

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW – GHOST ARMY: THE COMBAT CON ARTISTS OF WORLD WAR II

Inflatable dummy tanks made only of fabric, fake radio transmissions, and trucks fitted with speakers to blast the recorded sounds of a division on the move—all of these came together to create a unique Army unit, one fashioned to deceive.

The 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, more commonly known as the Ghost Army, played a significant role in saving the lives of Allied servicemembers following the landing at Normandy in June 1944. In essence, a theater troupe on the move, the Ghost Army had one mission: produce the illusion of Allied troop movement in every place where the Allies were not. The 23rd was comprised of artists, fashion designers, illustrators, and sound engineers, among other creative deceivers. This 1,100-man unit would create the illusion of war, and they did so with such success that it helped to secure the victory of the Allied powers in Europe.

Intro Panel

Deception, the act of misleading enemy forces, has been used for centuries to gain advantage in combat. During World War II, the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, known as the "The Ghost Army," elevated battlefield deception to an art form. A top-secret unit that included future celebrities such as Bill Blass, Ellsworth Kelly, and Art Kane, they waged war with inflatable tanks and vehicles, fake radio traffic, sound effects, and even phony generals. This carefully selected group of artists, engineers, professional soldiers, and draftees, armed with nothing heavier than .50 caliber machine guns, fooled Hitler's armies, saved thousands of lives, and played an important part in Allied victory in World War II.

Wartime Deception

American deception planners during World War II were inspired by British operations in North Africa. British General Dudley Clarke, assisted by magician Jasper Maskelyne, led deception unit "A-Force," which helped convert British weakness into strength. Their crowning achievement was "Operation Bertram." Using tanks disguised as trucks, and trucks disguised as tanks, Bertram left the Germans unprepared for General Bernard Montgomery's attack, and helped ensure a British victory in The Second

Battle of El Alamein in October 1942. British deception successes inspired the United States to get into the deception game.

Captain Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

American movie star Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. enlisted in the US Navy in April 1941 to work in Naval Intelligence. He eventually served in British Lord Louis Mountbatten's Combined Operations command. While in Combined Operations, Fairbanks observed the latest British deception techniques and became an advocate for American deception units. Back in the United States, he wrote a memo pitching the development of a deception organization. This memo helped pave the way for the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops.

Formation of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops

Activated on January 20, 1944, the 23rd was the first mobile, multimedia, tactical deception unit in US Army history. It was the brainchild of Colonel Billy Harris and Major Ralph Ingersoll, both American military planners in London. The unit had an authorized strength of 82 officers and 1,023 men under the command of Colonel Harry L. Reeder. An old-school infantryman irked by his new assignment, Reeder nevertheless began assembling men and equipment. Many West Point graduates and former Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) participants were assigned to the 23rd. It was said to have one of the highest unit IQ's in the army with an average of 119.

Major Ralph Ingersoll

Before the war, Ralph Ingersoll was a celebrity journalist and bestselling author. He was managing editor of the New Yorker, publisher of Fortune, and founder of an innovative New York newspaper called PM. A genuinely creative thinker, he was a controversial figure with a reputation as an egotist and a liar. He referred to the 23rd as "my con-artists" and called the unit's creation his only original contribution to the war effort.

Lt. Col. Clifford G. Simenson

West Point graduate Clifford G. Simenson was a young, highly regarded US Army officer. Expecting a combat command, he was surprised and disappointed to be assigned to the 23rd. Despite his misgivings, he threw himself into organizing the unit structure and training regime. He was instrumental in the development of American deception during the war. Simenson became the 23rd's operations officer and was integral to the success of the Ghost Army.

UNITS OF THE 23RD HEADQUARTERS SPECIAL TROOPS

1. **The Signal Company Special**

Formerly the 244th Signal Company, these 296 officers and men carried out radio deception dubbed "Spoof Radio." Commanded by Captain Irwin C. Vanderheide, they created fake radio traffic nets, impersonating operators from real units by learning to mimic their telegraphic "fist" or sending style. The Germans relied heavily on radio intercepts to track Allied units, and radio played a starring role in almost every deception. The Signal Company Special had high standards, with 40% of the unit being replaced before shipping out.

2. **The 406th Engineer Combat Company Special**

The 168 men of the 406th Engineer Combat Company Special provided security for the 23rd. Led by West Point graduate Captain George Rebh, these soldiers defended perimeters, constructed tank and artillery positions for inflatables, and also used bulldozers to simulate tank tracks leading away from the fake vehicles. While never having anything heavier than .50 caliber machine guns, the 406th was the only real defense for the Ghost Army.

3. **The 3132nd Signal Service Company Special**

The 3132nd Signal Service Company Special trained in early 1944 at the Army Experimental Station (AES) at Pine Camp, now Ft. Drum, New York. Playing sound effects from 500-pound speakers mounted on halftracks, this unit simulated sounds of men and tanks moving into position from up to 6,000 yards away. The 3132nd traveled with a library of sound recordings prerecorded at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. The equipment was so specialized that the halftracks were rigged with explosives to destroy them, rather than be captured.

4. **The 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special**

The largest group in the 23rd, the 379 men trained as "camoufleurs" set up the unit's array of inflatable tanks, trucks, planes, and artillery to fool the prying eyes of German spies. They also created phony road signs and shoulder patches for deception purposes. The 603rd had spent the previous two years perfecting the art of camouflage. Many were artists specially recruited from prestigious schools such as Pratt Institute and Cooper Union in New York City.

Training of "The Ghost Army"

The United States Army had never had a unit like the 23rd. There were no manuals, no training routines, and no guidelines to follow. Officers and men concocted their own ways to deceive the enemy. At first, the men creating visual deceptions had no dummies to train with, so they created their own. Three of the four units of the 23rd trained at Camp Forrest, Tennessee. A fourth, the 3132nd Signal Service Company, perfected their skills at Pine Camp, New York. Training had to be speedy: they had less than five months to be ready for action in Europe.

Col. Hilton Howell Railey & Pine Camp

The US Army's sonic deception program was created from scratch by Colonel Hilton Howell Railey. A New Orleans native, Railey had been a war correspondent, an investigative reporter, and the PR man who recruited Amelia Earhart to fly across the Atlantic. He was also a confidant of President Franklin Roosevelt. Railey established the Army Experimental Station (AES) at Pine Camp, New York, and trained two sonic units: the 3132nd and the 3133rd. He was awarded a Legion of Merit after the war for his "outstanding leadership in the development of a project entirely new to the United States Army."

