter every soldier should write.'"

"And he ended it with a letter to his son saying, 'I will do my best to make you and your mother proud.'"



**761ST MEMORIAL**

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# Mangrum honored for WWII service

The United States Army honored the courage, service and patriotism of World War II Army veteran and former Cobbs Creek resident Thomas Mangrum Saturday on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., with a Freedom Team Salute Commendation.

The honor came as part of a public program presented by WETA TV-26, the local Public Broadcasting System affiliate, and Friends of the National World War II Memorial that paid tribute to all the men and women who served in the military during World War II. Mangrum was honored along with six other U.S. Army veterans prior to a screening of film clips from the final segments of the new Ken Burns film, "The War."

Mangrum, who lives in Dumfries, was honored for his service as part of the 761st Tank Battalion, the first U.S. armored unit comprised of black soldiers committed to combat.

"By the end of World War II, more than half of the men and women serving in the military wore the Army uniform," said Major General Richard J. Rowe Jr., commanding general, Military District of Washington. "We believe the nation has a responsibility to acknowledge the sacrifice of World War II veterans, to ensure they are not forgotten."

The U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute program honors

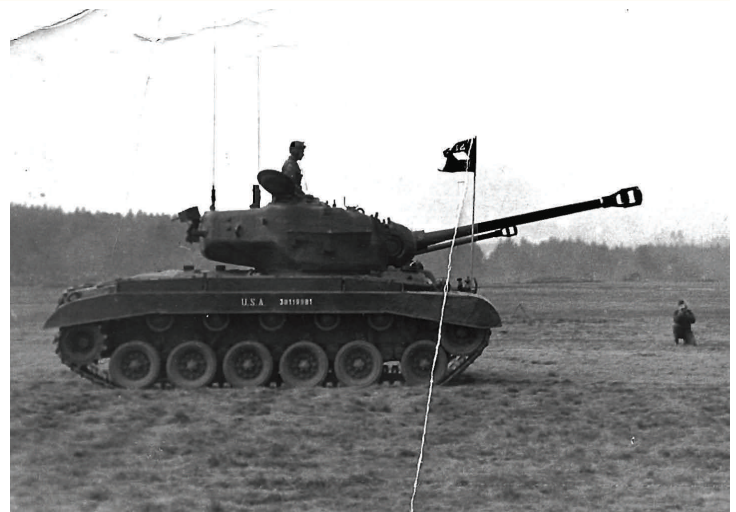
the service of all Army veterans of all generations. Sponsored by the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff, the program allows everyone to recognize U.S. Army veterans with a commendation for their dedicated service. The public and civilians, as well as all service members, can submit the names of an unlimited number of Army veterans at [www.freedomteamsalute.com](http://www.freedomteamsalute.com).

The 761st Tank Battalion was known as the "Black Panthers." The unit saw 183 days of continuous combat, inflicting thousands of enemy casualties, liberating 30 major towns, breaking through the Nazis' vaunted Siegfried Line, fighting major engagements in six countries and ending the war as the easternmost American unit in Austria. They were among the first U.S. troops to reach the outskirts of Berlin. Their unit motto was: "Come out fighting." In 1978 President Jimmy Carter awarded the 761st Tank Battalion the Presidential Unit Citation for Extraordinary Heroism.

"World War II veterans paid a high price to ensure the survival of our nation. It is appropriate that we as a society take every opportunity to pay our respects for the enormous sacrifices that were required of those who served in uniform as well as supporters on the home-front who made their service possible," said Rowe.



SUNDAY MAY 18, 1947—DON'T MISS IT



GERMANY AFTER 1945 (COLOGNE?)



GERMANY AFTER 1945 (COLOGNE?)



## Ask the Historian

### AN INTERVIEW WITH BUDDIE V. BRANCH, "B" COMPANY, 761st TANK



**BUDDIE V. BRANCH**

**"WE CROSSED THE ENGLISH  
CHANNEL TO OMAHA BEACH.  
THERE WERE WRECKED TRUCKS,  
TANKS, AND EVERYTHING ELSE  
ALL TANGLED IN THE WATER.  
SEEING THOSE KNOCKED OUT  
TANKS WAS A REAL WAKE-UP  
CALL"**



**WAYNE D. ROBINSON**

### PART I: The Dayton Boys Go To War

Buddie V. Branch was inducted on August 9, 1943 in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was drafted along with Dayton childhood chums Odell Williams, Clarence Copeland, and Henry Middlebrooks. Another friend, Jovan Council, had been drafted a year earlier and sent to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. Middlebrooks eventually served with the 784th Tank Battalion and was killed in combat. Williams and Copeland served alongside Branch in "B" Company of the 761st Tank Battalion.

After taking an aptitude test at Fort Thomas in Covington, Kentucky, Branch was selected for training at the Armor School at Fort Knox Kentucky. There, he and his fellow recruits received training in the use of pistols, carbines, rifles, and basic operation and maintenance of the M4 Sherman Tank.

In November of 1943, Buddie was transferred to Camp Hood, Texas, and assigned to "B" Company of the 761st Tank Battalion.

"Fort Hood was where we trained on the Shermans in earnest. We had three companies of Shermans, 17 tanks apiece, plus one company of 17 light tanks, M-5 Stuarts. We lived on the tanks in the field. We went on tactical maneuvers, practiced gunnery with the 75mm main gun, fired the fifty caliber and thirty caliber machine guns, and learned to field strip and re-assemble the weapons blindfolded. Every man learned to fight as Loader, Driver, Gunner, and Co-Driver. My main job was Gunner, but we were also trained to take over as Tank Commander in case of trouble."

In June of 1944, Branch went home on leave for one week. When he returned to Hood, the Battalion had been alerted for overseas movement. Another month of intense combat training followed.

"In August of 1944 we boarded a troop train for Camp Shanks. When the train went through towns in Louisiana we had to draw the window shades because some white people would throw rocks at the train when they saw black G.I.s.

