



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Honors The 761st Tank Battalion For Their Heroic Efforts During World War II

[WILLIAM J. LARKIN JR.](#) February 23, 2006

This week Senator Bill Larkin reports to residents that the New York State Senate has passed a resolution he authored to honor the 761st Tank Battalion, the "Black Panthers," for their heroic efforts during World War II.

"During the joyful celebration of Black History Month, it is especially fitting that we pay tribute to the first black armor unit to see combat," said Senator Larkin, a retired Lt Col in the U.S. Army. "These esteemed members of the United States Armed Forces served the country so faithfully when our Nation's freedom was at stake. "But at that time, their courageous deeds received so little notice in spite of their immense value in the successful defeat of Germany in WWII. We must recognize their incredible accomplishments and give them the highest commendation they so deserve."

For 183 days, the Black Panthers continually engaged in combat and defeated the best that Germany had, although they were usually outnumbered and faced superior weaponry. It was the 761st Tank Battalion who punched the hole in the Siegfried Line through which General Patton's tanks subsequently poured and raced across Germany.

The German breakthrough in the Ardennes Forest precipitated the famous action known to the world as the Battle of the Bulge. The 761st Tank Battalion was tasked with taking the

German stronghold in the town of Tillet. Every other American unit that was assigned to take the town had been beaten back. Tanks, artillery, and infantry inside the Ardennes Forest had assaulted Tillet and all had failed to take it. But after a week of steady fighting against entrenched SS troops, the Black Panthers took

Tillet and drove the Germans out in full retreat. These are but a few of their remarkable accomplishments during the war.

Senator Larkin said the 761st Tank Battalion had no headlines or movies to extol their tremendous exploits. "They spearheaded many of General Patton's attacks but were never represented in any films during the glamorous Hollywood days of WWII movie making. This is why it is so important now that we preserve their memory and all the tremendous sacrifices they made for our nation and for the benefit of all Americans."