

**CULTURAL
AWARENESS**

OBSERVANCE



**Days of Remembrance
Resource Base**

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Instructions

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Days of Remembrance

Did You Know?



Oskar Schindler plants a tree on the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem, 1962. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Leopold Page Photographic Collection. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa31614>

The Righteous Among the Nations Honors People Who Saved Jews

In 1953, Israel's parliament established Yad Vashem as the country's Martyrs' and Heroes' Memorial Authority. As a Holocaust remembrance center, it recognizes and honors the 6 million Jews killed during the Holocaust, the Jewish resistance fighters, and others who risked their lives to save Jews. The "Righteous Among the Nations" is a title bestowed upon the latter, non-Jewish people who helped the Jews in times of need.

The four qualifications required to earn the title of Righteous Among the Nations include saving Jews from the threat of death or deportation to concentration camps, risking their own life or liberty to save Jews, having the intention to help Jewish people, and having first-hand testimony or evidence from those rescued.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day in 1962, the Avenue of the Righteous was established as a place to plant trees to commemorate rescuers. The Righteous Among the Nations title holders receive a medal bearing their name and a certificate of honor, along with their name added to the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem. As of 2016, 26,120 individuals and groups from 44 countries have been bestowed the honor.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/righteous-among-the-nations?series=37>



Deportation of Jewish children from the Lodz ghetto in Poland, 1942. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jacob Igra. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1520>

Six Million Jews Died in the Holocaust

An unfathomable number of people died in the Holocaust. About 6 million Jews were killed by the Nazis and their collaborators. Nazis kept track of how many people they killed and sent to ghettos through deportation lists, registries of Jewish people, and documents from their euthanasia program. Though there is no single document listing every Jewish person killed, total estimates are gathered through various data.

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, around 2.7 million Jews died at killing centers, about 2 million murdered in mass shootings, between 800,000 and 1 million killed in ghettos, labor camps, and concentration camps, and at least 250,000 in other violent ways, such as riots, forced marches, or individual executions.

Millions of people from various nations were killed by the Nazis and their allies throughout WWII, including 3.3 million Soviet prisoners, 1.8 million Polish civilians, hundreds of thousands of Romani men, women, and children, Serbian civilians, people with disabilities, German political dissenters, Jehovah's Witnesses, gay or bisexual men, and Black people.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution>



A Jewish French resistance group, Campagne Reiman, pose together after the liberation of France. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/jewish-french-underground-group>

Partisan Groups Fought Nazis With Guerrilla Warfare and Smuggling

There were many Jewish people, mostly teenagers, who organized into partisan groups and fought against the Nazis. These men and women were often ordinary citizens who escaped ghettos and labor camps to join resistance efforts. The Jewish members of these groups often hid on the edges of towns and in forests to evade capture. These guerrilla groups were comprised of thousands of occupied people as well as between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews.

Because Nazis weren't as familiar with the terrain in occupied nations, partisans would hide in the forests and use the land to their advantage. Families would hide with these groups to evade capture as well. Women were more active in Jewish partisan groups, primarily sabotaging armaments manufactured by Nazis.

Many partisans operated as smugglers, couriers, and forgers who sought to protect Jewish children. Others blew up thousands of Nazi supply trains, power plants, and factories. They often lived under harsh weather conditions without real shelter and dealt with few supplies. Non-Jewish partisan groups were aided by local communities more often because antisemitism was so common.

<https://www.jewishpartisans.org/what-is-a-jewish-partisan>

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/women-in-the-holocaust/partisans/index.asp>



Women in barracks at Auschwitz after liberation. Photo credit: National Archives and Records Administration, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/women-survivors-at-auschwitz>

The Holocaust Brutalized Women

Through the Holocaust, Nazi Germany attempted to dehumanize Jewish people and all others they found “inferior.” This was especially the case with Jewish women. Nazis took away things that defined peoples’ personalities, such as removing the hair of women. They were branded with numbers and treated with tremendous disdain and malice. Women were undressed, sexually assaulted, and beaten. Nazis raped some women when they knew they wouldn’t get caught. Some Russians even committed rape when they liberated concentration camps.

In some cases, women used their gender to survive. Some women used smuggled make-up to possibly improve their chances during selection. Grooming and hygiene could be a matter of live or death, such as taking care of lice. Many women wore beads, shoes, or hairpins, anything to help them retain a sense of identity.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/women-in-the-holocaust/womanhood/index.asp>



German propaganda photo of a group of infants, promoting the role of “nurturing woman.” Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/german-propaganda-about-the-role-of-women?parent=en%2F4164>

The Women of Germany Were Forced Into Compliance

During Nazi rule in Germany, many “Aryan” women and men alike supported Hitler and his brutal antisemitism. Those who dissented were ostracized or killed. Nazis sought to increase the number of “racially pure” Germans by encouraging women to have as many children as possible. They created several laws that stated every SS member should have four children whether they were married or not. Germany provided large subsidies for families with many children, and increased punishments for abortions. Germany imposed harsh gender roles onto women, teaching girls to focus on being wives and mothers. Nazis outlawed interracial marriage, and prevented people with disabilities or certain diseases from marriage altogether.

