

**Statement Announcing the Awarding of the Presidential Unit Citation to the United States Army's 30th Infantry Division**

*March 17, 2020*

At my direction, the United States Army will award the Presidential Unit Citation to the 30th Infantry Division. More than 75 years ago, soldiers of the 30th Infantry Division slept in their foxholes after hastily taking defensive positions around the small town of Mortain, France. They woke to find themselves under attack by an entire German Panzer Corps. Through this assault, Adolf Hitler gambled to keep American forces from breaking out of the Normandy beachhead and into the open countryside. The Nazi plan required the Panzer forces to cut through the 30th Infantry Division en route to the sea. However, the actions of the 30th Infantry Division would prove to be decisive in blunting this attack.

Nicknamed the "Old Hickory Division" because its soldiers hailed from National Guard units from North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia—all States closely associated with President Andrew Jackson—the 30th Division soldiers proved as tough as their unit's namesake. The situation they faced on August 6, 1944, was dire. They found themselves confronted by overwhelming enemy armor, and the German Panzers broke through their lines. The Old Hickory Division, however, did not stop fighting. It pressed its cooks, clerks, and drivers into service as riflemen. The division's artillery protected its encircled and isolated elements with a constant barrage of fire. At daybreak, American and British close air support arrived to help. By the afternoon of August 7, the German attack stalled, and the division quickly counterattacked to relieve its trapped elements through another 5 days of fierce fighting. More than 2,000 Old Hickory soldiers were killed or wounded during the weeklong battle, but their efforts and sacrifice would have a profound impact on the course of history.

After the war, eight units within the 30th Infantry Division were recognized with the Presidential Unit Citation. Today I am proud to direct the Army to honor the remainder of the division and attached units with the Presidential Unit Citation for their heroic stand at Mortain. This action rightfully recognizes our veterans who triumphed against incredible odds, as well as those who died, during a critical battle that helped ensure the Allied victory in Europe.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : U.S. Army 30th Infantry Division, Presidential Unit Citation.

*Subjects:* Army, Department of the: 30th Infantry Division, Presidential Unit Citation; Decorations, medals, and awards : Presidential Unit Citation; Veterans : Service and dedication.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202000168.