



# 761ST NEWSLETTER

June 5, 2005

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

Volume 1, Issue 1

## 56th Annual Reunion

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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ♦ The 56th reunion was a great success. Read all about it in the cover article
- ♦ Do you recognize the pictures? - Page 5
- ♦ Volume 1, Issue 1—the first issue of the official newsletter. Keep looking for more



Pictured here, attending the Reunion, are (standing, left to right) James B. Jones, Rufus D. Taylor, Col. Aaron M. Dotson, USA (Ret.), Baron K. Bates, Roscoe Strozier, James C. Austin, James Young, Robert Cooper, Ivan H. Harrison, Jr., Ray L. Lottier, Maj. Gen. John R. Hawkins III, (2nd row) Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Kenneth C. Tait, Gloucester Stephens, Charles Womble, William H. McBurney, Wayne Robinson, (front row) Eddie Walker, Preston McNeil, Floyd Dade, Sgt. Lymon Alexander, USA (Ret.), Mark Henderson, USA (ret.), and Leonard Smith. (courtesy of Photographer Mark Olliver.)

The 56th annual reunion of the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association was held in the Washington D.C. area from Thursday, August 26th, to Sunday, August 29th, 2004 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Old Town Alexandria, with the annual banquet dinner being held on August 28, 2004 at 7:00PM.

Reunion Events included a group visit to the World War II Memorial on the National Mall (more below) and Arlington National Cemetery, and a memorial service at Fort Myer.

Photos from the 2004 Reunion are available in the Gallery at [www.761st.com](http://www.761st.com) (thanks to Floyd Dade's daughter, Shelli Hill.) Please feel free to add comments to the Gallery pictures. A news story about the 56th Annual Reunion from Washington, DC, TV station WUSA is available on their website, with a video that can be played there. To see the news story with the video go to <http://wusatv9.com/> and search on "761st". Part of their news report says, "Fifty-six years ago the men in this bat-

talion were shaking up the European battlefields in World War II; America's army had never before seen a battalion of tanks run by African Americans." Another news story about the reunion is available from [www.dcmilitary.com](http://www.dcmilitary.com) and again search on "761st". "The men of the 761st Tank Battalion held a memorial service and dinner Friday night at Fort Myer's Spates Hall. The World War II unit recalled old comrades who had passed away and the enemies they faced...."

## 56th Annual Reunion



**JUST BEFORE THE MEMORIAL SERVICE AT COL BATES' GRAVESITE**

**"56 YEARS AGO THE  
MEN IN THIS  
BATTALION WERE  
SHAKING UP THE  
EUROPEAN  
BATTLEFIELDS IN  
WORLD WAR II"**

### America Celebrates the Greatest Generation

Before and during the Association's 56th Annual Reunion, Washington, D.C., celebrated an array of more than 60 World War II themed exhibitions, performances and tours. Running from Memorial Day to Labor Day 2004, the 100-day celebration invited visitors to see the new World War II Memorial (the first national memorial dedicated to all who served during World War II) in the nation's capital and honor the contributions of the World War II generation. The celebration began with the American Battle Monuments Commission's official dedication events from May 27-30. Scheduled official events included the Dedication Ceremony on Saturday, May 29, a four-day National World War II Reunion on the National Mall, produced in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folk life and Cultural Heritage, and an entertainment salute to World War II Veterans.

The 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association celebrates and preserves the tremendous contributions African American soldiers played in securing our nation's liberty, including awarding education scholarships to deserving high school graduates, establishing a national monument at Fort Hood, Texas, and getting these untold chapters into America's history books.



**THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL LAYS BETWEEN THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL AND THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT. CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN SEPTEMBER 2001 AND OPENED TO THE PUBLIC ON APRIL 29, 2004. IT WAS DEDICATED SATURDAY MAY 29, 2004**



**THE NEWS STORY CAN STILL BE VIEWED VIA THE INTERNET AT [WWW.WUSATV9.COM](http://WWW.WUSATV9.COM). GO TO THE STATIONS WEBSITE AND SEARCH ON 761ST TO SEE THE VIDEO AND READ THE TEXT WRITTEN BY DEREK MCGINTY.**

## National Officers

Mr. Floyd Dade, Jr. — National President

Mr. Charles W. Womble — First Vice President

Mr. Kenneth C. Tait — Secretary

Mr. Gloucester Stephens — Treasurer

Reverend Clarence Copeland — Chaplain (recently deceased)

Mr. Wayne Robinson — Historian

Mr. William D. Smith — Webmaster

Mr. Rufus Taylor—Chairman, T.G. Hill Fund



**THE GRAVESITE OF LTCOL IVAN HARRISON, SR.**



## 57th Annual Reunion in “The Big Easy”

August 18th through August 21st the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association will be holding our 57th annual reunion at the Embassy Suites Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The Embassy Suites Hotel was selected because of its excellent location in New Orleans which will allow you to engage in many different activities with little or no travel. The hotel itself offers many amenities with the hope of getting you back next year—after all—there is too much to do and see in only three or four days.