Many women were persecuted if they publicly opposed the Nazi regime. If they protested, belonged to rival political parties, or were associated with communism, they risked being sent to concentration camps and death. Women who exhibited behavior deemed inappropriate were considered “asocial” and were punished. Many women perished in the T-4 program, which euthanized people with undesirable qualities.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/women-in-the-third-reich>



German police guard a group of Romani people who have rounded up for deportation to Poland, between 1940 and 1945.

Photo credit: Lydia Chagoll, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/german-police-guard-a-group-of-roma-gypsies>

Romani People Suffered Genocide

Romani (Roma) people originated in the Punjab region of northern India, entering Europe between the 8th and 10th centuries. They were called “Gypsies” because they were mistakenly identified as Egyptian; this label is considered by many to be derogatory. By 1939, there were about 1 million Roma living in Europe, typically working as craftsmen, performers, or shopkeepers.

Romani people were harassed and persecuted in Europe for centuries before Nazis took power in Germany. The Nazi regime began targeting Roma people for having “mixed blood,” passing racist laws that required Romani people to be sterilized. Through 1939 to 1945, Roma were sent to forced-labor and concentration camps, where they were systematically killed. Roma from all across Europe were sent to gas chambers, worked to death, shot, and contracted fatal diseases because of the Nazis. It is still unclear how many Romani people were killed during the Holocaust, but historians believe 250,000 to 500,000 Roma were killed during WWII.

After the war, discrimination of Romani people continued with little repercussion. In March 1982, German Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt formally acknowledged that German Roma were victims of genocide.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/series/roma-gypsies>

Homosexuality During the Nazi Regime

When the Nazis consolidated their power in Germany, they persecuted gay men and women. Before the Nazis came into power, gay communities flourished in Germany, particularly in big cities, despite sexual relations between men being criminalized in the country. The law eventually became the basis of a statute to target any man who ever had sexual relations with another man. About 100,000 men were arrested, about half were convicted of being homosexual, and between 5,000 and 15,000 were sent to concentration camps. They were typically made to wear pink triangles on their uniforms and were particularly brutalized.

Lesbians were not systematically persecuted because of their sexual identity. But like those of gay men, lesbian communities were harassed and destroyed. Nazi ideology included the belief that all German women should be mothers, and they hoped to expand what they believed to be their “racially pure Aryan race.” Therefore, lesbians were not targeted specifically, but they were often persecuted because they were seen as social outsiders.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lesbians-under-the-nazi-regime>

Sentiments About Immigration in the United States

Following Kristallnacht, or the “Night of Broken Glass,” which saw violence erupt against Jews in Germany, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the ambassador to Germany to return home. At a press conference, Roosevelt said that the attack on Jews had deeply shocked the American public. He also allowed 12,000 temporary German immigrants, most of them Jews, to remain indefinitely in the United States. Polls at the time indicated that 94% of Americans disapproved of Nazi treatment of the Jews; however, only 21% thought a larger number of Jewish exiles should be welcomed into the United States.

In 1939, Democratic Senator Robert Wagner of New York and Republican Congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts brought forth a bill to admit 20,000 German refugee children into the United States over the following 2 years. This legislation, which had a rare endorsement from First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, would bypass the existing immigration quotas. However, there was vocal opposition to letting in more immigrants, particularly from Democratic Senator Robert Reynolds, who wanted a 5-year total ban immigration in exchange for the child refugee bill. A majority of Americans agreed with Reynolds, and the legislation was not passed.

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/main>

A Young Jewish Boy Was Saved by a Family and Found Love

In April 1942, 11-year-old Philip Lazowski was one of the Jewish people in the Zhetel ghetto in Poland. An officer separated people into two groups, one deemed “useful” and one comprised of children and the elderly. The second group was to be killed immediately. Philip, who was all alone, approached Mirian Rabinowitz, a nurse, and her two daughters, hoping to pretend to be her son so he’d be protected. Rabinowitz gladly did so, saving his life. Philip spent the next several years hiding in the forest with his brother and father before immigrating to the United States in 1947.

In 1953, Philip reluctantly went to the wedding of a college classmate. While there, he began talking to a young woman named Gloria, who described the story of a friend who saved a young boy in 1942. Philip waited until the end of the story to announce, “I am that boy!” He later visited Mirian Rabinowitz in their new home of Hartford, Connecticut, to give her thanks for saving his life years prior. One of her two daughters, who were both adults by then, took a great liking to Philip, and the feeling was mutual. Philip married Ruth Rabinowitz in 1955. They dedicated their lives to Holocaust remembrance and the Jewish faith. Philip became a rabbi and had three sons.

<https://people.com/human-interest/man-saved-by-stranger-in-holocaust-marries-her-daughter-years-later/>

A Jewish Woman Reunited With the Family Who Hid Her After 73 Years

Charlotte Adelman was an 11-year-old Jewish girl in 1943 when she became separated from her family and placed in an orphanage. While her mother was taken away, her father planned an escape to Eastern France, and Charlotte ended up hiding in the Quatreville family’s cellar for 9 months. The Quatrevilles, who had no connection to Charlotte or her family, took her in after she was smuggled out of Paris in a noodle truck. At first, Charlotte went to school with the two Quatreville children, then moved into the cellar over the bombed out home next door when the Germans approached the area. After several months in the resistance, her father returned to find her. In 1957, Charlotte moved to the United States, married, and had two children.

