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The 103rd Honored for Their "Call To Duty"

The 103rd Infantry Division bravely fought 34 battles on the Western European front during WWII. Almost 60 years later, these WWII vets have finally received a long overdue tribute to their service.

In 1998, members of the 103rd Infantry Division Association devised a plan to honor their comrades, both living and dead, who served in the 103rd.

Fundraising began with the creation of the Texas WWII Historical Monument Fund. Its officers included several from VFW Post 1922 in Gainesville, Texas. They collected an astounding \$10,000 through their Post alone. The vast majority of the \$200,000 raised came from other members of the 103rd Infantry Division Association. The remaining funds were generated thanks to a notice published in the VFW Department of Texas newspaper.

Edd Hayes, a renowned Texas sculptor, created the statue entitled "A Call To Duty."

"We never expected to build anything so beautiful, so magnificent," reflects Chan Rogers, President of the 103rd Division Association and life member of VFW Post 1526, Medway, Mass.

The breathtaking bronze statue stands eight ft. tall. It depicts a G.I. running into battle, his rifle firmly grasped in both hands. Five bronze plaques surround the statue, detailing the remarkable history of the 103rd as well as the names of those who served in its ranks.

The stirring memorial to the 103rd resides on the outskirts of Camp Howze, the dismantled camp where the 103rd trained. Today, a travel information center occupies the grounds near Gainesville as signs in both directions off US Interstate 35 direct many visitors toward the Memorial.

The statue dedication took place on Veterans Day 2006 at the 103rd's annual reunion. Close to 500 visitors attended the touching tribute, many veterans of the 103rd themselves. A year later, veterans laid wreaths on the site in remembrance of their comrades.

"It's an unbelievable tribute to those who gave their lives to their country," concluded Rogers.

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