We sailed from New York Harbor to Dorset, England on August 27, 1944. When we landed in England on September 7, 1944, we drew brand new tanks and all the other gear. From there, we crossed the English Channel to Omaha Beach. There were wrecked trucks, tanks, and everything else all tangled up in the water. Seeing those knocked-out tanks was a real wake-up call."

The tankers spent two days preparing the vehicles for action, then made the 400-mile road march from Omaha Beach to St. Nicholas du Port, east of Nancy, France.



*Whitbey*

**WHITBEY  
AUSTRIA 1944**

## Ask the Historian



**SIMMONS, COOPER, COLEMAN, BIRD  
AND CHOPS  
MEN OF COMPANY "B"**

"We drove through all these towns, where the French people cheered us on in a most welcoming manner. When we got to Saint Nicholas, the rain and mud made for miserable going. We had to ignore the wet conditions, load armor piercing rounds, High Explosive rounds, thousands of rounds of machine gun ammo, not to mention tools, batteries for the radios, checking the radios, and cleaning and checking all weapons. We were working hard to make sure the tanks were ready for battle. We were less than fifty miles from the front lines. You could hear artillery, and sometimes even small-arms fire.

In the middle of all this, General Patton visited us one rainy day just before we went into combat. He said, "I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I have nothing but the best in my Army. I don't care what color you are as long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sons of bitches." At the time, I thought he was a funny guy with the six guns and stuff, but hell, we didn't need him to

tell us that. our motto was "Come Out Fighting." Didn't I tell you that?"

On the same day, we were joined by the war correspondent, Mr. Trezzvant Anderson. He stayed with us for the rest of the war and helped us to write the best book about the 761st, *Come Out Fighting*.

I will never forget the night before we went into battle. It got real cold. We checked and re-checked everything on the Sherman, then got together and said a prayer. Just then, Moses Ballard, our tank commander, came running back from a meeting at headquarters with Captain John Long, our company commander. He gathered us by the tank- me, George Gaffney, Driver; George Coleman, Loader, and a guy we called "Chops," the Assistant Driver. Ballard said we were going into a town called Morville. We had orders to support the infantry by killing any enemy troops, and blowing up anything that could be used for an observation post- steeples, high windows, everything. He told us to



**HILL AND CHIPPY  
AUSTRIA 1944**



**WOODEN, KNIGHT AND BRANCH**

watch out for the infantry on our flanks, the Yankee Division guys."

Branch and "B" Company were assigned to one of two task forces going into the attack. The task force was led by Colonel Peter Kopcsak, commander of the 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, one of the first four tank destroyer battalions in the U.S. Army. Kopcsak had personally written the book on tank destroyer tactics at Camp Hood.

"At about five a.m, we climbed in the tank and moved out, just after a big artillery barrage. We had infantry and a Tank Destroyer outfit with us. I think "A" Company was somewhere on our right, "C" was on our left. At the time, we did not know much about where the other tankers were, but later on I heard the "C" Company tankers got hit pretty hard.

I remember when we moved out of St. Nicholas. The rain had turned to snow. Inside the tank, there was a steady grinding noise, a vibration though you the crew compartment. You couldn't hear anything because of the engine noise, except over the intercom. Ballard sat up and behind me. Coleman was on

**BY WAYNE D. ROBINSON, 761ST TANK BATTALION HISTORIAN**



## Ask the Historian



**MICKY**

the left side of the gun, I sat on the other side. The driver and co-driver were down in the hull. Just as I pressed the tank helmet onto my head and braced my forehead against the brow-pad on the Gunner's sight, Ballard buttoned up, got on the intercom and ordered Coleman to "load H.E." Coleman pulled a round from the ready rack and slammed it into the breech. When I heard the breech slam shut, I knew we were getting ready to cut loose on that town.

From what I could see through my periscope, Morville was a mess. The Jerries were caught out in the open at first, because the noise of the artillery barrage covered our approach. I was ready to step on the firing switch when Ballard said: GUNNER- COAX- TROOPS. I answered IDENTIFIED. Ballard said FIRE. I said ON THE WAY, stepping on the foot trigger on the "Y" of WAY. We just tore them apart with the co-ax machine guns. Three other tanks were firing to our left. The combined tracer fire looked like a swarm of fiery bees. The Jerries ran for the buildings, I saw a bunch of overcoats trying to jump through basement windows. Some didn't make it."

Up ahead, the column was stalled when when the leading tank, commanded by Sgt. Roy King, was disabled by enemy anti-tank fire. According to Anderson, the Germans laid on mortar, anti-tank and artillery fire, setting the tank ablaze. When the crew attempted to bail out, King was killed by machine gun fire and tumbled into the street to the right side of the tank; Corporal Herbert Porter made it out despite severe wounds sustained inside the tank; Pfc. Nathaniel Ross was hit twice. Pvt. John McNeill and Tech 5 Jack Whitby crawled out through the tank's escape hatch in the bottom of

reached over and tapped me on the shoulder, motioning for me to look left. I stood on my seat and squeezed up to where Ballard made room in the commander's hatch so I could look out to the side. We passed a halftrack with five dead GIs in the back, sitting there looking normal, except they were burned up.

At the time, I did not pause to think much about what we had done. That came later. We were lucky to drive through the town without getting hit by an 88 or a mortar."

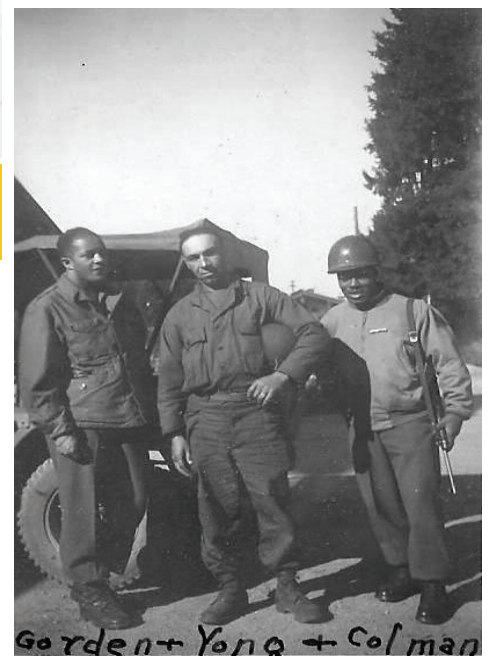


**BUDDIE, COUNCIL, WOODEN AND KNIGHT**

the hull. They brought their submachine guns and used them to kill Germans attempting to fire an anti-tank gun. Whitby re-entered the burning tank and opened fire with the coax machine gun, enabling the task force to pass through the center of town.

