



## **THE GHOST ARMY AVAILABLE VIA PBS PLUS ON MAY 15**

### **Documentary Reveals the Amazing Story of the Secret WWII Unit That Duped Hitler's Army — And Has Recently Been Honored by Congress**



*An inflatable tank designed to fool German soldiers.  
Credit: National Archives*

War, deception, and art come together in Rick Beyer's documentary *The Ghost Army*, the astonishing true story of American G.I.s — many of whom would go on to have illustrious careers in art, design, and fashion — who tricked the enemy with rubber tanks, sound effects, and carefully crafted illusions during the Second World War. A remarkable story of a top-secret mission that was at once absurd, deadly and amazingly effective, *The Ghost Army* returns via PBS PLUS and is available for scheduling beginning May 15, 2024 for Memorial Day or D-Day Anniversary scheduling.

In the summer of 1944, a handpicked group of G.I.s landed in France to conduct a special mission. Armed with truckloads of inflatable tanks, a massive collection of sound effects records, and more than a few tricks up their sleeves, their job was to create a traveling road show of deception on the battlefields of Europe, with the German Army as their audience. From Normandy to the Rhine, the 1100 men of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Headquarters Special Troops, known as the Ghost Army, conjured up phony convoys, phantom divisions, and make-believe headquarters to fool the enemy about the strength and location of American units. Every move they made was top secret and their story was hushed up for decades after the war's end.

The Ghost Army staged more than 20 deception operations in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany, often operating dangerously close to the front lines. In the final days of the war they faced their ultimate test: a deception along the Rhine in which thousands of lives depended on their delivering a convincing performance. What they accomplished was kept secret for nearly fifty years.

Many of the men chosen to carry out these deceptions were young artists recruited from arts schools across the country. In their spare time, they painted and sketched their way across Europe, creating a unique and moving visual record of their war. Some would go on to become famous, including fashion designer Bill Blass, painter Ellsworth Kelly and



photographer Art Kane. More than 65 years after the end of the war, the surviving members of the Ghost Army are proud that they used artistry and creativity to save lives. Theirs is not just another war story but a multi-layered tale of showmanship, creativity, and humanity.

Interviews with nineteen Ghost Army veterans are the heart of the film. The Ghost Army may be one of the last World War II documentaries told in the words of the men who served.

In 2022, President Biden signed legislation awarding the unit a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow. The legislation states that “The United States is eternally grateful to the soldiers of the 23d Headquarters, Special Troops and the 3133d Signal Service Company for their proficient use of innovative tactics throughout World War II, which saved lives and made significant contributions to the defeat of the Axis powers.” In March 2024, Congress will officially present the Gold Medal. Several surviving veterans are expected to attend.

For more information on the unit, visit [www.ghostarmy.org](http://www.ghostarmy.org). For more on the book and the film, go to [www.ghostarmy.com](http://www.ghostarmy.com).

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## THE GHOST ARMY

Written, Produced, and Directed by Rick Beyer  
Edited by Jon Neuburger  
Director of Photography: Dillard Morrison  
Original Music by Matt Mariano  
Narrated by Peter Coyote

**Rick Beyer (Writer/Producer/Director)** is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, a bestselling author, and a long-time history enthusiast. His credits include *Expedition Apocalypse*, filmed in Siberia for National Geographic Channel; *The Wright Challenge* (winner of a Parents’ Choice Award), *Secrets of Jamestown*, *Revolution in Boston* and *The Patent Files* for The History Channel; and *The Emancipation Proclamation* (featuring President Bill Clinton) for the Smithsonian Institution’s exhibit “Abraham Lincoln: An Extraordinary Life.” He co-wrote the book *The Ghost Army of World War II* with Elizabeth Sayles. He is also the author of the popular *Greatest Stories Never Told*.



series of history books published by Harper Collins, which have been described by the *Chicago Tribune* as “an old-fashioned sweetshop full of tasty morsels.” He began his career as a radio and TV journalist in Chicago and Boston, and is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

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For further info and photos visit [https://ghostarmy.com/about/film/Press\\_Kit](https://ghostarmy.com/about/film/Press_Kit)