Every morning you can expect to have a complementary cooked-to-order breakfast that includes specialty omelettes (try the crawfish omelette, it's their specialty), eggs cooked-to-order any style, fresh fruits, cereals, bacon, sausage,

French toast as well as fresh hot beignets (pronounced “ben-yay”). !!

The hotel is one block from the Louisiana Children's Museum, Two blocks from the Morial Convention Center, Mississippi River attractions, the River Walk shopping complex, casino gaming (Harrah's) and some of the city's most famous restaurants. The Aquarium of the Americas and IMAX Theatre are within four blocks; the D-Day Museum and French Quarter are five blocks away.

Hotel guests have access to the River Center Racquet Ball and Health Club just two blocks away and tee times for nearby golf can be arranged through the hotel concierge. there is also an outdoor heated lap pool, whirlpool, sundeck and fitness center with the latest in

workout equipment.

After a long day of meetings and/or recreation, join your friends any (or every) evening for a two hour complementary managerial reception with premium brand cocktails, wine, beer and snacks either in Madeleine's Bar overlooking the atrium or in the Lofts main lobby. Relax, renew old friendships and explore new ones.



THE EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL  
NEW ORLEANS ARTS AND WAREHOUSE  
DISTRICT

**The Embassy Suites Hotel New Orleans Arts and Warehouse District**

**315 Julia Street**

**New Orleans, La 70130**

**Toll free: 1-800-362-2779**

**Direct: 1-504-525-1993**

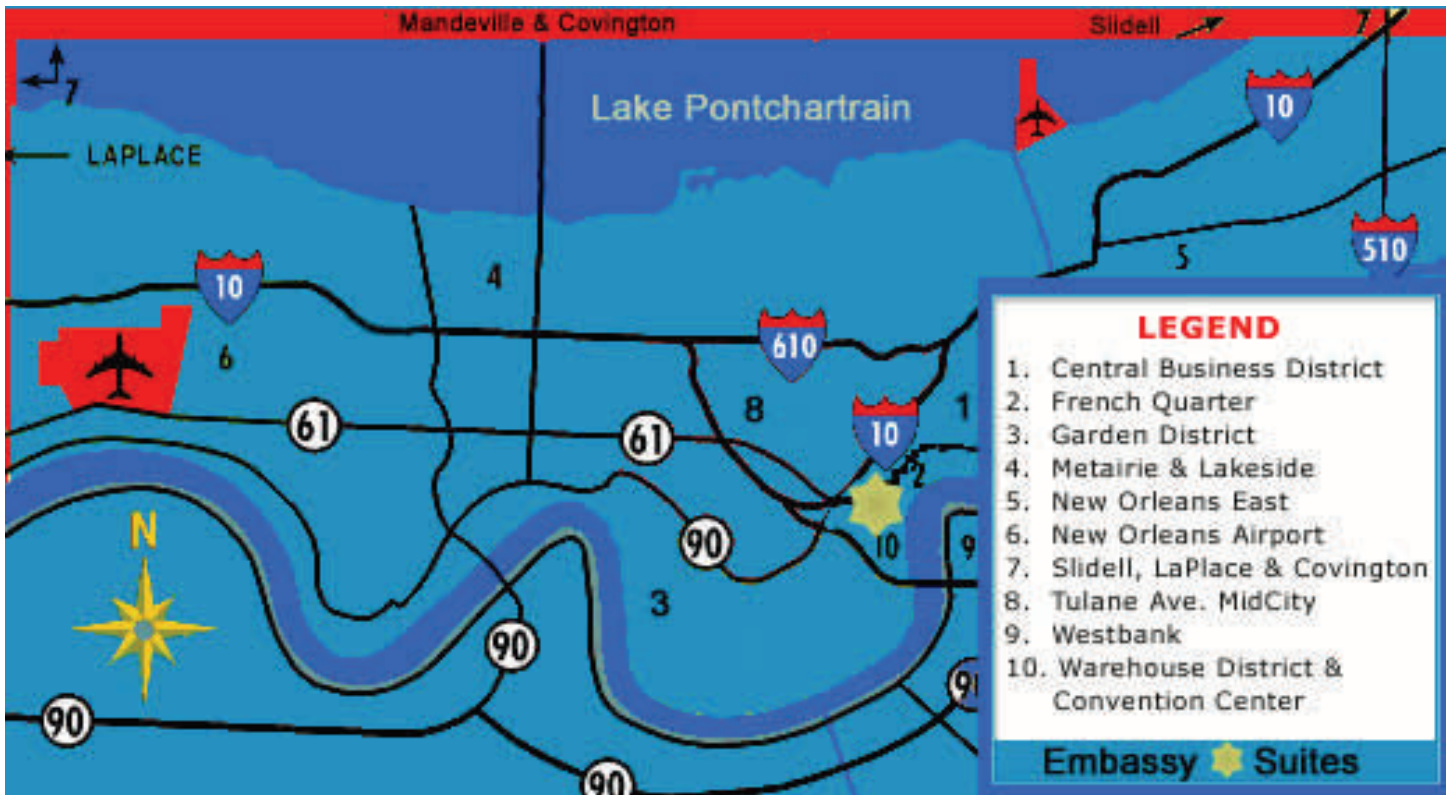
**Fax: 1-504-522-3044**

**RELAX, RENEW OLD**

**FRIENDSHIPS AND**

**EXPLORE NEW**

**ONES.**



## President's Corner – A Special Message

**“PUT FORTH ALL  
THE POSITIVE,  
SELFLESS ACTS  
THAT YOU CAN FOR  
THE BETTERMENT  
OF THE 761ST TANK  
BATTALION &  
ALLIED VETERANS  
ASSOCIATION”**

Greetings & Salutations to all Comrades, Family and Friends of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association:

I wish to thank everyone coming to this 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association in New Orleans, LA hosted by our New York Chapter and was chaired by Leonard Smith, before his passing, and his committee.

As we meet again and think back over the 60+ years when we landed on the shores of France and were assigned to front line duty, we will never forget our fallen comrades. We fought so hard in the Third Army of General George S. Patton, and the Seventh and Ninth Armies through six European countries for a continuous 183 days. We took part in four major campaigns and were

attached to the 71<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division during the liberation of one concentration camp in Austria. We were finally awarded The Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an armed enemy by President Jimmie Carter.



Since our Association was formed in 1948, we have been losing members each year, and especially now due to illness and age. Our association has progressed from meeting to share our stories to an association that has a successful scholarship program, is actively recruiting

new members, participating in news forums at schools, universities, churches, synagogues, newspapers and for historical videos.