"Ballard told Gaffney to hit the gas and we rolled right through the other side of town. There was a roadblock; the Sherman busted through like it was on rails. In the turret, there was a smell sort of like cap gun smoke. Coleman opened the pistol port, then

*Part 2 will be featured in the next newsletter in April*



**GORDON, YOUNG AND COLEMAN  
AUSTRIA 1944**

## A Primer on Gas Prices (Got Gas?)

There is hardly a day that goes by that you do not read about the rising cost of fuel or get that feeling of stunned disbelief as the numbers climb and climb while you fill your gas tank. If that weren't bad enough, there is the feeling of hopelessness. The price at the pump is not negotiable except to go somewhere else in hopes of saving a few cents per gallon. You are powerless and pain of salt being rubbed into an open wound smarts as you also read about record profits in the oil industry.

They say that knowledge is power. The knowledge gained from this article will give you some unique perspectives and boost your understanding of the oil industry but unfortunately it won't lower the price of gas at the pump or make a dent in your electric bill, but it will make you sound more interesting as you complain about today's high energy cost.

The first thing to understand is that the world's oil supply acts like an asymptote value – a math term that means a value gets closer and closer to zero but never reaches it. When searching for oil, the oil companies first retrieve the most accessible and therefore the cheapest to obtain and afterwards go after the more and more difficult and also costly to get. Depending on current prices, a particular oil find may not be extracted because the expense of removing the oil would exceed what the current market price would bring. It is a lot more costly to extract oil from a floating platform in the Gulf of Mexico over 2,000 feet of water than from a 300 foot well in Oklahoma. The oil we are using now is the byproduct of a process that took millions of years and the amount of crude oil available has a limit. According to the Energy Information Administration, a branch of our government that provides us official energy statistics, oil production in the U.S. has been on the decline since 1970. The agency also forecasts peak crude oil production worldwide, and based on factors such as growth in consumption and within 12 different scenarios place the world's peak production between 2021 and

2112. Recent realities such as the tremendous economic growth in China would indicate the peak production year to be sooner rather than later.

"The U.S is the world's largest energy producer, consumer, and net importer. It also ranks 11<sup>th</sup> worldwide in reserves of oil, six natural gas, and first in coal" according to the Energy Information Agency (EIA). Currently we import about 59.5% of the total petroleum we use. The countries the U.S imports petroleum from may surprise you. The top five, as of February 2007, in order of quantity are:

- Canada
- Mexico
- Venezuela
- Saudi Arabia
- Nigeria

If you look at oil consumption by country you should not be surprised that the U.S. is at the top of the list.

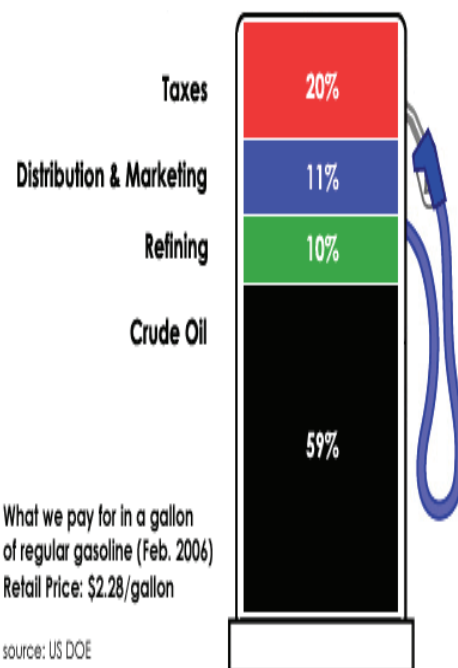
United States	20,730,000 bbl/day
China	6,534,000 bbl/day
Japan	5,578,000 bbl/day
Germany	2,650,000 bbl/day
Russia	2,500,000 bbl/day

**OIL CONSUMPTION BY COUNTRY**

The numbers that may surprise you are oil consumption (per capita) by country, that is, how much oil is consumed based on population. The numbers below are barrels per day per 1,000 people. I also added the names from the previous chart to show their positions.

1	Virgin Islands	1,058
2	Gibraltar	859
3	Netherlands Antilles	315
4	Singapore	178
5	United Arab Emirates	153
17	United States	69.46
35	Japan	43
54	Germany	32
84	Russia	17
138	China	5