Lt. Dick Syracuse and Sonic Deception

New York native Dick Syracuse began the war commanding an all-black chemical warfare company in the South. However, Syracuse clashed with racist white officers when he demanded equal treatment for his men and soon found himself transferred to the 3132nd. Here he trained in using recorded sound to simulate bridge building, tank movements, and other activities to fool the Germans that a major build

up was underway. Everything, such as weather, terrain, and distance had to be considered for a successful deception. Sonic deception became one of the Ghost Army's most successful weapons by the end of the war.

Shipping Out

After three months of intense training, the 23rd left Camp Forrest for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, to prepare for embarkation. The unit, except for the 3132nd, shipped out on the USNS Henry Gibbons from New York City bound for Bristol, England, in one of the largest convoys of the war. After a 13-day voyage, they arrived on May 15, 1944, and were based near Strafford-upon-Avon. They took over Walton Hall or as it came to be known, "Mouldy Manor" as a headquarters. Officers occupied Walton Hall and the men set up in tents outside.

Theresa Ricard

During World War II, women played a pivotal role in the American production effort to become the world's "Arsenal of Democracy." The 23rd urgently need its rubber inflatables and 16-year-old high school student Teresa Ricard rose to the challenge. Teresa answered a newspaper advertisement by US Rubber in Woonsocket, Rhode Island asking for workers and was soon working on the 93-pound inflatable tanks for .49 cents an hour after school. At the peak of the American industrial war effort, women, like Theresa, accounted for 36% of the workforce and made victory possible.

23rd's Contribution to Operation Fortitude

Once in England, members of the 23rd ramped up their training using newly arrived inflatables and radios. The 23rd's appearance also allowed it to take part, although in a small way, in Operation Fortitude. Fortitude was the Allied deception plan to make the Germans believe the D-Day assault landings would be in Norway or at Pas-de-Calais in France, not Normandy. From May 29 to June 3, 1944, the unit held three field exercises codenamed Cabbage, Cheese, and Spam. The exercises were the first time the 23rd deployed their inflatables in a large scale deception and could help explain why the belief persists of widespread inflatable use in Fortitude. These maneuvers offered valuable experience in the art of impersonation and may have simultaneously served to enhance Fortitude.

Into Normandy

Lt. Bernie Mason was drinking at an English pub on June 13, 1944, when he received orders to report back to base on the double. While the majority of the 23rd remained in England, a handful of men under Mason flew into Normandy the following day. Task Force Mason's mission was to set up inflatable artillery emplacements and flash containers simulating the position of the 980th Field Artillery. The succesful operation resulted in the Germans shelling dummy gun positions instead of the real ones. While Mason and his men were in action alone for 28 days, the rest of the 23rd moved into France in two groups codenamed Elephant and Residue beginning June 24, 1944.

Operation Elephant: The First Deception

The 23rd was still assembling in Normandy when it received orders to carry out its first major operation. Starting on July 1, 1944, the unit would take over the 2nd Armored Division positions in the Cerisy Forest. Using radio transmissions and inflatables, the 23rd worked to convince the Germans that the real 2nd Armored was remaining in reserve when it was actually moving to the front. This operation

identified many problems requiring correction. Camouflage was set up too perfectly. It needed mistakes allowing the Germans to see through it. Also, poor security allowed French civilians to wander into the deception area, threatening the whole operation. However, it was from the failures of Elephant that the 23rd figured out the final piece of deception: Special Effects.

Fred Fox and Special Effects

Lt. Fred Fox was a Princeton grad with a background in theater and had dreams of making it big in Hollywood. Fox became pivotal to the development of the 23rd when he composed a memo on July 11, 1944, after the failures of Elephant. Fox suggested that the 23rd needed to incorporate more showmanship into its deceptions. This spurred the development of what the men called "atmosphere" or "Special Effects." Special effects consisted of fake unit patches and markings on vehicles, phony headquarters, and even impersonations of generals. Special effects proved highly effective and became an important part of all subsequent operations.

Operation Brittany, August 12, 1944 and Operation Brest, August 20-17, 1944

In August the 23rd conducted two operations in quick succession: Brittany and Brest. Brittany was designed to convince the Germans that the 35th, 80th, and 90th Infantry Divisions along with the 2nd Armored were heading west when actually all were charging east as part of Patton's breakout across France. The 23rd divided into four columns and headed into the Brittany Peninsula. They transmitted messages as if they were the real units, and employed their newly developed Special Effects. The operation is believed to have slowed the withdrawal of the German Seventh Army long enough to contribute to its destruction in the Falaise Pocket.

The sonic deception unit, the 3132nd, arrived in time for Operation Brest, the first to use all of the 23rd's resources at once: inflatables, signal, sonic, and special effects. American forces were attacking the French port of Brest, and elements of the deception were carried out within 400 yards of the front lines. The deceivers aimed to bluff the Germans into thinking they faced massive Allied forces and surrendering. Unfortunately, Allied intelligence grossly underestimated German troop numbers and the Allies ran into stronger than expected resistance.

Another goal of Brest was to lure German anti-tank guns away from the 8th Infantry Division so that the division could attack. The 23rd accomplished this, but Company D of the 709th Tank Destroyer Battalion attacked from the very point where the 23rd had drawn German firepower and took heavy losses against German defenses. Brest taught US Army commanders that failure to realize the power of deception could have devastating results.

Operation Bettembourg, September 15-22, 1944

The German retreat across France was so swift that many 23rd operations were cancelled as quickly as they were planned. Resistance stiffened, however, as they approached Germany. Operation Bettembourg took place along the Luxembourg/German border. Impersonating the 6th Armored Division, the 23rd held a perilous 70-mile gap in General Patton's Third Army line for an entire week. Sonic and Special Effects were especially important because the front line was so close. As the days passed, the chances of detection increased. If the Germans caught on, a counterattack would have been devastating. However, the Ghost Army succeeded and fooled the enemy until relieved by the 83rd Infantry Division.

General George Rebh

Captain George Rebh, another West Point graduate, commanded the 406th Combat Engineer Company, Special, and was responsible for the security of the 23rd. During deceptions, soldiers from the 406th often played the part of MPs (military police) at crossroad checkpoints and dummy headquarters. He portrayed a full colonel during one deception, and visiting West Point acquaintances were puzzled at how Rebh had been promoted so quickly. "Right place at the right time" his sergeant told them with a straight face. Rebh stayed in the US Army, became a Rhodes Scholar, and retired as a Major General.

Life in Luxembourg and The Battle of the Bulge

Between October and December 1944, the 23rd staged five deceptions from Luxembourg City. In quiet moments, artists in the unit sketched and painted. The men even put on a talent show called the "Blarney Breakdown." During Operation Koblenz (December 6-15, 1944) the unit impersonated the 75th Infantry Division to reinforce a thinly held section of the front in the Ardennes forest. Unfortunately, this was exactly where the Germans attacked during The Battle of the Bulge. As the 23rd's unit history put it, "While the 23rd thought it was waving a red flag at a sucking calf, a Nazi bull was preparing to charge." Most of the unit retreated to Verdun, while radio operators conducted Operation Kodak (December 22-23, 1944) to assist General Patton's advance to relieve Bastogne.