Comrades, as we assemble again to transact business for the mutual benefit of our association, I would ask that we put aside any petty jealousies, do not trivialize any members contribution and put forth all the positive, selfless acts that you can for the betterment of the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association.

God Bless You All,

Floyd Dade

National President – 761<sup>st</sup>  
Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association

## One of Our Very Own

DEDICATION—that rare combination of perseverance, loyalty and commitment found in a select few individuals. This very amply describes the life of Rufus D. Taylor, who on May 12, 2005 was recognized with a “Pontiac Area Achievers Award” at the 18th Annual Achievers Award Luncheon hosted by the Boy Scouts of America Pontiac-Manito District and supported by a diverse group of local businesses and civic leaders. The award is based on service to our country and community, especially in working with youth.

As was stated in the Awards Luncheon program “Leading by example with a commitment to service both here and in the global community, reaching out to children and young adults of all

backgrounds and helping them succeed exemplifies What every adult should strive to do when presented the opportunity. Rufus Taylor has touched the lives of many children and young adults during his lifetime in the Pontiac area.

He takes great pride in veteran's affairs and vigorously participated in raising awareness of the leadership, exceptional service and contributions of Black Americans in defense of our nation. He served on the executive committee with the NAACP and Veterans Affairs bringing to our remembrance the contributions of his battalion and soldiers of color who served in the US Armed Forces. He is a past member of the Zoning Board of Appeals for the City of Pontiac (Michigan) and

is a current member of the Golden Opportunity Club,

Chaplain with the American Legion Post # 20 in Pontiac, Michigan. Rufus was educated in the Pontiac School District (including Webster School) and retired from Pontiac General Motors after 38 years. He and his family are members of Trinity Missionary Baptist Church. Rufus married Mattie Jean Scott in 1946 and they had five children.

As an original member of the 761st Tank Battalion, Mr. Taylor helped organize and charter the Pontiac Chapter of The 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Association over 56 years ago.

Rufus is still going strong and is a great example for all of us.



**RUFUS D. TAYLOR**



## Can You Identify These Photographs??

Every issue of the 761st Newsletter we hope to publish pictures sent in by you. They can be pictures of general interest with descriptions and names or as in this case we could be asking you if you can identify the time, place or people in the photographs. The safest way to send in pictures would be to **have them copied locally** and send the copy, thus retaining the original. The pictures will be scanned and sent back to you immediately. There are special mailers available that will protect the pictures and they should be marked "Photographs—do not Bend". Also if you want an electronic copy back with the original, let me know and I can send it back as both a JPEG and PDF file on a CD. Both of these may be viewed on almost any computer. You can contact:

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Ivan H. Harrison, Jr.