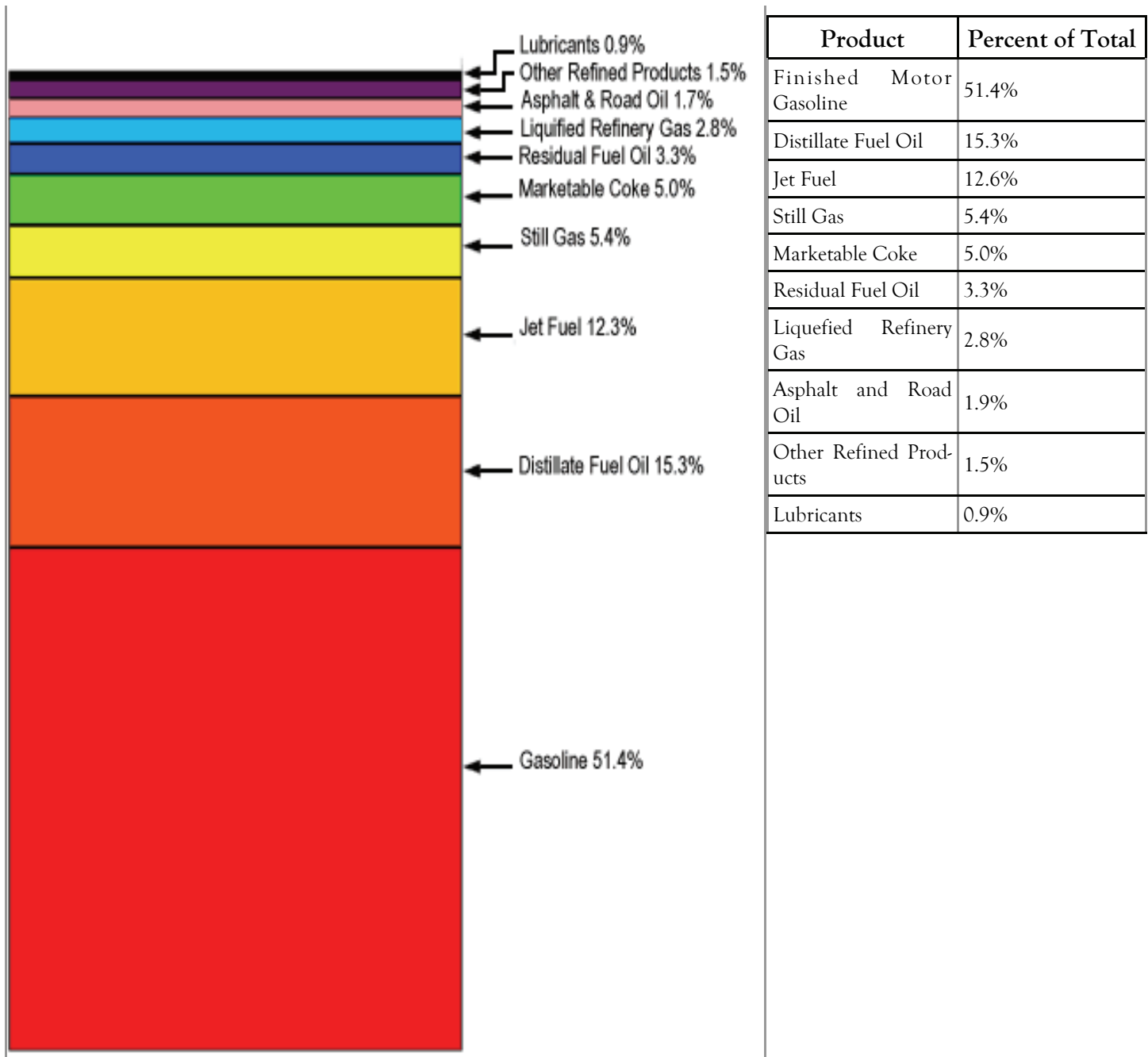
**OIL CONSUMPTION BASED ON POPULATION**



**WHERE DOES YOUR GAS DOLLAR GO?**



## Petroleum Products Yielded from One Barrel of Crude Oil in California



## Petroleum Products Yielded from One Barrel of Crude Oil in California

One barrel contains 42 gallons of crude oil. The total volume of products made from crude oil based origins is 48.43 gallons on average - 6.43 gallons greater than the original 42 gallons of crude oil. This represents a "processing gain" due to the additional other petroleum products such as alkylates are added to the refining process to create the final products.

Additionally, California gasoline contains approximately 5.7 percent by volume of ethanol, a non-petroleum-based additive that brings the total processing gain to 7.59 gallons (or 49.59 total gallons).

Source: California Energy Commission, Fuels Office, PIIRA database. Based on 2004 data.

Global annual consumption of crude oil far exceeds new discoveries of oil. Driven largely by developing Asian economies, world demand for conventional oil is increasing at an unusually high rate. In the U.S. annual demand growth is projected at an estimated 1.5 percent while China has had demand growth exceeding 28% in 2003, for example. Total world oil consumption is estimated to grow from 83.7 million barrels per day in 2006, to 91.6 million b/d in 2010 and 118.0 million b/d in the year 2030. The U.S. will import 60% of its oil requirements this year and China and India are expected to increase their annual demand for imported oil by 7 and 6 percent respectively.

The future is not difficult to see. The world is pumping more conventional oil than it is discovering. At the same time the U.S. and other consuming countries are increasing their demand for imported oil at record levels. High demand, limited or diminishing supply; the result is that you, as a consumer will pay more, the nation's economic productivity is impacted, your standard of living and national security is impacted if the Department of Defense cannot maintain secure sources of fuel to mobilize it's land vehicles, aircraft and naval fleets at home or around the world.

Earlier in this article I wrote that the world's oil supply acts like an asymptote value and that the most accessible and easiest to process is the first to be pumped and the more difficult and lower grade will be put off until it becomes economically feasible. It may surprise you to know that between tar sands in Alberta, Canada and America's rich, massive and concentrated oil shale reserves that lay in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming there are several trillion barrels of oil; more than what lies in the Middle East.

Canada's tar sand production was initiated in the 1960s and has steadily to over a million barrels/day and is projected to be at 2.5 billion barrels/day by 2017. The Alberta Tar Sands industry was the result of decades of close cooperation between the Canadian government and Canadian industry.

The massive shale oil reserves have been recognized as strategically important to the U.S. for over a hundred years. In 1912 President Taft established an Office of Naval Petroleum and Oil Shale reserves to ensure oil for naval military operations. The emerging oil shale industry started about 1974 and collapsed in the 1980s, not due to resource failure or technology potential or even environmental considerations. It collapsed simply because crude oil prices fell sharply and the projects were no longer economical. Today government and industry are revisiting the idea of a profitable shale oil industry and have set ambitious goals of 2 million barrels of oil per/day by 2020 and 3 million by 2040.

Oil shale is very different from the oil that we are most familiar with. It is not directly pumped out of the ground as a liquid because the oil substances in oil shale are solid. It must first be mined and heated to a high temperature to separate the solid from the liquid or an experimental process referred to as *in situ retorting* involves heating the oil shale while still underground and pumping the resulting liquid to the surface. You can see where this is going. It is a much more expensive process with potentially greater environmental impacts such as air quality, carbon emissions, groundwater, spent shale disposal, and land reclamation just for starters. Much of the water required would come from the Colorado River Basin and according to a study by the Rand Corporation, it would take 3 barrels of water to produce 1 barrel of shale oil.