War Turns Deadly

It was the coldest winter in forty years, yet the Ghost Army conducted six deceptions in January 1945 to help turn the tide of Hitler's last gamble on the Western Front. These missions came with a cost, however. Chester "Chet" Pelliccioni was killed by a German grenade hidden in the snow on January 7, 1945, becoming the first 23rd soldier lost in action. Operation Bouzonville (March 11-13, 1945) turned into their deadliest undertaking of the war. The unit was impersonating the 80th Infantry Division near Bouzonville, France while the real 80th headed north. All went according to plan until German artillery barrages killed two men, Sergeant George Peddle and Captain Thomas Wells, and wounded 15 others. The carnage of war had finally caught up with the 23rd.

Operation Viersen, March 18-March 24, 1945

The largest and most successful Ghost Army deception was Operation Viersen. The 23rd portrayed the 30th and 79th Infantry Divisions preparing to cross the Rhine River, while the actual units crossed further north. The men used all available deception tools:

- 600 inflatable tanks, artillery and planes
- Fake unit patches and markings
- Sounds of vehicles moving into position and pontoon bridges being built
- Fake radio traffic
- Phony divisional and battalion headquarters

Their efforts were so effective a real American reconnaissance plane landed on a dummy airfield. The Germans shelled the 23rd's positions and even flew reconnaissance flights over them. This time, the only casualties were inflatables punctured by shrapnel and the dummies were quickly fixed before daybreak. When the Rhine crossings occurred on March 24, 1945, against almost no opposition, it was clear the 23rd's final performance was an impressive triumph.

The 3133rd Signal Service Company

In the final days of the war, another tactical deception unit went into action in Italy. The 3133rd Signal Service Company was activated June 21, 1944, at the Army Experimental Station at Pine Camp, New York. Formed around a cadre of men from the 3132nd and officers at the camp, the 3133rd consisted of 10 officers and 192 men. Drawing from battlefield experiences of the 23rd, the 3133rd standardized equipment and increased the size of its security force. The 3133rd also placed its speakers inside M-10 Tank Destroyers nicknamed "slugs." To make room for their electronics, the M-10s had their guns replaced with fake ones.

On March 1, 1945, the 3133rd sailed for Naples aboard the USS General Brooke and arrived after 14 days. It joined in the Allied assault on the Gothic Line, Germany's last line of defense in Italy. A sonic deception carried out April 4-5, 1945, suggested to the Germans that an armored buildup was occurring near the town of Massa. After shifting east, the 3133rd ran a second deception on April 14-15, 1945, near Bologna. A third deception was canceled after German resistance collapsed. The 3133rd was in combat for only 19 days. After fighting ceased, the men of the 3133rd were deployed where needed, some to the Yugoslavian border and Greece in 1946, before the unit disbanded.

End of the Show

At war's end, the 23rd deployed to Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Germany to keep order among thousands of starving Russians, Poles, Italians and others brought there during the war. Troops struggled to keep the different nationalities from killing one another over ideologies or something as simple as food. The 23rd relinquished control of its DP camps by the end of April 1945. From Rouen, France, they went to Camp Twenty-Grand to get ready for transport home. On June 23, 1945, the 23rd moved through Le Havre, boarded the USS General O.H. Ernst and sailed for Newport News, Virginia, arriving on July 2, 1945. The unit was preparing to head to the Pacific, but the war ended before they could. Men were discharged and the unit disbanded on September 15, 1945.

Overdue Recognition: The Congressional Gold Medal

"It's amazing, the fakery that we perpetrated upon the enemy." –Private Irving Stempel, 603rd Camouflage Engineers

Once the war was over, many soldiers were sworn to secrecy. Records were classified and equipment packed away. Except for a newspaper article right after the war, no one spoke publicly about the deceivers until a 1985 Smithsonian article. Though knowledge of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops was then public, it was still officially classified until the mid-1990s.

Long-delayed recognition has finally come for the 1,100 soldiers who served in the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, and 200 more in the 3133rd Signal Service Company. On February 1, 2022, President Joseph Biden signed into law legislation awarding the unit a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow, for their "proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers."

Who's who of "The Ghost Army"

Bill Blass: Blass became a superstar fashion designer. His name grew into a household word, eventually appearing on everything from cars to boxes of chocolate. In 1967, fellow veteran Jack Masey prevailed

upon him to design uniforms for the United States Pavilion guides at the Expo 67 World's Fair in Montreal. Blass died in 2002 at age 79.

Art Kane: A visionary fashion and music photographer, Kane took the famous portrait of 57 jazz musicians on a stoop in Harlem titled Harlem 1958. It remains a jazz icon. During the 1960s Kane took many arresting portraits of recording artists, including The Rolling Stones, The Doors, Bob Dylan, and Janis Joplin. He died in 1995 at age 69.

Ellsworth Kelly: Kelly became one of the foremost American artists of the twentieth century. His minimalist work earned an international reputation, and his shaped canvases, paintings, sculptures, and prints have been exhibited around the world. In 2013, President Barack Obama awarded Kelly the National Medal of Arts. He died in 2015 at the age of 92.

Jack Masey: Jack Masey designed exhibitions around the world for the United States Information Agency. He was the director of design for the famous 1959 American National Exhibition in Moscow, and chief designer of American Pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal. Later his company designed the initial exhibits at the National World War II Museum. Masey died in 2016 at age 91.

Arthur Shilstone: Shilstone's illustrations have appeared in more than thirty magazines and graced the covers of dozens of books. He was also an official NASA artist. He continues to paint in his studio in West Redding, Connecticut.

Belisario Contreras: Originally from Chile, Contreras spent twenty years working as an artist for the US State Department. He received a PhD in history from American University in 1967 and wrote the book Tradition and Innovation in New Deal Art (1983). His paintings were displayed in numerous exhibitions. He died in 1990 at age seventy-three.

Arthur Singer: Arthur Singer became one of America's best-known wildlife artists. He illustrated more than twenty books, including the enormously popular Birds of North America. In 1982, he and his son Alan Singer created the "Birds and Flowers of the Fifty States" postage stamps, one of the largest selling special issues in Postal Service history. He died in 1990 at age 72.

Irving Mayer: Mayer helped design the Davy Crockett tactical nuclear weapon. A two-man gun, it was one of the smallest nuclear weapons systems ever built. He also worked on one of the largest: "Atomic Annie," an 84 ton atomic cannon. Mayer was posthumously honored by President John F. Kennedy for "contribution to the defense of the United States." He died in 1959 at age 35.

