



## Tribute to the 3<sup>RD</sup> ARMORED DIVISION

By 3AD.com Web Staff



After fifty years of honored service to the nation, beginning in 1941, the 3rd Armored Division (3AD) was inactivated, or retired, in 1992 following the end of the Cold War. Budget cuts by the U.S. Defense Department did what no armed enemy could ever do.

The 3AD, of course, was not the primary reason for the U.S. victory in WWII in Europe, or in the Cold War, or in Gulf War I. In each case, the 3AD was a single cog in a vast and complex U.S. military machine. But one tough and most special cog it was.

Of the fifteen U.S. armored divisions in Europe in World War II, the 3AD saw the most combat, inflicted the most damage, and took the most casualties. Under legendary commander Major Gen. Maurice Rose, it became known as the "Spearhead" Division of the American First Army.

During four decades of the Cold War, the Division was NATO's primary point-guard for the critical Fulda Gap in West Germany. As one historian wrote, the 3AD "stood eyeball-to-eyeball against the forces of the Soviet Union."

And in 1990-91, the Division left its German bases for action in the Persian Gulf War, attacking deep into Iraq as a lead element of the U.S. 7th Corps. The 3AD was, at that time, and remains to this day, the largest U.S. division ever assembled.

Yet is the Division really gone forever? Is the era permanently fading for the massive self-contained division with combined armor, infantry, artillery, and aviation? No one can say for sure. But, given the unexpected twists and turns of world geopolitics and as yet unpredictable new military challenges, the Spearhead colors stand ready to ride again -- in a leaner and even more powerful high-tech form.

The 3AD may be retired, but its enduring legacy and long colorful history has few equals among all U.S. military units, past and present. This foundation and website is dedicated to that legacy and that history, and to the veterans who served with Spearhead -- over 40,000 soldiers in WWII & early occupation of Germany; 220,000 in the Cold War with the defense of Western Europe; and 22,533 in the Gulf War's Operation Desert Storm of 1991.

***Spearhead !!***