Now that we see the "big" picture lets focus on now and you and I. How does the price we pay at the pump today compare with the price we paid 25 years ago? According to the Energy Information Administration (research arm of the U.S. Department of Energy) that when adjusted for inflation the price

of a gallon of gas in 1981 would be at \$3.29. The average fuel efficiency in 1981 was a little over 15 mpg and to day the average fuel efficiency is at 21 mpg. As a nation we are spending less than 3% of gross domestic product today compared to 4.6% in 1981.

Another price factor you hear about frequently in the news today has to do with oil refineries. Every time a refinery is impacted by weather, fire or mechanical problems the pump price goes up because the immediate supply will be impacted. Why don't oil companies build more refineries to increase capacity? It's a 10 to 15 year multibillion dollar to build a new refinery. Oil profits are high now but they were relatively flat before 2002. With calls to seek alternative fuels and reduce the use of fossil fuels, it is no wonder that oil companies don't want to make multibillion dollar investments that may not pay for themselves. No new refineries have been build since 1976, however existing ones have been greatly expanded.

Its frustrating when you drive by a gas station and see one price for gas and then drive back on the same route and gas has gone up 15 cents a gallon. You know that the gas he is selling at the higher is the same gas from before the prices went up. The answer is that the cost of an item, for any market, will be the cost to replace the item. Don't forget that when the price goes down it is the same gas that the station paid a higher price for earlier. Stations typically make only 2 to 3 cents per gallon. When gas goes down they risk losing money.

Another issue you hear about is that many consumers believe that oil companies are engaged in price gouging. There are no federal laws barring price gouging. A bill was introduced last year making gouging illegal but its scope was narrowed to times involving federal emergency or disaster. There are anti-trust laws to that make it illegal for companies to collude and keep prices artificially high. Some states do have laws against gouging and the news media have periodically reported on their enforcement, in particular, during times of emergency or disaster such as around the time of Hurricane Katrina .

After all that's said, gas, on average will only climb in price.



## Taking A Stand for Legacy

September 20, 2007

The 761st Tank Battalion's 59th annual reunion in the Detroit area was another festive gathering, but poignant in the dwindling number of those veterans who once roared across the battlefields of Europe and spearheaded on numerous fronts, helped turn the tide in the Bulge, smashed the Siegfried Line, and finally rolled to a halt on V-E Day. The opening stanza of Phil Latimer's poem, which has graced reunion programs for years, says it all: "Where have all my buddies gone? Gone and left me so alone. We were young in forty four. Now they've crossed o'er Jordan's shore." That sentiment was echoed, but defied, at the 59th reunion, with a bold decision to perpetuate the battalion's legacy.

The valor of old soldiers is often immortalized in monumental works of stone and marble, but what happened at the 2007 reunion created something more than some lifeless chunk of statuary. At the Saturday afternoon business meeting, in a nondescript conference room of the Embassy Suites Hotel in Troy, the assembled argued about changing the association's constitution and bylaws to open up membership. "We all have our time," James Jones said during a spirited discussion. "If you narrow [membership] down, it's going to die out—open up as wide as possible." Ivan Harrison, Jr. made a motion, Jones seconded it, unit historian Wayne Robinson articulated the new language, and a unanimous "Aye" formally

changed the constitution to state that "all members of the general public are eligible for membership in the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association." This was a watershed decision, ensuring that a living, breathing organization dedicated to the memory of the 761st might continue into perpetuity.

Such an on-going 761st association will draw upon the battalion's outstanding principles, inspiring present and future generations with the patriotism, pursuit of excellence, and dedication to duty the tankers displayed in the ultimate crucible of war. The change means the T.G. Hill Educational Assistance Fund can continue and that a revitalized association might even expand upon that philanthropic tradition.

An on-going association will ensure the 761st is never forgotten. The battalion's epic story includes not only the events of World War II, but the harsh realities of the racism that defined America for generations. The black panther tankers and others of the segregated units were the last to serve in a divided military, beginning with "the fight for the right to fight," as the late Floyd Dade once described the refusal

of African Americans to be relegated to subservient grunt work or dismissed from combat altogether. That the 761st was among the last to serve in a segregated military speaks volumes of the far-reaching consequences of what was truly won on the battlefields of WW II. President Harry Truman, who would desegregate the military, put it perfectly at a

**THAT THE 761ST HAS OPENED UP THE ASSOCIATION TO THE PUBLIC IS A GIFT TO THEIR COUNTRY...**

ceremony in the nation's capital one summer day in 1946 when he honored the Japanese American 100/442nd Regimental Combat Team with words that rang true for all segregated units: "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice—and you have won. Keep up that fight, and we will continue to win—to make this great republic stand for just what the constitution says it stands for: the welfare of all people all the time."

Television news anchor Tom Brokaw coined the memorable phrase "the greatest generation" to describe the survivors of the Great Depression who became soldiers in World War II and "went on to build modern America," as he wrote in his bestselling book, *The Greatest Generation*. The segregated units were among the builders, but theirs was the toughest task—to break down the barriers of homefront racism, those fortifications of segregation that had stood for generations. Beating Hitler and his Nazi army was easy compared to changing hearts and minds on the second front in a two-pronged war, that war against racism at home. The modern civil rights movement



**MARK COTTA VAZ**

**BY MARK COTTA VAZ**

## Taking A Stand for Legacy

arguably began with the men of the segregated units. Their ultimate victory is evident in the multi-ethnic face of modern America seen on the political stage, in corporate boardrooms, in the arts and culture and integrated neighborhoods. This feat of spiritual engineering has been indispensable to the building of modern America. Through educational outreach and the collection and preservation of its history and artifacts for present and future generations, an on-going association will always be able to remind the nation of the 761st's role in shaping the outcome of the war and postwar world.