David Slepian: After receiving a PhD from Harvard, Slepian worked as a mathematician at Bell Labs, where he did pioneering work on algebraic coding theory, used in advanced cryptography. In 1981, he was awarded the Alexander Graham Bell Medal, the highest honor of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic engineers (IEEE). He died in 2007 at age 83.

Eddie Haas: Hass became a prolific TV writer in Hollywood. He is credited as co-creator of The Munsters, and also wrote many of the episodes. In addition, he wrote for Get Smart, The Dick Van Dyke Show, and The Jerry Lewis Show among many others.

Illinois Stories

Seventy Ghost Army soldiers claim a connection with Illinois. Here are four of their stories:

BERNIE BLUESTEIN served in the 603rd, and came to Chicago after the war to work as an industrial designer for leading electronics companies such as Zenith and Sunbeam. Upon retirement, he started studying sculpture at Harper College in Palatine, and never left. Turning 99 on August 13, 2022, Bernie is in his 32nd year as an "emeritus student" at Harper, continuing to create sculptures based on pins and needles. He lives in Schaumburg.

ROBERT HILLER was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and served in the 3132nd. After the war, he settled in Chicago where he had met his wife Shirley Roberts while stationed for training at Ft. Sheridan. Hiller spent his career in the audio-visual business, using some of the same media tools employed by the 23rd, for peacetime purposes of education and commerce.

HAROLD FLINN was born in Chicago, and served in the 3132nd Signal Service Company, the sonic deception arm of the 23rd. After returning from the war, he worked for Bell Labs in Chicago for several years, before taking over his wife's family farm in Maquon, Illinois. Harold Flinn died in 2020.

TONY YOUNG was one of the artists who served in the 603rd Camouflage Engineers, the visual deception army of the Ghost Army, creating many wartime paintings. After the war he returned to his pre-war employer, People's Gas, and stayed his entire career, ultimately rising to advertising manager. He died in 2009.

From the Holocaust to Ghost Army

HELMUT ISENBERG was born in Saarbrücken, Germany. He and his family were Jews who escaped the Nazis in 1935 when he was 16. As an Eagle Scout, Helmut had been lucky enough to meet and befriend Prince Emanuel of Liechtenstein, who was also active in scouting. When Helmut's family escaped Germany, the prince got them admitted into Liechtenstein.

Still a teenager, Helmut found work as a newspaper photographer in Paris, then emigrated with his family to the U.S. in 1938. Helmut and both of his brothers served in the U.S. Army, Helmut ending up in the 603rd Camouflage Engineers, the visual deception arm of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops.

After the war, Helmut traveled around the world selling Papermate pens, and then launched a series of other businesses. He moved to Paris, where he became Commander of the Paris American Legion Post and met many world leaders including German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and American President Richard Nixon.

In 1990, he moved back to Germany, where he died in 1992. He is buried at the Jewish Cemetery at the Nordfriedhof in Wiesbaden. Two other soldiers who served in the 23rd Paul Seckel and Henry Rothschild, were also German Jews who fled the Holocaust.



GHOST ARMY: THE COMBAT CON ARTISTS OF WORLD WAR II DOCENT GUIDE

FIELD TRIPS: 20 MINUTE TOUR (In Our Voices or Be an Upstander field trip segment)

OVERVIEW

Inflatable dummy tanks made only of fabric, fake radio transmissions, and trucks fitted with speakers to blast the recorded sounds of a division on the move—all of these came together to create a unique Army unit, one fashioned to deceive.

The 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, more commonly known as the Ghost Army, played a significant role in saving the lives of Allied servicemembers following the landing at Normandy in June 1944. In essence, a theater troupe on the move, the Ghost Army had one mission: produce the illusion of Allied troop movement in every place where the Allies were not. The 23rd was comprised of artists, fashion designers, illustrators, and sound engineers, among other creative deceivers. This 1,100-man unit would create the illusion of war, and they did so with such success that it helped to secure the victory of the Allied powers in Europe.

GOALS AND THEMES

The purpose of this tour is to engage visitors with the story of the Ghost Army and their role in Allied victory through testimony and featured artifacts. Visitors will explore how the creativity, innovation, and collaboration of the 23rd's more than 1,100 men deceived, sketched, and painted across Europe, coming together with diverse skills and talents for the greater good in the fight against Nazi tyranny.

TOUR FRAMEWORK

Introduction	3 minutes
Section 1	7 minutes
Section 2	7 minutes
Conclusion	3 minutes

CONNECTION TO KARKOMI HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION

The end of the war in Europe and the victory of the Allied forces was due to many factors, one of which was the work of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, also known as the Ghost Army. The members of the Ghost Army relied on creativity and imagination and largely consisted of those the Nazi regime would have targeted: creative, rule-breaking, strongly individualistic artists and designers, among others. There were members of Ghost Army who were LGBTQ, including Bill Blass and Ellsworth Kelly, and a significant number of Jewish soldiers in the unit, including some who were German Jews who fled the Holocaust, such as Helmut Isenberg. There is also a direct connect to DP camps, as the Ghost Army was deployed to DP camps to keep order after the end of the war.

INTRODUCTION (3 minutes)

Q: Tell me what you know about D-Day.
Q: Why was D-Day successful?

Build off their answers to explain the importance of D-Day and the how its success depended on effective deception. Transition to the Ghost Army by mentioning their arrival in Normandy on June 14 and June 24, 1944.

Introduce the key message:
This exhibition tells the history of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, or "Ghost Army," through key artifacts, individuals, and operations. We will explore how creativity, innovation, and collaboration helped saved thousands of lives and win the war in Europe, and consider how we can use creativity to create change today.

What their experience will be like:
We will experience the story of the Ghost Army through photographs, artwork, inflatables, uniforms, and other original artifacts, in addition to videos and interactives. You will be given time during the tour to explore some of the exhibition on your own.

Transition: Ask students if they were to deceive the German army into believing a small unit of around 1,100 people was 30 times its actual size, what tactics would they use? What forms of deception would be necessary?

SECTION 1 (7 minutes)

Set Up/Context: The Ghost Army was divided into 4 units: Signal Company Special, 406th Engineer Combat Company Special, 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special, and 3132rd Signal Service Company Special [see exhibition overview for detailed explanations of each unit].

Q: When considering the camouflage unit, what types of things do you think the unit might have used in its deception?

Q: Why would the Ghost Army devote an entire unit to audio recordings?

Gallery Assignment – allow students to choose (or assign) one of the following prompts and allow them to explore this section of the exhibition on their own, then report back to the rest of the group.

