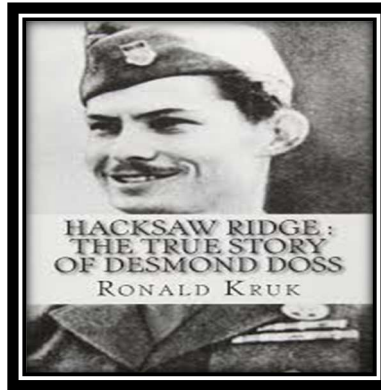


THE TRUE STORY OF THE MOVIE HACKSAW RIDGE AND DESMOND DOSS:

THE MEDAL OF HONOR WINNER WHO NEVER FIRED A SHOT
THE FIRST CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO RECEIVE THE MEDAL OF HONOR

DESMOND DOSS – THE REAL STORY

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“ I don’t know how I’m going to live with myself if I don’t stay true to what I believe”.

On April 1, 1942, Desmond Doss joined the United States Army. Little did he realize that three and a half years later, he would be standing on the White House lawn, receiving the nation’s highest award for his bravery and courage under fire.

Of the 16 million men in uniform during World War II, only 431 received the Congressional Medal of Honor. One of these was placed around the neck of a young Seventh-day Adventist, who during combat had not killed a single enemy soldier. He refused to carry a gun. His only weapons were his Bible and his faith in God.



President Harry S. Truman warmly shook the hand of Corporal Desmond Thomas Doss and then held it the entire time his citation was read aloud to those gathered outside the White House on October 12, 1945. “I’m proud of you,” Truman said. “You deserve this. I consider this a greater honor than being president.”

The journey that had brought young Desmond to this day had been a challenging one. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was working at the Newport News Naval shipyard and could have requested a deferment—but he wanted to do more for his country. He was willing to risk his life on the front lines to preserve freedom.

When he joined the Army, Desmond assumed that his classification as a conscientious objector would not require him to carry a weapon. He wanted to be an Army combat medic. As luck would have it, he was assigned to an infantry rifle company. His refusal to carry a gun caused a lot of trouble among his fellow soldiers. They viewed him with disdain and called him a misfit. One man in the barracks warned him, "Doss, as soon as we get into combat, I'll make sure you won't come back alive."

His commanding officers also wanted to get rid of the skinny Virginian who spoke with a gentle southern drawl. They saw him as a liability. Nobody believed a soldier without a weapon was worthwhile. They tried to intimidate him, scold him, assign him extra tough duties, and declare him mentally unfit for the Army. Then they attempted to court martial him for refusing a direct order—to carry a gun. But they failed to find a way to toss him out, and he refused to leave. He believed his duty was to obey God and serve his country. But it had to be in that order. His unwavering convictions were most important.

Desmond had been raised with a fervent belief in the Bible. When it came to the Ten Commandments, he applied them personally. During childhood, his father had purchased a large framed picture at an auction. It portrayed the Ten Commandments with colorful illustrations. Next to the words, "Thou shalt not kill" was a drawing of Cain holding a club and standing over the body of his dead brother Abel. Little Desmond would look at that picture and ask, "Why did Cain kill Abel? How in the world could a brother do such a thing?" In Desmond's mind, God said, "If you love me, you won't kill." With that picture firmly embedded in his mind, he determined that he would never take life.

However, there was another commandment that Desmond took just as seriously as the sixth. It was the fourth commandment. His religious upbringing included weekly church attendance, on the seventh day. The Army was exasperated to discover that he had yet another personal requirement. He asked for a weekly pass so he could attend church every Saturday. This meant two strikes against him. His fellow soldiers saw this Bible-reading Puritan, as being totally out of sync with the rest of the Army. So they ostracized him, bullied him, called him awful names, and cursed at him. His commanding officers also made his life difficult.

Things began turning around when the men discovered that this quiet unassuming medic had a way to heal the blisters on their march-weary feet. And if someone fainted from heat stroke, this medic was at his side, offering his canteen. Desmond never held a grudge. With kindness and gentle courtesy, he treated those who had mistreated him. He lived the golden rule, "...do to others what you would have them do to you..." (Matthew 7:12 NIV).



Desmond & His First Wife Dorothy Schutte

Doss married Dorothy Pauline Schutte on August 17, 1942, and they had one child, Desmond "Tommy" Doss Jr., born in 1946. Dorothy died on November 17, 1991, from a car accident. Doss remarried on July 1, 1993, to Frances May Duman.

