



# The CCHS Newsletter

Carroll County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1308

Carrollton, GA. 30112

June 2023

## The Ghost Army of World War II

The **23<sup>rd</sup> Headquarters Special Troops** were a deception-based unit of around 1,100 men who worked together to create elaborate ruses in the final year of WWII. Their job was to help fool German forces about the true numbers and movements of U.S. troops. Though the success of their assignments is hard to quantify, their deceptions are believed to have saved hundreds, if not thousands, of lives.

Sometimes they'd take on roles, like parts in a play. George Rebh once shared a memorable experience during Operation Viersen when he did just that. He'd been given the task of impersonating a full colonel as part of the ruse and was recognized by several fellow West Point men who had graduated ahead of him. They were mystified by how quickly he'd passed them in rank, and to a full colonel no less!

When they asked about it, they were told it was just one of those army things— “

Colonel” Rebh had been in the right place at the right time. It was one of several occasions that the members of the 23<sup>rd</sup> would deceive not just the Germans, but their own allies, to ensure the secrecy of their mission.

The **Signal Company Special** was charged with radio deception. Fake transmissions, invented dialogues, and entirely fabricated scenarios were created by 288 radio operators who were part of the company.

The **Signal Company Special's** deceptions breathed life into the elaborate scenes created by the other companies. They were the “silent orchestra underneath the musical.

This is not a Carroll County Story, though it is of historical Significance

While misdirection had the Germans tracking fake army units, the 3132 **Signal Service Company** had the job of making those fake units *sound* real. The 150 men in the company created what they called “concerts,” which included the noises of tanks driving and shifting gears, banging and hammering and other bustling activity, and even voices shouting orders and cursing. [Al Albrecht](#), who worked with the 3132<sup>nd</sup>, said “the back of my half-track...was the biggest boom box you ever saw. But it played sounds of tanks and activity.”

At around 380 men, the **603<sup>rd</sup> Engineer Camouflage Battalion** was the largest company in the **23<sup>rd</sup> Headquarters Special Troops**. They created the more well-known sights of the Ghost Army’s deceptions, using their incredible artistic talents to make fake tanks, howitzers, trucks, and other vehicles out of wood, fabric, and inflatables. On a smaller scale, they’d simulate the kind of trash, bullet casings, and similar debris that a real contingent of men might leave behind—anything to bring that sense of life and realism to a “scene.”



George Rebh



Al Albrecht

The battalion had been previously trained in camouflage, and used those skills to expose *just* enough that their creations would be noticed without being too obvious. Attention to detail and a strong understanding of art, shadow, and human nature all came together in creating tableaux so realistic they’d make German reconnaissance believe they’d photographed a real army.

There are countless stories that could be told about the **23<sup>rd</sup> Special Headquarters Troops**, both broadly and within the men’s own personal lives. Many of these can be found on [ghostarmy.org](http://ghostarmy.org) and in the 2013 documentary ***The Ghost Army***, where you can hear some of the Ghost Army veterans themselves share memories and experiences from the war and beyond.

## The History of 'APRONS'

Tina Trivett

I don't think most kids today know what an apron is. The principle use of Mom's or Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids. And when the weather was cold, she wrapped it around her arms. Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds. When dinner was ready, she walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes. They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron. I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron - but love.



### Carrollton Word find

Can you find all the Carrollton names?

Tanner	McGees
Mandeville	Dixie St
Railroad	McIntosh
Hudson	Lawler
Maple Street	Green Front
Bonner	Depot St
Horton	Bradley
Southwire	Adamson

F	G	T	A	N	N	E	R	Q	T	B	S
B	R	A	D	L	E	Y	A	H	E	G	O
T	S	E	I	X	I	D	I	P	E	R	U
W	J	D	G	T	A	K	L	K	R	E	T
H	U	F	N	M	C	V	R	L	T	E	H
S	O	B	S	P	D	O	O	D	S	N	W
O	H	O	R	T	O	N	A	V	E	F	I
T	N	N	N	O	S	D	U	H	L	R	R
N	R	N	L	A	W	L	E	R	P	O	E
I	D	E	P	O	T	S	T	S	A	N	D
C	Q	R	E	S	E	E	G	C	M	T	V
M	A	N	D	E	V	I	L	L	E	H	R





**13th Bowdon Area Historical Society**

**14th Flag Day**

**18th Father's Day**

**21st First Day of Summer**

## The CCHS Collection Is Going Digital

The Scanning Project continues and it is estimated to be about half way through. The scanning is a two step process; once the item is scanned it is assigned a number and description for the searchable database.

The photo collection is 80% complete. The team is developing photo albums to have on hand at meetings and presentations. Presently, 5,316 photographs have been scanned and have been placed in storage in the Archive Room of the Curtis Marlow Perry House.

• Books in the Collection	301
• Family Documents	681
• Documents	1,672
• Photographs	5,316
• Not Cataloged	<u>481</u>
	8,451
• 22 Gigabytes of Memory	

The bookcase is full with 301 books, including: city directories, phonebooks, restoration guides, Georgia Historical Society Quarterlies, and local history topics. The books are available for in room use.

The Family documents continue to grow. This collection includes newspaper clippings relating to individuals, family letters and family histories that have been submitted to the Society. We presently have information on 680 Carroll County surnames.

We have partnered with the **Carroll County Genealogical Society** to assist with family history searches. They have an phenomenal collection of genealogical resources available with over 245,780 surname listings.

The next phase of this project will be to photograph each artifact in the collection and log it into the database. There is an estimated 784 items to be documented. Once the collection is digitalized, there will be multiple uses of the data.

The Scanning Team has provided an invaluable service preserving the collection of photographs and documents. Their tireless dedication and commitment will insure future generations will be able to enjoy the collection. If you would like to join the Team, please let us know.



## Carroll County Historical Society Membership Application

**January thru December 2023**

Individual Membership      \$30.00 per year

Family Membership      \$50.00 per year

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/ST / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address will be used for receiving bulletins, newsletters, and announcements that CCHS will be sending out concerning the Society activities.

Membership Fee Paid \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Total Paid \_\_\_\_\_

Donations to the Society will be used to fund preservation projects in Carroll County. All donations are tax Deductible.

Members receive our Monthly Newsletter

Mail To: Carroll County Historical Society  
PO Box 1308  
Carrollton, GA. 30112

Online at: | [cchsorders@carrollcountyhistory.org](mailto:cchsorders@carrollcountyhistory.org)

[Click to become a member or renew on our website](#)

**Your Membership supports the preservation and presentation of Carroll County's history**