Prompt 1: Look for artifacts in the exhibition that tell the story of the 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special. How did camouflage, and more specifically the artifact you found, play a role in the success of the Ghost Army's operations?

Prompt 2: Look for artifacts in the exhibition that tell the story of the 3132rd Signal Service Company Special (Recordings). How did audio recordings, and more specifically the artifact you found, play a role in the success of the Ghost Army's operations?

SECTION 2 (7 minutes)

Set Up/Context: The Ghost Army was divided into 4 units: Signal Company Special, 406th Engineer Combat Company Special, 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special, and 3132rd Signal Service Company Special [see exhibition overview for detailed explanations of each unit]. This section also tells the story of many who served in the Ghost Army.

Q: The Signal Company Special carried out what they called "spoof radio." How do you think radio played a role in deception?

Q: What specialized skills or talents might have led to Ghost Army soldiers being recruited for the unit?

Gallery Assignment – allow students to choose (or assign) one of the following prompts and allow them to explore this section of the exhibition on their own, then report back to the rest of the group.

Prompt 1: Look for artifacts in the exhibition that tell the story of the Signal Company Special or "spoof radio." How did radio, and more specifically the artifact you found, play a role in the success of the Ghost Army's operations?

Prompt 2: Find the story of one individual who served in the Ghost Army and consider: What was their role/experience? Why were they selected for the Ghost Army? If applicable, what did they go on to do after the war ended?

*Note that this section includes panels with bios on the more famous members of the Ghost Army, those with local connections, and those with Holocaust connections to the Ghost Army. It also includes video testimony of Ghost Army veterans.

CONCLUSION (3 minutes)

Long-delayed recognition has finally come for the 1,100 soldiers who served in the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, and 200 more in the 3133rd Signal Service Company. On February 1, 2022, President Joseph Biden signed into law legislation awarding the unit a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow, for their "proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers." Make sure to point out that the Gold Medal was awarded in large part due to the advocacy of a 14-year-old student from Iowa, Caleb Sinnwell [see article in supplemental material].

Q: What is something you're passionate about fighting for? What are some creative ways that you could use your voice and talents to create change?



GHOST ARMY: THE COMBAT CON ARTISTS OF WORLD WAR II DOCENT GUIDE

DEDICATED FIELD TRIP: Ghost Army (40 minutes, plus 5 minutes transition time to Karkomi) & Karkomi: Liberation, Skokie, & Closing Film (45 minutes)

OVERVIEW

Inflatable dummy tanks made only of fabric, fake radio transmissions, and trucks fitted with speakers to blast the recorded sounds of a division on the move—all of these came together to create a unique Army unit, one fashioned to deceive.

The 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, more commonly known as the Ghost Army, played a significant role in saving the lives of Allied servicemembers following the landing at Normandy in June 1944. In essence, a theater troupe on the move, the Ghost Army had one mission: produce the illusion of Allied troop movement in every place where the Allies were not. The 23rd was comprised of artists, fashion designers, illustrators, and sound engineers, among other creative deceivers. This 1,100-man unit would create the illusion of war, and they did so with such success that it helped to secure the victory of the Allied powers in Europe.

GOALS AND THEMES

The purpose of this tour is to engage visitors with the story of the Ghost Army and their role in Allied victory through testimony and featured artifacts. Visitors will explore how the creativity, innovation, and collaboration of the 23rd's more than 1,100 men deceived, sketched, and painted across Europe, coming together with diverse skills and talents for the greater good in the fight against Nazi tyranny.

TOUR FRAMEWORK

	Field Trips
Introduction	5 minutes
Section 1	(15 minutes total)
Give Task	2 minutes
Exploration 1	3 minutes
Discussion	4 minutes
Exploration 2	3 minutes
Discussion	3 minutes
Section 2	(15 minutes total)
Give Task	2 minutes
Exploration 1	3 minutes
Discussion	4 minutes
Exploration 2	3 minutes
Discussion	3 minutes
Conclusion	5 minutes
Travel Time to Karkomi	5 minutes
Liberation	14 minutes
Skokie	13 minutes
Closing Film	18 minutes

CONNECTION TO KARKOMI HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION

The end of the war in Europe and the victory of the Allied forces was due to many factors, one of which was the work of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, also known as the Ghost Army. The members of the Ghost Army relied on creativity and imagination and largely consisted of those the Nazi regime would have targeted: creative, rule-breaking, strongly individualistic artists and designers, among others. There were members of Ghost Army who were LGBTQ, including Bill Blass and Ellsworth Kelly, and a significant number of Jewish soldiers in the unit, including some who were German Jews who fled the Holocaust, such as Helmut Isenberg. There is also a direct connect to DP camps, as the Ghost Army was deployed to DP camps to keep order after the end of the war.

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Q: Tell me what you know about D-Day.
Q: Why was D-Day successful?

Build off their answers to explain the importance of D-Day and the how its success depended on effective deception. Transition to the Ghost Army by mentioning their arrival in Normandy on June 14 and June 24, 1944.

Introduce the key message:
This exhibition tells the history of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, or “Ghost Army,” through key artifacts, individuals, and operations. We will explore how creativity, innovation, and collaboration helped saved thousands of lives and win the war in Europe, and consider how we can use creativity to create change today.

What their experience will be like:
We will experience the story of the Ghost Army through photographs, artwork, inflatables, uniforms, and other original artifacts, in addition to videos and interactives. You will be given time during the tour to explore some of the exhibition on your own.

Transition: Ask students if they were to deceive the German army into believing a small unit of around 1,100 people was 30 times its actual size, what tactics would they use? What forms of deception would be necessary?

SECTION 1 (15 minutes)

Set Up/Context: The Ghost Army was divided into 4 units: Signal Company Special, 406th Engineer Combat Company Special, 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special, and 3132rd Signal Service Company Special [see exhibition overview for detailed explanations of each unit].

Q: When considering the camouflage unit, what types of things do you think the unit might have used in its deception?

Gallery Assignment – give students the following prompt and allow them to explore this section of the exhibition on their own, then report back to the rest of the group.

Prompt: Look for artifacts in the exhibition that tell the story of the 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special. How did camouflage, and more specifically the artifact you found, play a role in the success of the Ghost Army's operations?

Bring students back to discuss, then give them another gallery assignment.

Q: Why would the Ghost Army devote an entire unit to audio recordings?

Gallery Assignment – give students the following prompt and allow them to explore this section of the exhibition on their own, then report back to the rest of the group.

Prompt: Look for artifacts in the exhibition that tell the story of the 3132rd Signal Service Company Special (Recordings). How did audio recordings, and more specifically the artifact you found, play a role in the success of the Ghost Army's operations?