That the 761st has opened up its association to the public is a gift to their country, perhaps the last unselfish act of a unit that gave so much. The surviving veterans, and

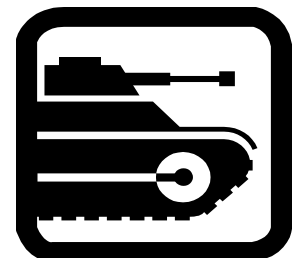


**L/R FRONT: TJ MANN AND JOHN WESTON  
L/R 2ND ROW: MARK VAZ, EDRISS DADE, SHAUNA DADE AND RUFUS TAYLOR**



**L/R FRONT: KENNETH TAIT (SECRETARY), WAYNE ROBINSON (HISTORIAN) AND GLOUCESTER STEVENS (TREASURER)**

those who watch and wait on the banks of Jordan, can rest easy knowing their family and friends will carry on their legacy.



**MARK COTTA VAZ IS A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING WRITER WHO HAS BEEN ATTENDING 761ST REUNIONS SINCE THE FIFTIETH REUNION IN LAS VEGAS. HE HAS RECENTLY FINISHED HIS BOOK ON THE SEGREGATED UNITS OF WORLD WAR II, WHICH FEATURES THE 761ST TANK BATTALION.**



## MAIL CALL

Hello Ivan,  
On Sept. 29 here in DC at the World War II Memorial, the Army will join with Public Broadcasting and Friends of the World War II Memorial to present a screening of an abbreviated version of the last episodes of Ken Burns' film, THE WAR. As part of that event we will perform our Freedom Team Salute ceremony, with (potentially) the Secretary of the Army presiding. We would like to honor one of the 761st members who live in this area at that time  
Jean Davis

I am proud to follow in the footsteps of honorable men like you and other members of the 761st Tank Battalion. Your accomplishments in the face of racism and bigotry were amazing. Being a black man, I clearly understand your sufferings and your triumph. Unbelievably, many soldiers, black and white, especially black soldiers don't realize the courage and gallantry with which the 761st served. Right now, I am a member of the 3rd US Army stationed in Atlanta, Ga. Fort McPherson. God Bless and thanks for your service and sacrifice!!

LTC Billy Miller  
Chief, Command Training  
3rd US Army HQs

This e-mail is to inform your organization about our foundation's efforts to construct and operate a regional museum and research library dedicated to World War II. The World War II History

Center Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization located in south-central Kansas. At this time, we are in the process of acquiring land for our 55,000 square foot facility which will include indoor/outdoor/interactive displays on all aspects of World War II, including the European, Pacific, and Home Fronts. We will have a library full of books, periodicals, and other resources which will open to the public free of charge. Our facility will also include archival storage and retrieval, a 160 seat theater/auditorium, a memorial to the World War II generation and the nation's only full-scale World War II battlefield on-site. This battlefield will be approximately 15 to 20 acres in size and include a small village, bunkers, trenches and many other battlefield implements typical to World War II. Its purpose is to stage battle reenactments, allow tours at a much lower cost than traveling overseas, and provide rides to visitors in restored WWII military vehicles.

The World War II History Center will provide a package of services and attractions unmatched anywhere else in the United States, and already offers many services at its temporary location. However, we need your help. Support from organizations like yours is critical to the success of our venture. We would ask that you refer to our website at [www.wwiihistorycenter.org](http://www.wwiihistorycenter.org)

to learn more about our mission and goals, and how your organization and its members might be able to help. We understand that the World War II generation will not be around for much longer, so we are working as quickly as we can to ensure that their sacrifices will not be forgotten before they are all gone. Please help us to realize our goal of establishing a tribute to the finest example of what being an American is all about.

Sincerely,  
Allen R. Cooley  
Founder and President  
World War II History Center Foundation  
"Remember, Honor, Educate"  
(316)322-8753  
[wwiihistorycenter@att.net](mailto:wwiihistorycenter@att.net)  
[www.wwiihistorycenter.org](http://www.wwiihistorycenter.org)

I am starting a drive to have an Oklahoma state road, building or park named after SSG Ruben Rivers. I have sent letters to state Congressmen and the Governor and the local papers. I am interested in getting help to spread the word. Is there any assistance your organization might be able to give me?

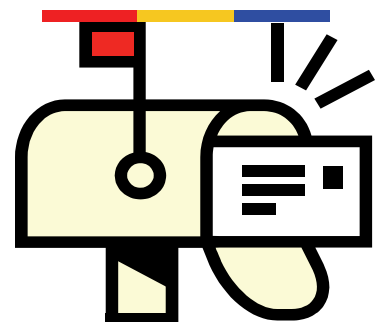
<http://rubenriverspetition.blogspot.com/>  
Ron Simpson  
BCS Compliance Analyst  
Business Customer Services  
Business Markets Group  
Cingular Wireless, now the new AT&T  
Email:  
[ron.simpson@cingular.com](mailto:ron.simpson@cingular.com)

As you already know the 758th, 761st, 784th are all featured in the "Segregated Armor" exhibit at the Patton Museum on Fort Knox. Here's a direct link to that exhibit: <http://www.generalpatton.org/qtvr/qtvr08f07.asp> once there, you will have to click inside of the room to be able to view inside of the exhibit as well. <http://GeneralPatton.org>

Keep up the good work on the websites!

Tim Williams  
4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment  
"TUSKERS!...WE PIERCE!"

Hyde Park Films wrote:  
Dear Sir,  
My name is Andre King and I have written a screenplay based on the true events and experiences of the 761st. I have named it "Liberators" borrowing the title of the book I used for most of my source material. I would like to contact some of the remaining members if at all possible. I just saw a History channel special on the Battalion and I am deeply moved. I would love to share my work with you and have some feedback. Please let me know of your interest.



## MAIL CALL

Greetings,

My name is Michael Smith. I am a photo restoration expert of 24 years and at this time I would like to offer complete restore and rebuild of any photographs FREE OF CHARGE to any and all of the family of the 761st.

The business is located in Las Vegas Nevada. If my services could be of use to any of the veterans and family members please respond. I am simply doing this as a gesture after a recent lecture at UCLA I attended. I want to show my thanks in the only way I know how.