[ivanharrisonjr@hotmail.com](mailto:ivanharrisonjr@hotmail.com)

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Thanks to **Wayne Robinson, 761st Tank Battalion Historian** for the three photographs shown here.

Wayne wrote:

"One appears to show an 'A' Company tank on the move, 'A Pearl,' with the tank commander visible. It was common practice for letter tank companies to apply nicknames/graphics corresponding to company letter. The second photo shows the tank's bow gunner. The third photo shows a late-war or post war tanker performing first-echelon maintenance to the tracks and bogey wheels of a Pershing 90mm main gun tank. I say 'late war or post war' because tankers did not receive Pershings until April of 1945. Most went to the Third Armored Division. E.G. McConnell took additional photos of this 761st Pershing and crewmembers late in the war."



## MAIL CALL

"Greetings, I am writing for information with reference to tracking my family's possible movement at the end of WWII.

This is what I know: My father was born in southern Hungary in 1942. My grandparents fled in 1944, though I'm sure of the date. The next information I believe to be accurate is that a group of refugees (including my family) encountered the 761st upon exiting a forest. The family stories I heard suggested this was the first time they had seen a black face. I'd like to investigate when and where this may have happened. I'm hoping to be directed appropriately.

Kind thanks,  
Dan Freund"

*Please share this with as many tankers as you can who might be able to give this man some information about his refugee family. He might come to the reunion in New Orleans,*

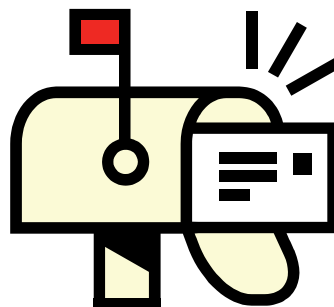
*Please let me know if there is any recollection, pictures or a story to go with this encounter.*

### 761 Brain Teasers

(For the Younger Readers)

1. The number 761 is a prime number. What is its relationship to 757 called?
2. What is the relationship between the two numbers 761 and 1523?
3. What is the significance of the number 761 in relation to the number known as  $\pi$ ? The value of  $\pi$  (pi) is 3.1415926535898..... and many more decimal positions.
4. At a temperature of 59°F at sea level the speed of sound is \_\_\_\_\_ mph.
5. Elvis Presley, when in the Army, was an armored scout car driver in Germany. The last three digits of his service number were \_\_\_\_\_.

The first to submit the correct answers will receive a special prize. The answers will appear in the next issue.





## **TAPS**

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

**REV CLARENCE COPELAND  
DIED MARCH 2005**

**FRANKLIN GARRIDO  
DIED APRIL 2005**

**LEON HOPTON  
DIED APRIL 2005**

**LYMON ALEXANDER  
DIED MAY 2005**

**LEONARD SMITH  
DIED MAY 2005**

**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

### New Directory

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  
E-mail: kctnt@aol.com

**We're on the Web!**  
**[www.761st.com](http://www.761st.com)**

The Latest directory created for the 761st Tank Battalion and Allied Veterans Organization was several years ago and a lot has changed since then. A new directory will be coming out soon along with a process to keep it more up to date so that it could be reprinted more frequently.

A list of names and addresses was included with the newsletter along with a form to inform us of corrections or changes. The envelope is for your convenience to return the filled in form.

If you know of any former 761st members or of their families please include their information also so that we may forward 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.

### Important VA Phone Numbers

#### For information on:

VA Benefits  
Health Benefits  
Education Benefits  
Life Insurance  
Debt Management  
Mammography Hotline  
Telecommunication Device  
for the Deaf (TDD)  
CHAMPVA  
Headstones and Markers  
Special Health Issues:  
Gulf War, Agent Orange,  
Project 112/Shad  
Health Eligibility Center  
2957 Clairmont Rd. #200 or  
Atlanta, GA 30329

#### Call:

1-800-827-1000  
1-877-222-8387  
1-888-442-4551  
1-800-669-8477  
1-800-827-0648  
1-888-492-7844  
  
1-800-829-4833  
1-800-733-8387  
1-800-697-6947  
  
1-800-749-8387  
1-404-235-1257  
  
1-800-929-8387

The VA Federal Benefits booklet and other information is available on VA's World Wide Web Home Page at: <http://www.va.gov/>

### Statement of Publication

This is the official publication of the 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association. It will be published periodically and the schedule has not yet been determined. All members and associates are encouraged to support the voice of the 761st and initially reader response will 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.

Emails may be submitted to:

Ivan H. Harrison, Jr.  
[ivanharrisonjr@hotmail.com](mailto:ivanharrisonjr@hotmail.com)