SECTION 2 (15 minutes)

Set Up/Context: The Ghost Army was divided into 4 units: Signal Company Special, 406th Engineer Combat Company Special, 603rd Engineer Camouflage Battalion Special, and 3132rd Signal Service Company Special [see exhibition overview for detailed explanations of each unit]. This section also tells the story of many who served in the Ghost Army.

Q: The Signal Company Special carried out what they called "spoof radio." How do you think radio played a role in deception?

Gallery Assignment – give students the following prompt and allow them to explore this section of the exhibition on their own, then report back to the rest of the group.

Prompt: Look for artifacts in the exhibition that tell the story of the Signal Company Special or "spoof radio." How did radio, and more specifically the artifact you found, play a role in the success of the Ghost Army's operations?

Q: What specialized skills or talents might have led to Ghost Army soldiers being recruited for the unit?

Gallery Assignment – give students the following prompt and allow them to explore this section of the exhibition on their own, then report back to the rest of the group.

Prompt: Find the story of one individual who served in the Ghost Army. What was their role? Why were they selected for the Ghost Army? If applicable, what did they go on to do after the war ended?

*Note that this section includes panels with bios on the more famous members of the Ghost Army, those with local connections, and those with Holocaust connections to the Ghost Army. It also includes video testimony of Ghost Army veterans.

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

Long-delayed recognition has finally come for the 1,100 soldiers who served in the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, and 200 more in the 3133rd Signal Service Company. On February 1, 2022, President Joseph Biden signed into law legislation awarding the unit a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow, for their "proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers." Make sure to point out that the Gold Medal was awarded in large part due to the advocacy of a 14-year-old student from Iowa, Caleb Sinnwell [see article in supplemental material].

Q: What is something you're passionate about fighting for? What are some creative ways that you could use your voice and talents to create change?

TRANSITION TO KARKOMI

The Ghost Army's actions in WWII contributed to liberation and the end of the war. Additionally, after the war ended, the Ghost Army was deployed to DP camps in Germany.



GHOST ARMY: THE COMBAT CON ARTISTS OF WORLD WAR II DOCENT GUIDE

ADULT GROUP TOURS

OVERVIEW

Inflatable dummy tanks made only of fabric, fake radio transmissions, and trucks fitted with speakers to blast the recorded sounds of a division on the move—all of these came together to create a unique Army unit, one fashioned to deceive.

The 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, more commonly known as the Ghost Army, played a significant role in saving the lives of Allied servicemembers following the landing at Normandy in June 1944. In essence, a theater troupe on the move, the Ghost Army had one mission: produce the illusion of Allied troop movement in every place where the Allies were not. The 23rd was comprised of artists, fashion designers, illustrators, and sound engineers, among other creative deceivers. This 1,100-man unit would create the illusion of war, and they did so with such success that it helped to secure the victory of the Allied powers in Europe.

GOALS AND THEMES

The purpose of this tour is to engage visitors with the story of the Ghost Army and their role in Allied victory through testimony and featured artifacts. Visitors will explore how the creativity, innovation, and collaboration of the 23rd's more than 1,100 men deceived, sketched, and painted across Europe, coming together with diverse skills and talents for the greater good in the fight against Nazi tyranny.

TOUR FRAMEWORK

	Adult Tours
Introduction	5 minutes
Section 1	15 minutes
Section 2	15 minutes
Conclusion	5 minutes

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

Q: Tell me what you know about D-Day.
Q: Why was D-Day successful?

Build off their answers to explain the importance of D-Day and the how its success depended on effective deception. Transition to the Ghost Army by mentioning their arrival in Normandy on June 14 and June 24, 1944.

Introduce the key message:
This exhibition tells the history of the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, or "Ghost Army," through key artifacts, individuals, and operations. We will explore how creativity, innovation, and collaboration helped saved thousands of lives and win the war in Europe, and consider how we can use creativity to create change today.

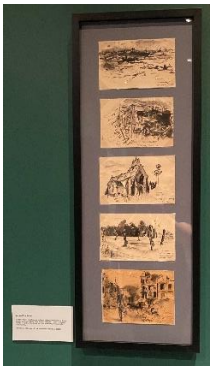
What their experience will be like:
We will experience the story of the Ghost Army through photographs, artwork, inflatables, uniforms, and other original artifacts, in addition to videos and interactives.

Transition: Ask participants if they were to deceive the German army into believing a small unit of around 1,100 people was 30 times its actual size, what tactics would they use? What forms of deception would be necessary?

Follow the tour narrative in the Exhibition Overview. Key items you may want to highlight include, but aren't limited to, the following:

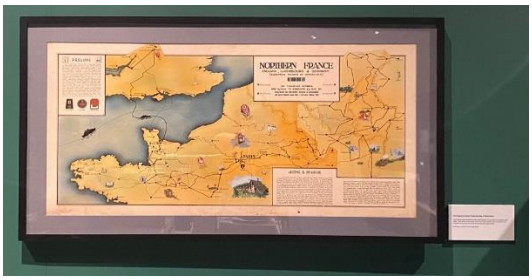
SECTION 1





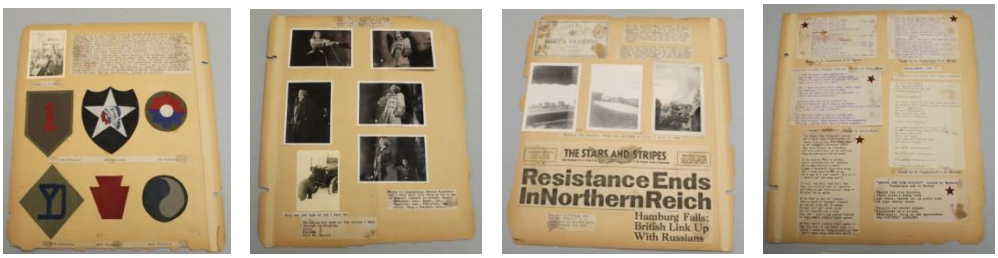
Artwork of Arthur Shilstone
Watercolors: "Sewing Patches," "Sagging Gun at Sunrise"
Sketches: "Landing in Normandy D +18," "Concealment - Normandy, France '44," "Sniper Lookout - Somewhere in Normandy," "Germany Defense Against Glider Invasion," "Treviers - France - June 1944"

A member of the 603rd Combat Engineers, Arthur Shilstone had a prolific postwar career as an illustrator. He worked for Smithsonian Magazine, National Geographic, and even NASA. Shilstone's paintings about his time in the Ghost Army offer a glimpse in what the men faced on a daily basis conducting their deception operations.