In November 2014, Charlotte, who then lived in Scottsdale, Arizona, received a Facebook message from Alain Quatreville, who was only four when Charlotte stayed with his family in France. They began a GoFundMe campaign so Charlotte and her family could raise enough money to travel to the Wall of Names in Paris at the Mémorial de la Shoah, where her mother is memorialized. After accomplishing this, Charlotte and Alain stayed in touch after meeting again.

<https://people.com/human-interest/holocaust-survivor-reunites-family-hid-her-nazis-after-73-years/>



Raphael Lemkin (top row, right) with representatives of four states who ratified the Genocide Convention in New York, 1950. Photo credit: United Nations Archives and Records Management Section, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/representatives-of-four-states-who-ratified-the-genocide-convention>

History of “Genocide” and the Law

The term “genocide” was created in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jewish refugee, referring to violent crimes against groups with the intent to destroy the existence of the group. After WWII, many top Nazis were charged with crimes against humanity during the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, Germany; they used the term genocide in the indictment as a descriptive term. Thanks in part to the work of Lemkin, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which internationally defines and criminalizes genocide.

According to the United Nations’ definition, genocide includes the following acts with the intention to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/what-is-genocide>

<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>



Office of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, where verdicts against people responsible for committing genocide and war crimes in Rwanda were handed down. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Public Domain. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/international-criminal-tribunal-for-rwanda>

Genocide Has Continued and Can Happen Again

Despite what we know about the horrors of the Holocaust, more genocides have occurred. The genocides in Rwanda in 1994 and Bosnia in 1995 are just two examples. An important part of understanding and reflecting on the Holocaust is identifying the possibility of atrocities to occur again.

Some of the risk factors and warning signs, according to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, include instability, harmful ideology, and discrimination and violence against groups. Large-scale instability can result from armed conflict, uprisings, or threats to a regime's power; in unstable environments, leaders and citizen may be willing to resort to violence to protect themselves and what they value. Genocide can occur when leaders believe that some people in their country are inferior or dangerous because of their race, religion, or national or ethnic origin. Continually, before genocide is committed, there have likely been instances of discrimination, persecution, and violence to the people who belong to a certain group.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/question/what-have-we-learned-about-the-risk-factors-and-warning-signs-of-genocide>



Memorial to Metropolitan Chrysostomos and Lucas Carrer on the Greek island of Zakynthos, 2012. Photo credit: Marcel Lingg, Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Resistance_Memorial%2%80%93_Zakynthos-City_%E2%80%93_Greek_%E2%80%93_01.jpg

Greek Island Protected Its Jews From Nazi Occupation

During WWII, there were about 275 Jews living on Zakynthos, a Greek island in the Ionian Sea. The island was under Italian rule, and the Jews remained unharmed; however, after Mussolini's removal from office, Germany occupied the territory in 1943, and ordered all Jews assembled for deportation.

The Greek mayor, Lucas Carrer, was ordered to provide a list of all Jews occupying the island, but he protested, telling them that they were Greek citizens who did no harm and didn't deserve deportation. The Nazis did not listen to Carrer's pleas. He went to a local church leader, Metropolitan Chrysostomos, to help negotiate with the Germans. Chrysostomos told Carrer to burn the list of Jews for deportation. Going back to the Germans without a list of Jews, he instead gave them a piece of paper with own name written on it, refusing to give up his citizens.

Still, the Germans attempted to continue their plan of deportation. Carrer and Chrysostomos warned the Jews on the island, urging them to leave their homes to hide in the mountains. Many did so and were provided food and shelter by other islanders until they were liberated. The two men were honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/chrysostomos-karrer.html>



Group photographed during the Passover Seder in Manila, Philippines, 1925. Photo credit: Center for Jewish History, National Jewish Welfare Board Records. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/36988361@N08/4502486553/>

The Philippines Took in Jewish People During the Holocaust

From 1937 to 1941, about 1,200 European Jews fled from Nazi persecution to the Philippines. Many came from Austria and Germany as antisemitic policies intensified. Some traveled to Shanghai, China, and Sousa, Dominican Republic, as well. Unfortunately, life wasn't easy in the Philippines as Japan sieged much of East Asia.

Under supervision of the United States, the Commonwealth of the Philippines was unable to accept people who needed public assistance; rather, the nation's refugee committee sought professionals like doctors, mechanics, and accountants. The first president of the nation, Manuel Quezon, wanted to settle some 10,000 Jews in the Philippines, but only a fraction of this number actually arrived because of Japan's invasion. Life was difficult, but in some respects the Jews were treated better than the Filipinos during Japanese occupation. Still, there were millions of civilian deaths during the war, and many areas of the Philippines were destroyed.

A monument honoring the Philippines was erected at the Holocaust Memorial Park in Rishon Lezion, Israel, in 2009. A film titled *An Open Door*, which depicts how many Jewish people found refuge in the Philippines during the Holocaust, was shown in Sacramento, California, in November 2023. The film was made by Noel Izon, a Jewish woman who was brought there over 70 years ago.

