

Presidential citation to 761st today

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NEAR NANCY, FRANCE, Nov. 5, 1941—An M-1 medium tank is put through the paces in the mud by members of

the 761st Motor Transport Battalion.

AVA, draft costs 'roughly equal'

Secretary of the Army Clifford L. Alexander Jr. released yesterday an Army study that contradicts sharply criticism about the cost of the All Volunteer Army (AVA).

The Army analysis focuses primarily on the two issues raised most often by AVA critics—cost and attrition rates.

It challenges charges that conversion from a draft to a volunteer force has cost \$18 billion. Fourteen billion of the \$18 billion is improperly charged to the AVA. The Army bases its position on the fact that Congress acknowledged the principle of pay comparability between the public and the private sectors before the draft ended. According to the Army's analysis, the \$14 billion cost applies equally to a conscript force.

On balance, the study suggests, the costs peculiar to having the AVA are roughly equal to the costs of having an Army of comparable size in a draft environment.

To the charge of high attrition rates, the Army responds that the significant issue is not attrition rates but turnover rates, the percent of personnel who must be replaced each year. Army figures show that the turnover rate for rate for the draft Army was 28 percent. The current AVA turnover rate is 24 percent and is expected to go lower. Study figures suggest that this difference contributes to an Active Army savings of \$81 million in annual operating costs.

However, the analysis acknowledges that the added costs of manning the Reserve Components will offset Active Army savings.

by Holly Grossl

The Presidential Unit Citation will be awarded to the 761st Tank Battalion after 30 years by Secretary of the Army Clifford L. Alexander during a ceremony today at Ft. Myer's Summerall Field at 11 a.m.

Lt. Col. (Retired) Charles A. (Pop) Gates, national commander of the 761st Tank Battalion Association, will receive the award which honors the Army's first black tank battalion for its heroic actions in Europe during World War II. Approximately 150 former members of the unit are expected to attend the ceremony.

President Carter recently signed the citation following a 30-year endeavor by members of the unit to gain recognition for their unit's accomplishments in the European Theater of Operation during 1944 and 1945.

As a result of a letter written by Herman Taylor of the 761st Veterans Association, a seven-month research effort covering a variety of historical records produced evidence that the 761st warranted special recognition and such recognition had not been forthcoming in a segregated army.

The unit inflicted high casualty and equipment losses on German forces despite adverse weather conditions and problems in resupply peculiar only to a dispersed black unit attached to several other units during 183 consecutive days in battle without relief. The battalion was a major participant in the Allied thrust which drove across France, Belgium and Germany and which culminated in a link-up with Soviet forces in Austria. Fighting both as a separate battalion and as company-sized elements dispersed among numerous larger units, the 761st conducted major assaults on more than 30 towns across Europe.