



By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, I have today awarded

THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)  
FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM  
TO THE  
761st TANK BATTALION, UNITED STATES ARMY

The 761st Tank Battalion distinguished itself by extraordinary gallantry, courage, professionalism and high esprit de corps displayed in the accomplishment of unusually difficult and hazardous operations in the European Theater of Operations from 31 October 1944 to 6 May 1945. During 183 days in combat, elements of the 761st - the first United States Army tank battalion committed to battle comprised of black soldiers - were responsible for inflicting thousands of enemy casualties and for capturing, destroying, or aiding in the liberation of more than 30 major towns, 4 airfields, 3 ammunition supply dumps, 461 wheeled vehicles, 34 tanks, 113 large guns, 1 radio station, and numerous individual and crew-served weapons. This was accomplished while enduring an overall casualty rate approaching 50 percent, the loss of 71 tanks, and in spite of extremely adverse weather conditions, very difficult terrain not suited to armor operations, heavily fortified enemy positions and units, and extreme shortages of replacement personnel and equipment. The accomplishments are outstanding examples of the indomitable spirit and heroism displayed by the tank crews of the 761st. In one of the first major combat actions of the 761st, in the vicinity of Vic-sur-Seille and Morville-les-Vic, France, the battalion faced a reinforced enemy division. Despite the overwhelming superiority of enemy forces, elements of the battalion initiated a furious and persistent attack which caused defending enemy elements to withdraw. While pursuing the enemy, tanks of the 761st were immobilized before an anti-tank ditch. Savage fire from enemy bazooka and rocket launcher teams, positioned 50 yards beyond the ditch, disabled many of the vehicles. Crewmen dismounted the disabled tanks, crawled under them with their 50 caliber weapons, and placed withering fire upon the enemy positions. This resulted in the elimination of many of the positions and virtually destroyed two enemy companies while permitting the escape of other tanks and crews and eventual completion of the mission. From 5 January 1945 to 9 January 1945, the 761st engaged the 15th SS Panzer Division in the vicinity of Tillet, Belgium. Suffering severe casualties and damage to their tanks, the 761st attacked and counter-attacked throughout the five-day period against a numerically superior force in both personnel and equipment, and on 9 January 1945 the men of the 761st routed the enemy from Tillet and captured the town. This action was significant in that the enemy was prevented from further supply of its forces encircling Bastogne, and the United States troops there, because of the closing of the Brussels-Bastogne highway by the men of the 761st. One of the most significant accomplishments of the 761st began 20 March 1945 when, acting as the armor spearhead, the unit broke through the Siegfried Line into the Rhine plain, allowing units of the 4th Armored Division to move through to the Rhine River. During the period 20 March 1945 to 23 March 1945 the battalion, after operating far in advance of friendly artillery, encountered the fiercest of enemy resistance in the most heavily defended area of the war theater. Throughout the 72-hour period of the attack, elements of the 761st assaulted and destroyed enemy fortifications with a speed and intensity that enabled the capture or destruction of 7 Siegfried towns, 31 pill-boxes, 49 machine gun emplacements, 61 anti-tank guns, 451 vehicles, 11 ammunition trucks, 4 self-propelled guns, one 170mm artillery piece, 200 horses, and one ammunition dump. Enemy casualties totaled over 4,100 and of those captured it was determined that the 761st in its Siegfried Line attack had faced elements of 14 different German divisions. The accomplishments of the 761st in the Siegfried area were truly magnificent as the successful crossing of the Rhine River into Germany was totally dependent upon the accomplishment of their mission. The men of the 761st Tank Battalion, while serving as a separate battalion with the 26th, 71st, 79th, 87th, 95th, and 103d Infantry Divisions, the 17th Airborne Division, and 3d, 7th, and 9th Armies in 183 continuous days in battle, fought major engagements in six European countries, participated in four major allied campaigns, and on 6 May 1945, as the easternmost American soldiers in Austria, ended their combat missions by joining with the First Ukrainian Army (Russian) at the Enn River, Steyr, Austria. Throughout this period of combat, the courageous and professional actions of the members of the "Black Panther" battalion, coupled with their indomitable fighting spirit and devotion to duty, reflect great credit on the 761st Tank Battalion, the United States Army, and this Nation.

*Jimmy Carter*