



They Fooled the Nazis: Gold Medal to the Ghost Army

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On March 22, 2024, a memorable page of U.S. military history was celebrated with the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to the Ghost Army, a group of valiant American soldiers who, with ingenuity and courage, significantly contributed to the Allies' victory during World War II. Their extraordinary mission, shrouded in secrecy for decades, used ingenious deception tactics to disorient enemy forces.

Armed with inflatable tanks, trucks, and planes, as well as employing sophisticated sound effects and radio transmission techniques, these specialized military units were crucial in confusing the Nazis, simulating the presence of Allied forces where there were none. The 23rd Headquarters Special Troops and the 3133rd Signal Service Company were the protagonists of this unusual but decisive military strategy, staging about twenty deception operations across France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany, as well as two in Italy.

The award ceremony, held at the Capitol, saw the emotional participation of three of the seven surviving members of these special teams: **Seymour Nussenbaum and Bernard Bluestein**,

both centenarians, and **John Christman**, aged 99. Their courage and skill in the art of disguise were finally recognized with the highest Congressional honor.

The story of the Ghost Army, emerging from the veil of secrecy only after its declassification in 1996, was brought to light thanks to the efforts of veterans' families and the work of Rick Beyer, a filmmaker and author who dedicated years to collecting testimonies and documents. Beyer, head of the Ghost Army Legacy Project, produced and directed the 2013 documentary "The Ghost Army" and co-authored the book "The Ghost Army of World War II" published in 2015, works that helped publicize the exploits of these shadow heroes.

The award ceremony offered a living history lesson, demonstrating how ingenuity and creativity can play a role as crucial as brute force in wartime. The Ghost Army remains an inspiring symbol of how intelligence and boldness can change the course of history.