<https://www.cnn.com/2015/02/02/world/asia/philippines-jews-wwii/index.html>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/sacramento/video/film-screened-at-crest-theater-highlights-holocaust-haven-in-philippines/>

Days of Remembrance

People



Eva Rapaport as a young girl. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/eva-rapaport>

Eva Rapaport Escaped German Persecution

Eva Rapaport and her parents hurriedly packed just a few suitcases when they decided to leave Vienna for Paris. Germany annexed their home country, Austria, in March 1938. Eva was an only child with nonreligious Jewish parents. Her father was a journalist who was harassed by the Gestapo for writing articles against the Germans.

When Eva and her family fled for Paris, they evaded German bombings and occupation. They escaped through the dangerous mountains between France and Switzerland to a southern village in an unoccupied part of France and were hidden by Father Longerey, a Catholic priest, until the end of the war. They survived mostly off vegetables grown in the small garden near the church. In 1948, the Rapaport family immigrated to the United States.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/eva-rapaport>

Adolfo Kaminsky Forged Documents to Get Jewish People to Safety

Adolfo Kaminsky deceived Nazis as a master of forging documents, saving between 10,000 to 14,000 or more Jewish people. Kaminsky was born in 1925 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Russian Jewish parents, eventually moving to France in 1932. After the German invasion and their occupation, Kaminsky found employment as an apprentice to a clothing dyer, learning to remove stains and color clothing.

The situation became dire in France, and Kaminsky's mother was mysteriously killed. He began helping the resistance by building detonators; however, by 1943, deportations from France to death camps escalated dramatically. Of the roughly 64,000 French Jews sent to concentration camps at this time, only about 2,000 survived. The Kaminskys were some of those spared because the Argentinian government intervened on their behalf. Back in Paris, Adolfo Kaminsky sought forged documentation in order to protect him and his family from future deportations. This led him to another resistance group; he met a contact nicknamed "Penguin" and was recruited for his remarkable ability to get rid of ink at just 18 years old.

In a laboratory disguised as an artist's studio, Kaminsky worked tirelessly for no compensation to forge papers for people to avoid deportation. He took great care to remove ink, duplicate typefaces, and press his own paper. With fabricated letterheads, watermarks, and rubber stamps, he forged birth certificates, passports, and ration cards. The slightest error could mean death for all involved. One night in particular, 300 children needed documents immediately, so he and others worked through the night to create 900 documents for all of them. He tireless work ruined the sight in his right eye.

After World War II, he would continue to help those in need by supporting resistance activities until the early 1970s. An extensive record of everything he did to help those in need was documented by his daughter, Sarah Kaminsky, with her biography, *Adolfo Kaminsky: A Forger's Life*. He passed away in 2023 at age 97.

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/about-us/notes-museum/adolfo-kaminsky>



Oskar Schindler (second from left) poses with his office employee at his Emalia enamel factory in Krakow, Poland, 1940.
Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Leopold Page Photographic Collection.

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa31431>

Oskar Schindler Kept Jewish People Safe in His Factory

Born in 1908 in Zwittau, Austria-Hungary, Oskar Schindler was a businessman who saved more than 1,000 Jews from deportation to Auschwitz. A citizen of the Czechoslovak Republic after World War I, Schindler served in the Czechoslovakian army then the German armed forces in 1936. He became a member of the Nazi party just before Germany annexed part of his country.

After the German invasion of Poland, Schindler moved to Kraków to take advantage of German occupation, “Aryanizing” Jewish-owned businesses. After taking over an enamelware manufacturing plant, he employed at least 1,000 Jewish forced laborers from the nearby ghetto. From March 1943 until the factory became a subcamp the next year, Schindler intervened on behalf of many Jewish workers when they lived under the brutal conditions of the Plaszow concentration camp. He bribed and used personal diplomacy to prevent the deportation of his Jewish workers, even allowing the Jews to stay the night at the factory.

After Plaszow was changed from a labor camp to a concentration camp, Schindler convinced the SS to turn his factory into a subcamp in order to keep his workers safe, keeping hundreds of Jews in his factory. Schindler was arrested three times because of suspected corruption and giving unauthorized aid to Jews, but he wasn’t charged.

In 1944, the Nazis transferred the Jews at Schindler’s factory to the Plaszow concentration camp. Schindler got authorization to relocate his plant to Bohemia and Moravia as an armaments factory. One of his assistants created a list of up to 1,200 Jewish prisoners to work the new factory; this became known as “Schindler’s list.” This action saved about 800 Jewish men and between 300 and 400 Jewish women. By the time the Soviets liberated the nearby camp, the factory had only produced one wagonload of ammunition after 8 months of operation.

Oskar Schindler died in Germany in 1974 penniless and relatively unknown. As those he saved spread his story, he gained recognition. In 1993, he and his wife Emilie Schindler were awarded the “Righteous Among Nations” title for their efforts to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. That same year, acclaimed filmmaker Steven Spielberg adapted his story into an Oscar-winning film, *Schindler’s List*.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/oskar-schindler>



Anthony Acevedo as a member of U.S. Army in France, weeks before his capture in the Battle of the Bulge, 1944. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/anthony-acevedo>

Anthony Acevedo Survived the Holocaust, Keeping an Important Record

Born in San Bernardino, California, in 1924, Anthony Acevedo faced prejudice and segregation from a young age for being of Mexican descent. In 1937, during the Great Depression, Acevedo and his family relocated from California to Durango, Mexico, after pressure from the State and Federal Government. With support from his father, he returned to the United States to join the Army, taking classes to become an Army medic. In 1944, he was sent to Europe after less than 5 months of training as part of Company B of the 275th Infantry Regiment, 70th Infantry Division.