23rd Headquarters Special Troops Route Map painted by Allison Severe

Corporal Allison Severe served with the 603rd Combat Engineers in Europe. Severe was wounded in action January 7, 1945, and had to be evacuated. After the war, Severe made this airbrushed and painted map to illustrate the route of the 23rd from the United States and throughout Europe.



Scrapbook Pages of Seymour Nussenbaum

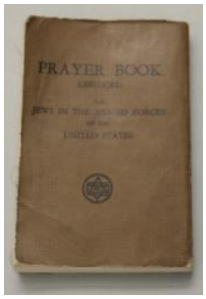
Seymour Nussenbaum served with the 603rd Combat Engineers throughout training in the United States and in Europe. Seymour's scrapbook covers his time in the Army and serves as a great record of not just the everyday life in the 603rd and 23rd. One page shows rare photographs of the 23rd's inflatables and their destruction by fire. It also shows men painting phony bumper markings on a vehicle. Another page offers some of the fake unit patches Nussenbaum and the 23rd would create when depicting other units during deception operations.



Leonard Davis Dog tags & ID card

Lieutenant, later, Captain Leonard Davis served with the 3132nd Signal Service Company and was one of the first officers into the unit. He served with the 3132nd supervising the unit's efforts simulating sound on the battlefield. These dog tags and ID card were Davis' during his time with the Ghost Army.



Goldberg ID card, Bronze Star, and Prayer Book

Jacob Goldberg was a medic in the 603rd Combat Engineers, and was one of the few members of the Ghost Army publically recognized for his heroism during the war. Goldberg was awarded a Bronze Star for Valor for his actions administering aid to wounded soldiers while under fire March 13, 1945, during Operation Bouzonville.






Stanley Nance Diary/German Phrasebook, Radio Pennant, and Sewing Kit

Sergeant Stanley Nance served in the Signal Company Special as a radio operator and commander of a radio truck. The German phrasebook contains Nance's notes from many Ghost Army operations. The sewing kit was used by Nance to swap out phony patches on his uniform used by the unit during deceptions, and the pennant flew on his radio truck which he nicknamed "Kilowatt Kommand."





Inflatable Tank, Artillery, & (deflated) Plane – all reproductions

The US Army chose the M4 Sherman as its main dummy tank because of its widespread and common use on the battlefield. The Army experimented with a metal tank frame to fit on top of a jeep, but the decision was made to go with inflatables because of the ease of transport and the speed of set up. For

Operation Viersen in March 1945, more than 150 inflatable tanks were erected to support the deception.

Due to the importance of artillery to American soldiers, the Germans made it a point to target their positions. The 23rd would set up its fake, inflatable artillery and try to persuade the Germans to fire at the dummy positions. Empty shell casings, camouflage nets, and flash containers set off at night imitating the bright light of a firing gun helped add to the deception. Throughout the war, the Germans fired numerous times at the 23rd's dummy guns instead of the real ones, saving many lives.

The Stinson L-5 Sentinel [deflated and located at entrance to exhibition] was a lightweight reconnaissance and observation aircraft used by the Allies to operate on unimproved airstrips close to the front lines. Because the plane was a common sight on the battlefield, the 23rd would set up dummy airstrips and L5s to fool the Germans into believing they were real. The deception tactic was so successful, American pilots flying L5s would sometimes land on the fake airfields thinking they were real.

The dummies came in oversized canvas duffels. "It was a little bundle of stuff, which a tank was in," said Jack Masey. The soldiers would open the bundle, spread it out, and inflate the tank through multiple nozzles. "[We would pull out] this amorphic shape," remarked Private Ned Harris, "and then [watch] it being filled with air and taking form like a monster." It took 15-20 minutes to inflate a single tank. "And we all had a very grand time doing it," recalled Masey, "joking and laughing as these things took shape." (Beyer & Sayles, p. 57)



Uniform Jacket of Al Albrecht

At 18 years old, Al Albrecht was one of the youngest members of the 23rd. A member of the 3132nd Signal Service Company, Special, he was with the unit from the United States through Europe and participated in all its sonic operations. As the driver of a half-track, Albrecht would have been responsible for its destruction to prevent its sensitive equipment from being captured by the Germans.



Wire Recorder

Wire recorders, the predecessor to tape recorders, were used to play pre-recorded sound effects to the enemy at night. These might include sounds of men and vehicles on the move, or digging in. A single

spool contained two miles of wire, enough for 30 minutes of sound. The men of the 3132nd and 3133rd broadcast these recordings through 500-pound speakers which had a range of up to 15 miles. The halftracks and tank destroyers containing the sound equipment were rigged with explosives to explode to prevent capture.





Joseph Spence Uniform Jacket, artwork, and signed Nazi flag

Joseph Spence served as a camouflage technician in Company B of the 603rd Camouflage Engineers. Spence was a late addition to the 23rd, joining it in England, and knew nothing about the deception mission. He was shocked when "all of a sudden I see four guys, one on each end of a General Sherman tank, picking the thing up. And I practically collapsed, because I thought: 'Gee, I could never pick up a tank.'" (Beyer & Sayles, p. 57)

The flag belonged to Spence, who told his wife that it came from the Nazi Headquarters in Krefeld, a town in Germany near the site of their last mission, Operation Viersen, conducted in March 1945. This is one of three similar Nazi flags that were brought home by three members of Company B. Each was signed by a multitude of Ghost Army soldiers. One, which was brought back by veteran Harold Fisch, is in the possession of the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County. Another flag was brought back by veteran Hank Gallucci and is currently in private hands. Some of the signatures are the same on all three, some are different. All three also list places where the 23rd headquarters Special Troops found themselves during the war.

Joe Spence had a distinguished career in arts education, finally retiring as chair of the Department of Creative Arts at the University of North Carolina. He died in 2011 at age 87.

SECTION 2





German hand grenade case; artwork by Ned Harris (located on wall behind the case); middle picture – sketchbook series drawn by Harris while waiting to cross the channel to Normandy, June 23-26, 1944.

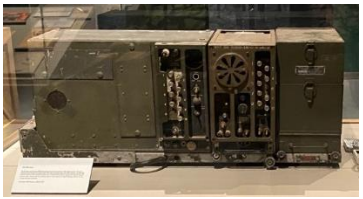
Ned Harris served with the 603rd Camouflage Engineers as an assistant truck driver. While Harris was in Europe, he picked up a German hand grenade case from the battlefield and used it to carry around his art supplies. These cases were used by the German Army for carrying into combat up to 15 of their M24 stick hand grenades. Harris, after the war, graduated art school and had a long career as a graphic designer and photographer.

