

THE GHOST AIR ARMY

1 x 56 HD



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During World War II, a hand-picked group of American GI's undertook a bizarre mission: create a traveling road show of deception on the battlefields of Europe, with the Nazi German Army as their audience. The U.S. 23rd Headquarters Special Troops used inflatable rubber tanks, sound trucks, and dazzling performance art to bluff the enemy again and again, often right along the front lines. This little-known unit's knack for trickery was crucial to Allied success in World War II but their top-secret mission was kept quiet for nearly 50 years after the war's end.

Over the course of the war, these soldiers staged more than 20 operations in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. As part of their mission, these artists of deception frequently impersonated officers and men from other units, pretending to leak classified information to confuse the opposing forces. In the final days of World War II they faced their ultimate test, a deception along the Rhine River where thousands of lives depended on them delivering a convincing performance to distract and confuse the looming Nazi enemy.

But these incredible battlefield illusions are only part of the story. Many of the men picked to carry out these deceptions were talented young artists specially recruited from art schools across the country. Their ranks included future fashion designer Bill Blass and painter Ellsworth Kelley. In their spare time, they painted and sketched their way across Europe, creating a unique and moving visual record of their war.

Using World War II archival footage of this top-secret unit, dozens of still photographs, paintings, and sketches created by "ghost army" soldiers during the war, and interviews with veterans of this special unit, *The Ghost Army* tells the extraordinary story of the unit for the first time ever on film and demonstrates the power of creativity and of the WWII soldiers who found a unique way to employ it to save lives.

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CREDITS

Producer, Director, Writer: Rick Beyer

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Bob Tompkins



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