Acevedo and his company fought in the Battle of the Bulge alongside 600,000 other Americans. He bravely tended to the wounded during the chaotic fighting. One day in January 1945, he was struck in the leg by shrapnel, captured, and sent to Stalag IX-B prison camp in Bad Orb, Germany.

While imprisoned, Acevedo and others were subjected to torture, starvation, and violence. However, he continued to treat other American POWs. Weeks later, Nazis removed Jewish American soldiers and men of other backgrounds, including Acevedo and other Mexican Americans, from the camp. They were sent to Berga, a forced labor subcamp of Buchenwald concentration camp. While there, Acevedo kept a secret diary of his experiences, the ordeals and deaths of fellow soldiers, and records of dates and names.

In April 1945, as American and Soviet troops closed in on the camp, Acevedo and other POWs were evacuated on a forced march, during which many died. Acevedo survived after liberation by Allied forces later that month. He received several awards for his service, including the Bronze Star. In 2010, he donated his diary and other artifacts to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. He was the first Mexican American to register with the museum's registry of Holocaust survivors.

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/anthony-acevedo>

Nesse Galperin Godin Survived a Death March

Nesse Galperin Godin was born in Siauliai, Lithuania, in 1928 to a happy, giving Jewish family. Her family owned a dairy business, and her mother helped in charities and orphanages. At the time, Siauliai had a diverse, vibrant Jewish community: several synagogues, Jewish schools, a Jewish newspaper, and various Jewish organizations of different political leanings. In 1941, rumors began spreading of the persecution of Polish Jews, but many remained certain nothing like that would happen to them. Once the Nazis began occupying their town, they imposed harsh policies, including forced abortion for pregnant women, limits on food, and the creation of Jewish ghettos. Many of their neighbors and local officials betrayed them, aided the Nazis in their persecution, or simply did nothing to help them.

In 1943, Nesse, her mother, and brother were deported to Danzig, Poland, to do forced labor. They were shuffled around various subcamps at the Stutthof concentration camp until Nesse was forced into a death march of 1,000 female prisoners in 1945. After 2 months, they were freed by the Soviet army, but only 200 women, including Nesse, had survived. After the war, Nesse and her mother were reunited and moved to the United States in 1950, leaving the Feldafing displaced persons camp in Bavaria after several years. Nesse married another survivor, Yankel Godin, had three children, and became a volunteer at the United States Holocaust Museum.

<https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-survivors/volunteers/nesse-galperin-godin>

Suzanne Spaak Gave up Everything to Help Jews

Suzanne Spaak, wife to a successful filmmaker, daughter of a Belgian banker, and mother of two children, was an upper-class Parisian before the German invasion of France. She despised the German occupation and decided to join the underground resistance. In 1942, she joined the National Movement Against Racism to fight Nazism. While her abilities were doubted at first, she successfully searched for hospitals in Paris that would accept hidden Jews. She used her social standing to encourage judges, clerics, and authors to help Jews and spread information on how to resist the Nazis. In 1943, she became aware of the horrors of the Holocaust and became an active participant in smuggling more than 60 children to safety, even sheltering some in her home. Later that year, she was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to prison. She was murdered by Germans 10 months later.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-women/spaak.asp>



Varian Fry posing in Berlin, where he traveled as editor for a foreign policy magazine, *The Living Age*, 1935. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Annette Fry. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1112767>

Varian Fry Informed Others on Antisemitism Then Saved Lives

Varian Fry was an American journalist who helped anti-Nazi refugees escape from France after the German invasion. Born in New York City in 1907, Fry was an editor and researcher at a number of magazines in the early 1930s. During that time, he traveled to Nazi Germany to report on Hitler’s rule, writing about the anti-Jewish riots in Berlin. Fry would continue to cover the wars beginning all over the globe, eventually writing several books on world politics.

After Germany invaded France, Fry helped gather 200 journalists, museum curators, university presidents, artists, and Jewish refugees to found the Emergency Rescue Committee to rescue people out of France, particularly artists who might be targeted by the Nazis. Fry volunteered to represent the group and guide rescue efforts in southern France.

Varian Fry used a number of legal and illegal methods to get Jewish and non-Jewish refugees to the United States. He housed refugees, provided escape routes through the mountains, and helped those illegally crossing borders onto ships to the United States, which alerted the State Department to Fry’s illegal activity. He helped about 2,000 people escape the war while dealing with several arrests and an eventual expulsion from France in 1941.

After the United States entered the war, Fry began writing for *The Nation* magazine to alert the public to the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis against the Jews. Unfit for military service, Fry worked on memoirs during the remainder of the war. Before his death in 1967, he was awarded the Croix de Chevalier de la Legion d’Honneur, France’s highest decoration of merit. He was also honored as the first American to be a “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/varian-fry?series=37>



False identification card used by Vladka Meed in the early 1940s. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Benjamin Meed. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/false-identification-card-used-by-vladka-meed>

Vladka Meed Smuggled Supplies to the Jewish Resistance, Risking Her Life

Vladka Meed, born in 1921, grew up in a lower middle-class family in Warsaw, Poland. She attended a Yiddish secular school supported by the Democratic Socialist Movement and participated in the Bund Youth Movement of Warsaw.

