

Living what you Believe...

During World War II there was a young man from Virginia named Desmond Doss who was a member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and he firmly believed that it was wrong to kill another human. He wanted to serve his country and he had no problem dying for his country but he would not carry a gun or take a life even to save his own. When Desmond Doss left for boot camp his wife gave him a small bible to carry with him. As his first day in boot camp was ending he did what he always did which was to get down on his knees and pray at his bedside. The other recruits upon seeing this greeted him with a flurry of name-calling and obscenities and threw boots at him in ridicule. His commanding officers were worried that in the heat of battle American lives might be lost because of his unwillingness to use a gun. They made Doss a medic. About nine months later they were in the pacific and had climbed up a steep cliff onto a plateau when the Japanese opened fire upon them. Dozens of men were killed and wounded. The shooting was so intense that the Americans had to pull back leaving the dead and wounded behind. Everyone that could escape over the cliff did, except for one lone medic named Desmond Doss. Under constant enemy fire Doss treated the wounded and made a stretcher and tied ropes to it and one by one lowered the wounded over the side of the cliff to safety. Doss worked throughout the afternoon and evening treating and lowering the injured soldiers. When Doss finally came over the side of the cliff he had single handedly saved seventy men. Men, who some months earlier had ridiculed him and thrown boots at him as he prayed, now owed their lives to him. Over the next several days, Desmond Doss risked his life again and again to save lives. Some time later Doss was treating the wounded on a beach when shrapnel struck him in his legs. He was being carried to safety when he ordered the men carrying him to put him down and place another man on the stretcher who was in worse condition. While Doss lay on the ground waiting for another stretcher a sniper shot him, shattering his arm. Rather than risk someone else's safety to help him he tied his shattered

arm to a gunstock and crawled 300 yards over rough terrain to an aid station. After he was in a hospital he discovered that he had lost the bible his wife had given him, somewhere on the battlefield. He sent back word to his fellow soldiers that if they found it to please send it to him. Upon hearing of his lost bible his entire battalion got on their hands and knees and sifted their fingers through sand, mud and water until one of them finally found it. They dried and cleaned it as best they could and sent it to him. Desmond Doss spent five full years in hospitals recovering from the injuries he received in the war. He was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nations highest military award, for his heroism on the battlefield. The Medal of Honor was presented to Desmond Doss by U.S President Harry Truman who said during the ceremony "I would rather have that medal than be President". A monument was later erected on the plateau where he saved seventy men from death to further honor him. He stayed true to his faith and never carried a gun or took a life. As of the writing of this story Desmond Doss is still alive and remains a living legend of W.W.II.

I hope that each of you has a belief in God and that each of you is as strong in your faith as Desmond Doss was in his. Many people say what they believe but few live what they believe.