Thank you  
Michael Smith

Dear Sir or Ma'am,

I just watched the TV show about black tankers in WW2. As a tanker and a minority, I felt very inspired by the show. As a platoon leader, I had Soldiers from all different races. It is interesting to see how things have changed over the years. However, it seems to me that African Americans were predominantly the first to pave the way for minorities in the Armed Forces. As a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, I would like to extend my thanks to the Soldiers of the 761st. They made it possible, along with their commander, for Americans of all races and cultures to service gallantly on the front line in the name of their country.

On the way!

Ivan E. Hong

James wrote:

I just caught the tail end of a show on the History Channel on the 761st Tank Battalion the other day. I never knew any colored tankers were involved in the relief of Bastogne. I am 46 years old and never realized the extent of racism that these Soldiers had to endure. I am white, and was brought up in a much different time in the history of our Country. I do not use the term "African American", I use the term "Black". My family is of Scottish Origin on both sides and I don't refer to myself as a "Scottish American". I was born in the United States of America, so me and everybody else who was born here is an American, PERIOD, we are just different colors. The Soldiers who served in the 761st are Americans. I am proud to be able to type and send this e-mail to these Valiant Soldiers who served my Country with distinction. I will hopefully be able to shake the hand of one of these Gentlemen one day. I hope the webmaster will forward my sincere Thanks and Gratitude to any and all surviving members of this Battalion. All of you were and are truly members of "The Greatest Generation", always know this, and always be proud of it. This Country owes, not only you, but all the veterans a debt of gratitude. My late Uncle Raymond Johnson retired from the Navy as a Master Chief. He fought in WW 2, Korea, and Vietnam. When he was buried in 2000, Taps was played on a boom box, needless to say, I was deeply of-

fended. When these Hero's go on to their Heavenly rewards, I hope they have a Bugler to play over their graves. It is the only proper way to pay the last respects to these fine Soldiers. Thank all of you, from the bottom of my heart, and may God Bless each one of you and your Families.

Jim Watson

Ron wrote:

Last year I started the petition to get a state highway in Oklahoma named after SSG Ruben Rivers.

Here is the progress.

Senator Charlie Laster and his office introduced an amendment to legislation yesterday to have a part of State Highway 9 in Tecumseh named after SSG Rivers.

After I started this effort, I found that my brother works with a woman that is part of his family and we were able to contact SSG Rivers' brother and got his blessing for this.

I just wanted to give you all an update.

Ruben Rivers Highway

I have attached a copy of the amendment that I introduced naming a section of highway after Ruben Rivers. The amendment was added to SB 1894 which passed the Senate yesterday 48-0. The bill is now on its way to the House for consideration. I will keep you updated as the bill makes it way through the legislative process.

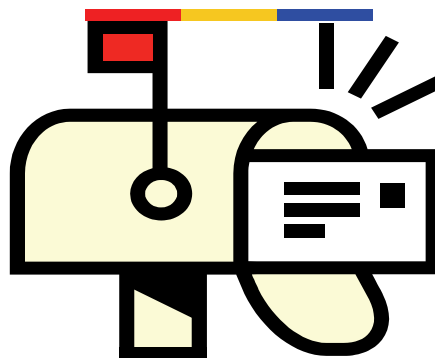
*Sharon Veazey*

Executive Assistant to  
Senator Charlie Laster

John Burke wrote:

I am trying to get a contact number or e-mail address for the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Division. I had a person from Washington DC call looking for a good contact number. If you could supply me with a contact number I would appreciate it.

John Burke,  
Adjutant 1<sup>st</sup> District  
American Legion Department of Michigan





## Scholarships and Educational Assistance Available to 761st Family Members

There are two established scholarships that are associated with the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion. The Paul L. Bates Memorial Scholarship Fund and the T.G. Hill Educational Assistance Fund.

The Paul L. Bates Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1999 in memory of Colonel Paul L. Bates who, perhaps more than any other single person, shaped the battalion into the remarkable unit that it became. Colonel Bates was a 1931 graduate of Western Maryland College (on July 1, 2002, the name officially changed to McDaniel College), and during his college years was an All-American football player.

The scholarship was established as a tribute to the brave men who fought under his command and provides awards for lineal descendants of members of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion who served with the unit from August 1944 through April 1945.

Recipients must be accepted to and attend McDaniel College, possess and maintain a 2.0 grade point average at McDaniel College and demonstrate financial need.

McDaniel College is a private four year college of the liberal arts and sciences. There is a flexible curricula at both the undergraduate and master's degree level where students from 31 states and 17 countries prepare for their future lives. Over the years the college has grown from a single building with 37 students to 40 buildings on a 160-acre campus populated by 1,600 undergraduates and 1,300 graduate students. The average class size is 17 students and there is a student-faculty ratio of 12 – 1. This enables a close-knit community where learning is collaborative and every student receives personal attention.

For information about McDaniel College and how to apply, visit the McDaniel College web site at [www.mcdaniel.edu](http://www.mcdaniel.edu).

The T.G. Hill Educational Assistance fund has provided support to many young students over the years with over \$87,000 in cash awards. In 2005 there were two awards of \$1,000 to each of two students.

The assistance provided to the young students is different from other scholarships in that the student receives a check in their own name and has the freedom to use the money at their own discretion. This is important because many students who receive other forms of financial support, family or institutional, experience a financial gap that puts a strain on family resources and/or is not covered by other sources. There are many extra costs associated with higher learning that are often overlooked until the student is faced with difficult choices.

Can I join a professional organization in the field I am majoring in, can I afford books in my field that are not required reading for any of my courses, those reference books are so expensive but it would help so much to have my own set or it could just be that my socks get wet when it rains because of the hole in my shoes—whatever.