Under Nazi occupation, she was separated from her family. Vladka had a typical “Aryan” appearance and pretended to be a Christian outside of the Warsaw ghetto. As a teenager, she became a successful underground courier, smuggling weapons and supplies to the Jewish Fighting Organization. She also helped children escape from the ghetto into hiding, mostly in Christian homes. Tragically, while she was helping resistance to Nazi rule, her family was deported to Treblinka, where they were killed.

In 1948, Vladka Meed published a memoir, *On Both Sides of the Wall*. The book detailed her experiences as a smuggler as well as the people she interacted with. It was first published in Yiddish by the Educational Committee of the Workmen’s Circle in New York. She lectured about the Holocaust and became vice president of the Jewish Labor Committee. She’s earned many awards, including Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization Award, Award of the Jewish Teachers’ Association, the 1993 Hadassah Henrietta Szold Award, and the 1995 Elie Wiesel Remembrance Award.

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/meed-vladka>

Carl Lutz Provided Documents and Housing for Jews

Carl Lutz was born in Switzerland in 1895 but immigrated to the United States as a young man. Eventually, he became a diplomat working at the Swiss Consulate in Palestine before transferring to Budapest, Hungary. During this time, Hungary restricted the activities and movements of Jews, even forcing them to work on the battlefield during WWII; despite this, Hungarian Regent Miklós Horthy didn't allow their deportation.

As the Swiss ambassador, Lutz began working with the Jewish Agency for Palestine to get Jews to safety. He was responsible for saving thousands of Jews escape from Hungary by providing them Swiss documents. In 1944, Hitler toppled Hungary's government to install an even more radical Nazi regime, terrorizing the Hungarian Jews. Lutz was able to negotiate permission to provide protective documents for 8,000 individual Jews, just a fraction of Hungary's 800,000 Jews. Lutz instead issued the letters for 8,000 Jewish families, and members of the resistance forged thousands more.

As the Nazi-aligned agents caused havoc across Budapest, Lutz provided documents to organize safe houses, protecting Jews and hiding the resistance. Lutz's obtained buildings housed an additional 3,000 Jews. In 1944, many of Budapest's Jews were forced to march to the Austrian border, but Lutz and his colleagues rescued many from the line and brought them back to the city. Lutz and his wife fled the city in 1945 after the Soviet army invaded, returning to Switzerland after the war.

Carl Lutz earned the title of Righteous Among the Nations in 1965 for saving tens of thousands of people from dying in the Holocaust. Before and after his death in 1975, he was recognized with several honors, including Nobel Peace Prize nominations and a dedicated room in the Federal Palace of Switzerland in 2018.

<https://www.history.com/news/carl-lutz-saved-jews-holocaust-nazis-world-war-ii>

<https://houseofswitzerland.org/swissstories/history/carl-lutz-swiss-man-who-saved-tens-thousands-jews>

<https://collections.yadvashem.org/en/about/o6455>



Lisa Nussbaum as a child. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/lisa-nussbaum>

Lisa Nussbaum Fought the Nazis as a Partisan

Lisa Nussbaum, born in 1926, lived with her Jewish family in Racзки, Poland. Her father exported geese, and her mother owned a fabric store. In 1937, while she was in school, some boys grabbed her by the hair and pinned her to the wall, saying, “We’ll crucify you like you crucified Jesus.” This kind of threat is a common anti-Jewish myth that Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus, falsely justifying violence against Jews.

In 1941, Lisa and her family were in the Slonim ghetto. While there, Lisa and her sister, Pola, hid in a nearby forest and saw Jews being shot and put into pits. They were caught, about to be killed in the same manner, but they escaped. They hid with a Christian woman until it was safe. When they returned, they found her mother had been killed. Pola was killed when she tried to escape in 1942. Lisa got away from the ghetto, joined the Jewish resistance in Vilna, and aided a partisan group, fighting Germans out of the Naroch Forest. In 1944, Soviet troops liberated the region. Lisa immigrated to the United States in 1947.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/lisa-nussbaum>

Sofka Skipwith Saved Jewish Children

Sofka Skipwith, born in 1907, was a Russian princess descending from the founders of Moscow. As a refugee, she lived in England and France with other Russian exiles. When Germany conquered France, she was imprisoned between 1941 and 1944. While there, she heard the tragic stories of Jewish prisoners and decided to help them once she was released.

Sofka Skipwith and Madeleine White, a detained British citizen, maintained contacts with French resistance groups in order to make fake documents for Jewish youth in Vittel. Sofka smuggled a list of Jewish people in a tube of toothpaste to western diplomats to protect them from deportation. Sofka’s fake Latin American passports for the 280 Polish Jews mostly failed, and all but 60 of them were deported to concentration camps. Sofka and Madeline managed to smuggle a Jewish baby out of the camp. After the war, she published an autobiography, *Sofka, an Autobiography of a Princess*, which detailed her experiences.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-women/skipwith.asp>



*Johan van Hulst in the Dutch Senate, 1963. Photo credit: Anefo photo collection, Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10648/aa28a49e-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>*

Johan van Hulst Transported Jewish Children From His School

Johan van Hulst was a Dutch a teacher working at a Calvinist teaching college in Amsterdam in 1942. In the midst of WWII, he was responsible for saving the lives of at least 600 Dutch infants and children from Nazi persecution. After the funding of his school was cut, he organized community funding and worked twice his previous hours at low wages, becoming principal.