Beyer & Sayles, p. 65: The remainder of the 23rd (minus the sonic company, still training in England) came to France in two groups. The first, code-named Elephant, arrived in late June. The second, known as Residue (nicknamed "Garbage" by the men), came in early July. Aboard the landing ship that would take them across the Channel, they waited day after monotonous day to get underway. "Boredom, and anticipating, and too much time to think," recalled Private Ned Harris. "That's when the sketchbooks come out."



Portable Generator

During deception operations in the field, the 23rd had to be able to supply power to work radios, air compressors, and other critical machinery. This air-cooled, two-cycle gas powered PE-214-C portable generator could supply 300 watts of power at either 120 or 240 volts and would have been one of the many different types used in combat. The generator's small size and weight made it ideal for the fast-moving 23rd.



Radio

The US Army spent the late 1930s developing radio sets using the new "FM" radio frequency. The most famous of these became the handie-talkie (SCR-536) and walkie-talkie (SCR-300). However, the SCR-508 became critical for use in armored vehicles, such as tanks and half-tracks, using preset channels selected by push button. This was one of six different types of radios used by the Signal Company, Special, to carry out their deception operations.



Jim Steg Vehicle Horseshoe & DP drawings (L-R): “Berest Duska,” “Yiosvic,” “Osa,” "Balaneneso Wasia"; watercolor: “Portrait of a Young Man in a Hat”

Corporal Jim Steg served in the 603rd Camouflage Engineers supervising camouflage and the painting of dummy guns and vehicles. He also drove a truck he named “El Toro” on which he placed this horseshoe. This same horseshoe later hung above the door in his kitchen for good luck. When the 23rd was in charge of Displaced Persons in Trier, Germany, Steg sketched many of them. Unfortunately, when people in the camp were returned home, countless were killed by the ruthless Soviet regime. Most of his portraits were the last representation of these people ever taken.



Reconstructed fake headquarters for the 119th Regiment of the 30th Division, set up in March 1945 in Dulken, Germany, as part of Operation Viersen. [See “Anatomy of a Fake Headquarters” in supplemental material.]



Operations Map of Harold Dahl

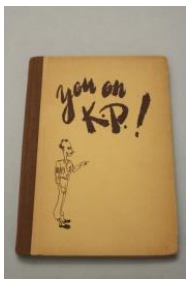
Many members of the 23rd created maps to show the unit’s journey during the war. Dahl drew this map showing the 23rd’s entry into Europe and the dates and locations of the deception operations he was a part of. These maps are important because they are some of the few physical documents the men left behind because of the secrecy behind the unit.

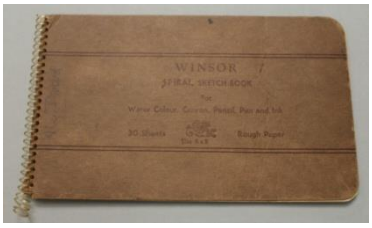



Uniform Jacket of Donald Mead & 3133rd Signal Service Company Patch

Donald Mead served with the 3133rd Signal Service Company in the United States and Italy. Mead was a member of the first operational platoon of the 3133rd at Pine Camp in November 1944 and sailed for Italy with the unit in March 1945. He saw action during the 3133rd's two successful deception operations in April 1945 near the Italian cities of Massa and Bologna. While Mead and his fellow members of the 3133rd were only in combat 19 days, the unit compiled an outstanding service record before being disbanded in 1946.

The 3133rd Signal Service Company, while a small outfit, had a unique unit insignia. Placed atop a US armored forces patch, the insignia depicts the devil thumbing his nose and was also the Army Experimental Station (AES) crest when the unit trained at Pine Camp. This was Donald Mead's patch from his time in the 3133rd.



"You on KP!" Booklet by Jack Masey; Sketchbooks of Victor Dowd

Corporal Jack Masey, of the 603rd Camouflage Engineers, spent time between deceptions caricaturing the men in his company. He put the caricatures together in a book called "You on KP!". The men pooled their money and had copies printed in Luxembourg City as souvenirs. After the war, Masey designed exhibitions for the US government and numerous museums – he even led the design team that created the original Pacific galleries at The National WWII Museum.

Victor Dowd served as a sergeant in the 603rd Camouflage Engineers. Before the war he was a comic book illustrator, working with the legendary Stan Lee among others. He was one of the earliest members of the 23rd to enter mainland Europe after the Normandy landings in June 1944 as a part of Task Force Mason. After the war, Dowd created illustrations for books, advertisements and the fashion industry.



Diary of Robert Tompkins

Against all security regulations, Tompkins kept a secret diary in a tiny address book. He believed that if he was caught with it, he'd "be shot on the spot." He wrote as small as he could because he was afraid he would run out of space before the fighting was over. (Beyer & Sayles, p. 92)

Excerpts re: Operation Brest (Beyer & Sayles p. 92 & 95):

August 21, 1944
Pulled out at 8:10 AM. 158 miles. Drove most of the way with top and windshield down in driving rain. Would give my right arm to sit in front of a cozy fire with my little darling in my arms. Oh Adolph, you son of a bitch. I feel like a frozen drowned rat.

August 24, 1944
Maintained items – tore them down at 9 PM. Moved up 500 yards to new area and set up new tanks. Willy [Blass] and I set up our tent with our feet sticking out in the pouring down rain and passed out around 3 AM.

Excerpt re: Operation Bettembourg (Beyer & Sayles p. 115):

September 16, 1944
Pulled into the woods at 3 o'clock. Tanks moving all around us. Woke early. Put on patches. Set up tanks. Built fires simulating armored infantry battalion. Truck goes out every hour to village for atmosphere. Drank a quart of beer with a family in Bettembourg.

Excerpt re: DP camps (Beyer & Sayles p. 206)

April 15, 1945
Russians and Poles stealing everything they can get their hands on, and I don't blame them. Resent having to guard a goddamn Heinie [German]. Some Russians are hiding in the hills with guns and raiding the Germans at night. If we were smart we'd turn our backs.



Robert Hiller's cap; photograph of Shirley and Robert Hiller, Pine Camp, New York, 1944; and journal

Captain Robert Hiller served in the 3132nd. While training at Pine Camp, Hiller kept a journal. After he was deployed, Hiller's wife Shirley used it to save letters, photographs, and V-mail communications that Hiller sent back to her in the US.

CONCLUSION (5 minutes)

Long-delayed recognition has finally come for the 1,100 soldiers who served in the 23rd Headquarters Special Troops, and 200 more in the 3133rd Signal Service Company. On February 1, 2022, President Joseph Biden signed into law legislation awarding the unit a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow, for their "proficient use of innovative tactics during World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers." You may also want to highlight Ghost Army veterans from Illinois to make a local connection.

Q: What is something you're passionate about fighting for? What are some creative ways that you could use your voice and talents to create change?