Desmond served in combat on the islands of Guam, Leyte, and Okinawa. In each military operation, he exhibited extraordinary dedication to his fellow men. While others were taking lives, he was busy saving life. When the cry, "medic" rang out on the battlefield, he never considered his safety. He repeatedly ran into the heat of battle to treat a fallen comrade and carry him back to safety. All this, while enemy bullets whizzed past and mortar shells exploded around him. Several times, while treating a wounded soldier, Desmond was so close to enemy lines, that he could hear the whispering of Japanese voices.

In May 1945, as German troops were surrendering on the other side of the world, Japanese troops were fiercely defending, to their last man, the only remaining barrier (Okinawa and the Maeda Escarpment) to an allied invasion of their homeland. The men in Desmond's division were repeatedly trying to capture the Maeda Escarpment, an imposing rock face the soldiers called Hacksaw Ridge. After the company had secured the top of the cliff, the Americans were stunned when suddenly enemy forces rushed them in a vicious counterattack. Officers ordered an immediate retreat. Soldiers rushed to climb back down the cliff. All the soldier's except one.

Less than one-third of the men made it back down. The rest lay wounded, scattered across enemy soil—abandoned and left for dead, if they weren't already.

One lone soldier disobeyed orders and charged back into the firefight to rescue as many of his men as he could before he either collapsed or died trying. His iron determination and unflagging courage resulted in at least 75 lives saved that day, May 5, 1945, his Sabbath.

Eventually, the Americans took Hacksaw Ridge. Okinawa was captured inch by bloody inch. Several days later, during an unsuccessful night raid, Desmond was severely wounded. Hiding in a shell hole with two riflemen, a Japanese grenade landed at his feet. The explosion sent him flying. The shrapnel tore into his leg and up to his hip. He treated his wounds as best he could. While attempting to reach safety, he was hit by a sniper's bullet that shattered his arm. His brave actions as a combat medic were done. But not before insisting that his litter-bearers take another man first before rescuing him. Wounded, in pain, and losing blood, he still put others ahead of his safety. He would choose to die so another could live. After all, that's what he read in his Bible. Such was the character demonstrated by Jesus Christ.



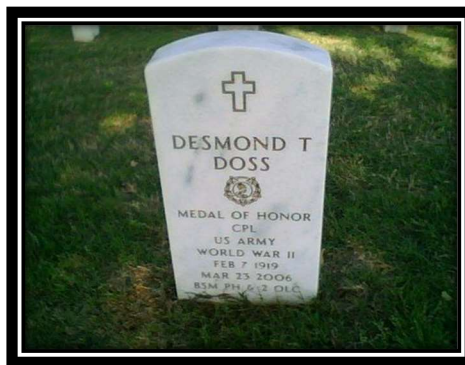
In addition to his Medal of Honor, Desmond Doss received a Bronze Star for valor with one Oak Leaf cluster (signifying he received 2 Bronze Stars); a Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf clusters (signifying he received 3 Purple Hearts); the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars, and beachhead arrowhead (signifying he served in 4 combat campaigns including an amphibious landing under combat conditions); the Good Conduct Medal; the American Defense Campaign; and the not so common, Presidential Unit Citation given to the 1st Battalion, 307Inf, 77th Infantry Division for securing the Maeda Escarpment.

The Medal of Honor was established during the Civil War under President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. At the one-hundredth anniversary in 1962, the other recipients of that award selected Desmond Doss to represent them at a White House ceremony. He had a pleasant chat with President John F. Kennedy.

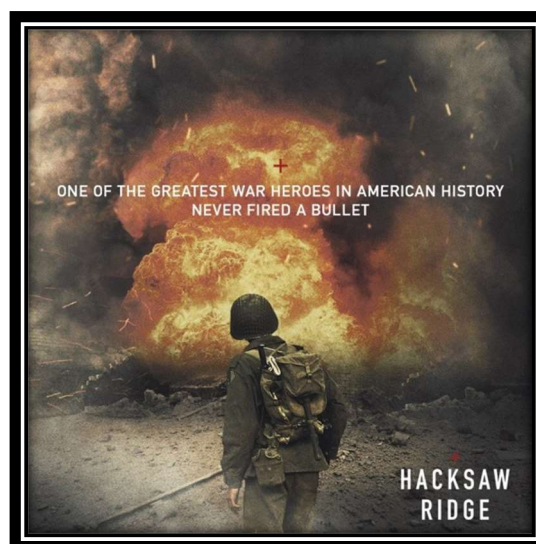


After the war, Doss initially planned to continue his career in carpentry, but extensive damage to his left arm made him unable to do so. In 1946, Doss was diagnosed with tuberculosis, which he had contracted on Leyte. He underwent treatment for five and a half years - which cost him a lung and five ribs - before being discharged from the hospital in August 1951 with 90% disability.