Across the street from the school, which was in a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, stood a former theater turned into a deportation center by the Nazis. Historians believe about 46,000 people were deported from the former theater. The center's administrator, Walter Süskind, had Jewish heritage and worked with the head of the children's day-care facility to falsify arrival numbers, letting people escape and sneaking children to the tram. They recruited van Hulst to join their effort. To prevent their deportation, nurses at the day care would pass children over a hedge to van Hulst; he then gave them over to resistance groups to hide them.

The men systematically organized with the parents to fake the children's registration so their disappearances were not noticed, making the horrible decision of which children to spare, unable to save them all without getting caught. Van Hulst kept up appearances with the Nazis, not even telling his wife about what he was doing.

He managed to keep his school open during the war and worked with the resistance until he went into hiding during the final weeks of the war. Later in life, he went on to become a Dutch senator for 25 years and a member of the European Parliament in the 1960s. His old home became a Holocaust museum. Before his death in 2018, he was awarded the Righteous Among the Nations title.

<https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/29/europe/johan-van-hulst-dead-intl/index.html>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43569049>



Corrie Ten Boom in a scouting uniform, 1921. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CorrieTenBoom.jpg>

Corrie Ten Boom Organized Hiding Places for Jewish People

Corrie Ten Boom, born in 1892, and her family were members of the Dutch Reformed Church who helped Jews and those escaping Nazi persecution during WWII. Before the war, her family protested the treatment of Jews at the hands of the Nazis, even working with Jewish communities to improve relations with Christians. When the war started, the Ten Boom family helped organize a small resistance network, building hidden shelters, gathering supplies, and finding others willing to hide Jews. They kept six people, including Jews and resistance workers, hidden in their home in the Netherlands.

Once they were suspected of helping Jews, the Gestapo raided their home and arrested all ten members of their family, but those hiding remained undiscovered. Corrie, her sister, and her father remained in prison. Casper Ten Boom, her father, died just 10 days later. Corrie and her sister were sent to the Ravensbrück camp in Germany, where her sister perished. Corrie was eventually discharged from the camp, traveled back to the Netherlands, and became an advocate of reconciliation, helping others to overcome the scars left by Nazi occupation.

Corrie Ten Boom received recognition with the Righteous Among the Nations title by Yad Vashem in 1967. She wrote about her experiences in an autobiography, *The Hiding Place*. She died in 1983 at the age of 91.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/corrie-ten-boom>



Gertruida Wijsmuller-Meijer with a commemorative bust of her head in Amsterdam, Netherlands, 1965. Nationaal Archief of the Netherlands, Anefo photo collection. <http://hdl.handle.net/10648/aac15dba-d0b4-102d-bcf8-003048976d84>

Gertruida Wijsmuller-Meijer Helped Young Refugees

Born in Alkmaar, Netherlands, in 1896, Geertruida Wijsmuller fought to save thousands of Jews from the Nazis during the Holocaust. She was a non-Jew with access to Nazi power structure from her high social standing, allowing her to operate in Germany with connections in high places. Working with the resistance against German aggression, she requested permission for 600 Jewish children to leave Austria for England in 1938. With the tight timeline of 5 days and numerous bureaucratic problems, she helped the children escape the country. Over the next 2 years, she transported children from across Central Europe to safety. Wijsmuller accompanied some of these young refugees, risking her own life.

She also organized the transportation of medicine and food to camps of French fighters in unoccupied zones. In France, she also helped refugees escape persecution by helping them transport through Spain.

https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?searchType=righteous_only&language=en&itemId=4018228&ind=0

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/truus-wijsmuller-saved-1000s-of-jews-in-wwii-so-why-has-no-one-heard-of-her/>



Gertrude Boyarski with her husband, 1946. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/gertrude-boyarski?parent=en%2F11842>

Gertrude Boyarski Fought and Disrupted German Supply Lines

Gertrude Boyarski was born in 1922 to a Jewish family. When the Germans invaded her town of Derechin, Poland, Gertrude and her family were forced into a ghetto. Her father was a butcher and housepainter, deemed “useful” by the Nazis, and the family was kept in a separate guarded building. However, this did not protect them from a Nazi massacre on July 24, 1942, in which over 3,000 Jews were killed in the ghetto. The Boyarski family escaped into the forest and joined a partisan unit. The family helped attack the police station, getting weapons and ammunition for the rebel group. In the following months, Gertrude’s whole family was killed at the hands of German soldiers and citizens aiding their cause.

