



**Desmond  
Doss**  
*Army*

## Desmond Doss

Feb 7, 1919 - Mar 23, 2006

**BIRTHPLACE:** Lynchburg, VA

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### SOLDIER DETAILS

**HIGHEST RANK:** Corporal

**DIVISION:** Army, Medical Detachment 307th Infantry

**THEATER OF OPERATION:** Pacific

**SERVED:** Jan 1, 1942 -

**BATTLE:** Maeda Escarpment, otherwise known as  
Hacksaw Ridge Gaum

**MILITARY HONORS:** Medal of Honor Citation 2  
Bronze stars

**HONORED BY:** The Eisenhower Foundation

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### BIOGRAPHY

"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 really deserve this. I consider this a greater honor than being president" - "The Desmond Doss Council" Desmond Thomas Doss, born on February 7, 1919 in Lynchburg Virginia, voluntarily joined the US Army on April 1, 1942. He was sent to Fort Jackson in South Carolina for training with the reactivated 77th Infantry Division. Doss' refusal to carry a weapon led to his assignment with the Medical Detachment, 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division. At first many were not pleased with Desmond's beliefs as a conscientious objector - He would then go on to save the lives of many of these men. Desmond saw heavy combat on the islands of Guam and Leyte. By the time he arrived on Okinawa, Private First Class Desmond Doss was the recipient of two Bronze Star citations for Valor. During the brutal battle to capture Maeda Escarpment, otherwise known as Hacksaw Ridge, Doss would go on to save at least 75 to 100 of his brothers during the Battle of Hacksaw Ridge. Despite suffering from his own injuries, Doss was determined to save as many men as possible. He did just that. His actions during the Battle were beyond legendary. Doss was wounded four times during Battle of Okinawa - but he never gave up. He was evacuated from the island on May 21, 1945. Private First Class Desmond Doss was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Harry S Truman during a White House Ceremony on October 12, 1945. ? Desmond Doss' Medal of Honor Citation reads as follows: 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. Before being discharged from the army in 1946 Desmond was diagnosed with tuberculosis. He would spend upwards of the next 6 years in the hospital resulting in the loss of his left lung. He would retire from the military in 1976 with the rank of Corporal. Despite his illness Desmond was a survivor. Desmond and his wife Dorothy (pictured below) had one son. He became a widower in 1991 when his wife perished in an automobile accident. He later remarried in 1993. On March 23, 2006 Corporal Desmond Doss passed away due to respiratory complications at the age of 87 years old. He lies in rest at Chattanooga National Cemetery in Tennessee. "Courtesy of WWII uncovered original description and photos sourced by The Desmond Doss Council, US Army Center of Military History and Ancestry Database"