Doss continued to receive treatment from the military, but after an overdose of antibiotics rendered him completely deaf in 1976, he was given 100% disability; he was able to regain his hearing after receiving a cochlear implant in 1988. Despite the severity of his injuries, Doss managed to raise a family on a small farm in Rising Fawn, Georgia.



After being hospitalized for difficulty breathing, Doss died on March 23, 2006, at the age of 87 at his home in Piedmont, Alabama. He was buried on April 3, 2006, in the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Frances died three years later on February 3, 2009, at the Piedmont Health Care Center in Piedmont, Alabama.



Sadly, fewer heroes propagate non-violence, and fewer are willing to follow the golden rule of living. The world is abounding with hotheaded youth who are yet to see the pointlessness of it. They might not see what Desmond saw all his life.

Desmond Doss was the one who advocated it whilst being in one of the ugliest places mankind could find itself in - right at the center of it. The message nevertheless stays loud and clear.

A movie that this beautiful and needs to be celebrated. The life of a true hero needs to be revered. Sadly, there is defiance at every corner when you are trying to do the right thing, but not falling back and looking at the face of adversity is how heroes get made.

"With the world so set on tearing itself apart, it doesn't seem like such a bad thing to me to want to put a little bit of it back together."

Desmond Doss

THE CLIMB AT HACKSAW RIDGE



[ACTUAL PICTURE DURING WAR](#)

[FILMING THE MOVIE](#)

Information provided by the Website indicates that the soldier at the top of the left-hand picture above is that of Private Desmond Doss.

DESMOND DOSS' MEDAL OF HONOR CITATION



MEDAL OF HONOR



The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, March 3, 1863,
has awarded in the name of The Congress the MEDAL OF HONOR to

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DESMOND T. DOSS
UNITED STATES ARMY

for service as set forth in the following

Citation: Private First Class *Desmond T. Doss*, United States Army, Medical Detachment, 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division. Near Urasoe-Mura, Okinawa, Ryukyu Islands, 29 April - 21 May 1945. He was a company aid man when the 1st Battalion assaulted a jagged escarpment 400 feet high. As our troops gained the summit, a heavy concentration of artillery, mortar and machinegun fire crashed into them, inflicting approximately 75 casualties and driving the others back. Private First Class *Doss* refused to seek cover and remained in the fire-swept area with the many stricken, carrying them one by one to the edge of the escarpment and there lowering them on a rope-supported litter down the face of a cliff to friendly hands. On 2 May, he exposed himself to heavy rifle and mortar fire in rescuing a wounded man 200 yards forward of the lines on the same escarpment; and two days later he treated four men who had been cut down while assaulting a strongly defended cave, advancing through a shower of grenades to within eight yards of enemy forces in a cave's mouth, where he dressed his comrades' wounds before making four separate trips under fire to evacuate them to safety. On 5 May, he unhesitatingly braved enemy shelling and small-arms fire to assist an artillery officer. He applied bandages, moved his patient to a spot that offered protection from small-arms fire and, while artillery and mortar shells fell close by, painstakingly administered plasma. Later that day, when an American was severely wounded by fire from a cave, Private First Class *Doss* crawled to him where he had fallen 25 feet from the enemy position, rendered aid, and carried him 100 yards to safety while continually exposed to enemy fire. On 21 May, in a night attack on high ground near Shuri, he remained in exposed territory while the rest of his company took cover, fearlessly risking the chance that he would be mistaken for an infiltrating Japanese and giving aid to the injured until he was himself seriously wounded in the legs by the explosion of a grenade. Rather than call another aid man from cover, he cared for his own injuries and waited five hours before litter bearers reached him and started carrying him to cover. The trio was caught in an enemy tank attack and Private First Class *Doss*, seeing a more critically wounded man nearby, crawled off the litter and directed the bearers to give their first attention to the other man. Awaiting the litter bearers' return, he was again struck, this time suffering a compound fracture of one arm. With magnificent fortitude he bound a rifle stock to his shattered arm as a splint and then crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to the aid station. Through his outstanding bravery and unflinching determination in the face of desperately dangerous conditions Private First Class *Doss* saved the lives of many soldiers. His name became a symbol throughout the 77th Infantry Division for outstanding gallantry far above and beyond the call of duty.

October 12, 1945

THE WHITE HOUSE

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