

Life and Death on + HACKSAW RIDGE

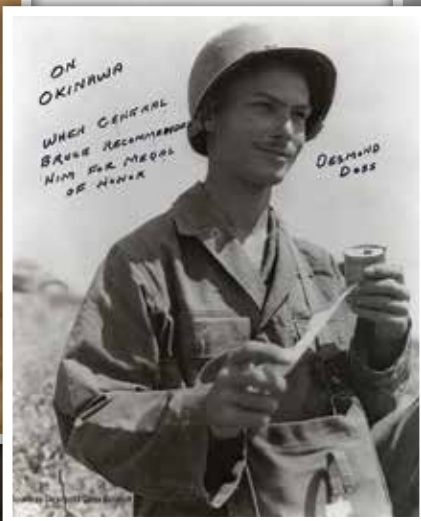
Desmond Doss. In Adventist circles, the story of his bravery and how he faced persecution from fellow soldiers is repeated over and over. Now, seventy-one years after his heroic efforts, the Desmond Doss story will be shared with the world.

Hacksaw Ridge tells the story of Doss' enlistment and the trials he faced for taking a stand as a conscientious objector who wanted to serve his country. Although Doss was a conscientious objector and could have received a draft exemption, he chose to serve according to the dictates of his conscience, which

meant he would not carry a gun. He served in combat in the Pacific, on the islands of Guam, Leyte, and Okinawa.

His most well-known service was when Doss was tested in one of the bloodiest battles during World War II, when his fellow soldiers needed aid during the Battle of Okinawa. It was on the Maeda Escarpment that Doss ran into the fight rather than from it. He is credited with lowering 75 men to safety down the 400-foot escarpment.

"Courage and bravery can't be taught," says retired U. S. Army Colonel Charles Knapp and chair of the Desmond Doss Council. "What



many people don't know about Desmond is that before his actions on the Maeda Escarpment, he had already been awarded 2 Bronze Stars and 2 Purple Hearts. His faith carried him through unimaginable horror."

In addition to the Medal of Honor, Doss was awarded 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, 307 Inf, 77th Infantry Division for securing the Maeda Escarpment.

The movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, has been in the making for 15 years. It opened on November 4, 2016, in 3,000 theaters and has been optioned to be shown in every major movie distribution area of the world.

There were many struggles to bring Desmond's story to the big screen," says Knapp. "Some studios thought it was too religious. Many things that had been put in place

for making the movie changed when the economy tanked in 2007-2008. After that, we had to start completely over." In February 2015, funding was obtained, and the creation of the movie was finally underway.

This isn't the first time that Doss's story has been told in film. Terry Benedict's television documentary, *The Conscientious Objector*, was created in 2004. It featured interviews with Doss and his fellow soldiers.

In screenings across the United States, *Hacksaw Ridge* received high praise for its positive portrayal of a Christian who stood for his convictions. Although it is a story of war, the central theme is one of faith and living by uncompromising principle.

The Desmond Doss Council is tasked with the mission to preserve, protect, and manage the life story of Desmond T. Doss and his intellectual properties, collections, and memorabilia in a manner that honors his legacy, his beliefs, his church, and his God.

How will you respond to questions about Desmond Doss and Hacksaw Ridge? Helpful talking Points can be found on page 29.



HACKSAW RIDGE TALKING POINTS

WHAT DO WE SAY IF SOMEONE ASKS WHY THE CHURCH IS BEHIND THIS MOVIE OR WHY THEY WOULD PROMOTE IT?

Hacksaw Ridge was not made by or for the Adventist Church. Desmond Doss approved the telling of his story provided his beliefs, the facts, his church were properly and accurately portrayed; and that the movie would honor God. The Desmond Doss Council was charged with protecting, preserving, and managing the story to God's glory. The movie's producers have coordinated script, plot lines, and portrayal with the Doss Council for accuracy and appropriateness.

WHY WOULD ADVENTISTS WATCH THE FILM?

Neither church leadership nor the Doss Council advocates church members to see the film. The church is neither promoting nor marketing the film. Church members will be asked questions about Doss, his beliefs, his church, prayer, faith and the miraculous events leading to the award of the Medal of Honor. *Hacksaw Ridge* will motivate those questions. It will be helpful for church members to understand the full context of how these most Christian of all moral ethics are portrayed in the film and how they honor and glorify God. The movie is expected to open avenues of conversation with friends, neighbors, co-workers and family like no other witnessing opportunity has in 100 years.

HOW VIOLENT IS THE FILM?

Very violent; it is not for the faint of heart. Some scenes, while true, may be so realistic as to be disturbing. The battle for the Maeda Escarpment in which Desmond Doss is a central participant visually describes the

brutality sometimes in disturbing but accurate ways. This battle is considered by military historians to be the bloodiest of World War II. *Hacksaw Ridge* is a war movie and the first to document the battle on film. The action is all live action. Very little computer (CGI) animation was used.

DID THE FILM STAY TRUE TO DOSS'S CHARACTER? Yes.

WAS THE SPIRITUAL TONE CONVEYED CORRECTLY? Yes.

DID THEY PORTRAY ADVENTISTS IN A GOOD LIGHT?

Yes. While the film does not preach, teach or moralize, viewers come away with the seed of thought set in their minds that Doss' integrity, faith, and moral courage is synonymous with what Seventh-day Adventists believe and practice.

HOW MUCH NUDITY?

No female nudity. One barracks scene has one soldier exhibitionist (actually happened) goofing off, but there is no full nudity displayed.

WHY IS MEL GIBSON THE DIRECTOR?

Mel Gibson was chosen by the film's producer, Bill Mechanic, as the best director to accurately portray the story. His faith tradition was not a consideration.

To learn more about the Desmond Doss story and the movie, *Hacksaw Ridge*, visit:
www.desmondoss.com
www.hacksawridgeresources.com
www.hacksawridge.movie

If you are asked by friends and acquaintances about *Hacksaw Ridge*, how will you respond? The North American Division has prepared these talking points as a guide.