

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

67 Years Later – A World War II Division’s Combat Action Is Finally Recognized

Bastogne, Belgium - December 8, 2011 – The combat actions of the U.S. 10th Armored Division in the defense of Bastogne during WWII’s Battle of the Bulge will soon be recognized with the placement and dedication of a plaque in the city where they boldly fought nearly 67 years ago. Regrettably, the actions of the 10th Armored during the battle have been largely neglected in history, while the 101st Airborne Division is often the lone unit credited for defending the town. The plaque will document and acknowledge Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division as the first major combat unit to arrive in Bastogne and to defend the town during the initial hours of the battle.

Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division was rushed north to the city of Bastogne early in the battle, arriving in Bastogne the evening of December 18th, 1944. CCB positioned their defensive teams at three strategic villages to the east of Bastogne – Noville to the northeast, Longvilly to the east and Wardin to the southeast. Their total force consisted of about 2,800 officers and men and 75 tanks. The German force bearing down on Bastogne was comprised of approximately 300 tanks and 50,000 men. After delaying the initial German advance, the remnants of the three 10th Armored teams joined the U.S. 101st Airborne Division for the remainder of the siege. In recognition of their gallant actions, Combat Command B was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

General Anthony McAuliffe, who commanded the 101st Airborne and attached units in Bastogne during the battle, is famed for his reply to the Germans of, “Nuts!”, when they demanded that the surrounded U.S. troops surrender the city. Some twenty years after the battle, General McAuliffe praised the men of the 10th Armored “Tiger” Division saying, "It’s always seemed regrettable to me, that Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division didn’t get the credit it deserved in the battle of Bastogne. All of the newspaper and radio talk was about the paratroopers. Actually, the 10th Armored Division was in there a day before we were and had some very hard fighting before we ever got into it, and I sincerely believe that we would never have been able to get into Bastogne if it had not been for the defensive fighting of the three elements of the 10th Armored Division who were first into Bastogne and protected the town from invasion by the Germans.”

The 10th Armored Division plaque will be placed along the road to the Mardasson Memorial northeast of Bastogne on Saturday December 10th at 1:15 p.m. during the Nuts Festival that is celebrated in Bastogne every year.

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See www.10tharmored.com/bastogne for photos/videos

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