The T.G. Hill Educational Assistance Fund is provided through donations to the 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association by both members and friends. The Association is chartered as a non-profit corporation with 501(c)(3) status. Donations to the educational assistance fund are always welcome. Checks should be made out the 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association with the notation T.G. Hill Education Fund in the memo area. The mailing address is as follows:

**761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association**  
**P.O. Box 211009**  
**Detroit, Michigan 48221**

### McDaniel College Contact Information

#### Contact Admissions

Phone: 800-638-5005  
 Email: [admissions@mcdaniel.edu](mailto:admissions@mcdaniel.edu)  
 Address: McDaniel College  
 Office of Admissions  
 2 College Hill  
 Westminster, MD 21157

#### Contact Graduate Admissions

Phone: 410-857-2500  
 Fax: 410-857-2515  
 Email: [gradadms@mcdaniel.edu](mailto:gradadms@mcdaniel.edu)  
 Address: Graduate & Professional Studies Office  
 Academic Hall, 2nd Floor  
 McDaniel College  
 2 College Hill  
 Westminster, MD 21157-4390

For information on scholarships and financial aid contact the Director of Financial Aid at email: [pwilliams@mcdaniel.edu](mailto:pwilliams@mcdaniel.edu) or phone: 410-857-2233

An additional contact for more information about the scholarship, contact:

Ms. Debbie Leazer  
 Assistant Director of Donor Relations  
 McDaniel College  
 2 College Hill  
 Westminster, MD 21157  
 Phone: 410-857-2251  
 E-mail: [dleazer@mcdaniel.edu](mailto:dleazer@mcdaniel.edu)

### T.G. Hill Educational Assistance Fund

For an application write to:

761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association  
 P.O. Box 211009  
 Detroit, Michigan 48221  
 Attn: T.G. Hill Educational Assistance Fund



## TAPS

**THE 761ST NEWSLETTER HAS LEARNED OF THE FOLLOWING DEATHS. OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY GOES OUT TO THE FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE DECEASED.**

FLOYD DADE, JR.	SEPTEMBER 27, 2006
1ST SGT. CHARLES M. KING	OCTOBER 14, 2006
E.G. McCONNELL	MARCH 13, 2007
KENNETH HAMM	MAY 16, 2007
PHIL AGNEW	MAY 25, 2007
JOHNNIE STEVENS	JULY 12, 2007
L Z ANDERSON	JANUARY 8, 2008
HARRY K. TYREE	FEBRUARY 15, 2008
SIDNEY A. DICKASON, SR.	MARCH 16, 2008
HERMAN TAYLOR	MARCH 8, 2008



ANYONE WHO KNOWS OF A MEMBER'S DEATH PLEASE  
NOTIFY THE NEWSLETTER SO THAT PERSON CAN BE  
LISTED IN TAPS AND ALSO ON THE HONOR ROLL AT  
THE NEXT REUNION



## COME OUT FIGHTING

The Official Newsletter of the  
761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association

Organization Address  
761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association  
P.O. Box 211009  
Detroit, Michigan 48221

Kenneth C. Tait— National Secretary  
Phone: 313-361-2986  
E-mail: kctnt@aol.com

**We're on the Web!**

**[www.761st.com](http://www.761st.com)**

## New Directory

The Latest directory created for the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Organization was several years ago and a lot has changed since then. If you know of any former 761st members or of their families please forward their information so that we may mail them future issues of the 761st newsletter. There will be valuable information on topics such as scholarships available to family members, activities of the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association and updates on individual members.

## Statement of Publication

This is the official publication of the 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association. It will be published on a tri-annual basis with publication dates of April 30, August 31, and December 31. All members and associates are encouraged to support the voice of the 761st. Reader response will ultimately determine the frequency of publication.

The news letter is intended to be a vehicle for the members and associates to express opinions, make suggestions, share experiences and especially to keep in touch.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication but they must be signed. Letters requesting that the writer's name be withheld will be honored and stated so in the printed article. Because the Association is a non-profit organization, letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

Unless stated otherwise, the views printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer and do not necessarily represent the views of the Association leadership or the editor of the newsletter.

The Association is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted for publication. It would be impossible to check each story. Therefore we rely on the submitter to research each article.

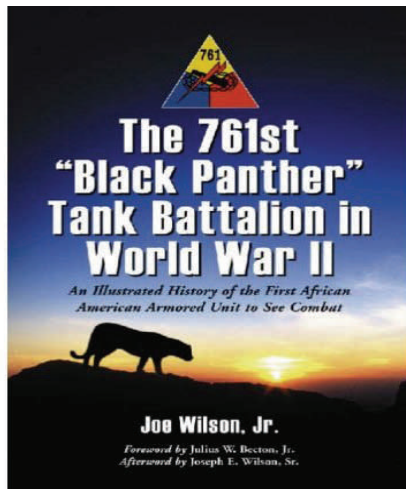
The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter by submitting your letters, stories, photographs and suggestions.

Letters may be submitted to:

Ivan H. Harrison, Jr.  
7518 Hamilton Ave  
Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527-6923  
[ivanharrisonjr@hotmail.com](mailto:ivanharrisonjr@hotmail.com)

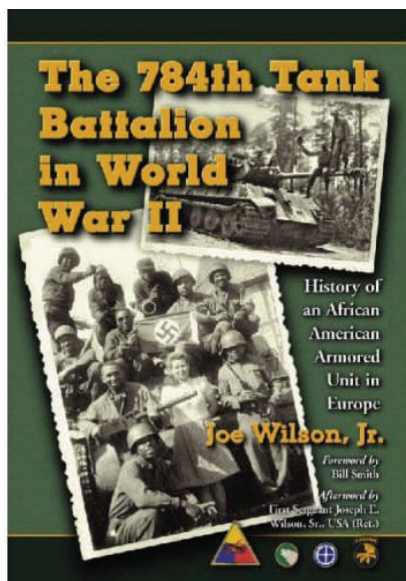
## New Publications



### **761st Black Panther Tank Battalion in World War II: An Illustrated History of the First African American Armored Unit to See Combat. (Paperback)**

by [Joe Wilson, Jr.](#)  
(Afterword), [Julius W. Becton](#)

ISBN: 0-7864-2862-7



### **The 784th Tank Battalion in World War II: The History of an African American Armored Unit in Europe. (Hardcover)**

By [Joe Wilson, Jr.](#)  
(Author), and [Bill Smith](#)  
(Foreword)

ISBN: 0-7864-2758-1  
ISBN-13: 978-0786427581