After the death of her family, Gertrude dedicated herself to fighting alongside the partisans. She proved her worth to the unit’s leader, Russian commander Bulak, by standing guard alone for 2 weeks. Gertrude attacked German soldiers who invaded surrounding villages. In one instance, on International Women’s Day, Gertrude and a friend demolished a wooden bridge used by German troops, using kerosene and straw from a local village. After the war, she married another partisan fighter and moved to the United States.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/gertrude-boyarski>



Stefania Wilczynska, 1927. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons, Maria Falkowska, Public Domain.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stefania_Wilczy%C5%84ska_1927.jpg

Stefania Wilczynska Gave Her Life to Jewish Children

Stefania Wilczynska was born in Poland in 1886. She studied at the University of Liège, Belgium, and became a teacher. She began working at an orphanage with Dr. Janusz Korczak, who enlisted in World War I. Stefania Wilczynska oversaw the 150 children at the orphanage while he was away. Years later, when the Germans invaded Poland, she had the opportunity to escape through some of her connections, but she declined in order to stay with the orphaned children, attempting to keep them safe. Stefania, Dr. Korczak, and the children were sent to the Warsaw ghetto where they would be killed.

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/women-in-the-holocaust/caring-others/stefania-wilczynska.asp>

Hannah Szenes Returned to Her Home Country to Aid Jews

Hannah Szenes was a Jewish volunteer parachutist from Budapest, Hungary, before moving to Palestine in 1939. She, along with 32 other Jewish parachutists, fought on behalf of the British army. In June 1944, Szenes and others infiltrated occupied Hungary to assist resistance and rescue efforts. She was captured by Germans and tortured for several months, but she did not give away any information. In order to get her to talk, they captured and imprisoned her mother as well. Still, neither of them broke. Tragically, Hannah was then executed by the Germans at just 23 years old. Her mother kept her memory alive by publishing Hannah's plays, poems, and diaries that she had written.

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/szenes-hannah>



Photo of Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds. Photo credit: Yad Vashem.
<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/edmonds.html>

Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds Heroically Stood up to Nazis

Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds was born in 1919 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Edmonds, who grew up attending a Methodist church, enlisted for the U.S. Army at age 21; he was sent to Europe in 1944 as part of the 106th Infantry Division, just several days before the Battle of the Bulge began. Unfortunately, Edmonds became one of the 20,000 Americans captured. Many were forced to march, sealed in boxcars with no food or water, and transported to the Stalag IX-B prison camp.

The Germans divided POWs into groups and began transporting them to other camps. Edmonds, now one of the highest ranking members at the camp, defended the Jews who were treated much worse. In 1945, the Germans announced that all Jewish prisoners were to report in front of their barracks the following morning, where they'd be shot. Edmonds ordered all Americans, Jewish or not, to stand with the Jews. That morning, a German commander shouted at Edmonds, "These men cannot all be Jews!"

Edmonds responded, "We are all Jews here." The commander pointed his pistol at Edmonds' head, threatening him to reveal who among them were Jewish, but he did not waver. Edmonds told the German commander that, if he shot him, he'd have to kill them all, and he'd be tried as a war criminal. Because the war appeared to be ending soon, the German commander yielded and let them go back to their barracks. The 200 Jews among them were not identified and stayed safe until the camp was liberated. Edmonds valiantly stood up to the Germans even at the end, refusing orders to evacuate with the other prisoners, instead waiting for the U.S. Army to arrive shortly thereafter.

Edmonds would go on to fight again in the Korean War. He then returned to Tennessee, spending the rest of his life with his family while working as a salesman. He never told anybody, even his family, about the events of the prison camp. After his death in 1985, his son discovered the story while helping his daughter with a school project. In 2015, he was recognized with the Righteous Among the Nations title.

<https://time.com/6306430/roddie-edmonds-american-world-war-ii/>

<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/edmonds.html>



Blanka Rothschild, 2004. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/blanka-rothschild-in-2004>

Blanka Rothschild Survived a Concentration Camp

Blanka Rothschild, an only child, lived in Lodz, Poland, with her family when the German army invaded in 1939. Her father died 2 years prior. Blanka and her mother decided to stay in Lodz with her grandmother who couldn't travel. There, they were forced into a ghetto where they worked in a bakery and a hospital. In 1944, Blanka and her family were deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp, where only she survived. The Nazis were planning to kill all of the prisoners, but didn't have enough time before the Russians arrived to liberate the camp.

After the war, she joined a caravan headed to Warsaw, which had been reduced to rubble, and hitchhiked back to Lodz. Everything in her old apartment was gone, even the carpeting, and Blanka had nothing. She moved to a displaced persons camp in Berlin and then to the United States in 1947 at 25 years old and started a family. Blanka Rothschild passed away at 87 in 2010.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/blanka-rothschild-oral-history-excerpts>

Frieda Belinfante Disguised Herself to Aid Resistance Efforts

Frieda Belinfante was a half-Jewish lesbian woman who disguised as a man to hide from the Nazi regime. She was involved with the resistance movement responsible for the destruction of the Amsterdam Population Registry in March 1943. Belinfante helped falsify identity cards and secure hiding places for those persecuted by the Nazis. Later that year, she had to go into hiding herself after many members of her Netherlands-based gay resistance group were executed by Nazi officers. She escaped to Switzerland and then to the United States.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/frieda-belinfante>



Serena and Irene Fogel in Paris on their way to New York, 1947. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn516883#?rsc=21439&cv=2&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=-130%2C-854%2C2584%2C4021>

Irene Fogel Weiss Survived Ravensbrück and Became a Volunteer

Irene Fogel Weiss was 13 years old when she was sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. She was born in 1930 in Bótrágy, Czechoslovakia, to a Jewish family, which included her parents, Meyer and Leah Fogel, and her five siblings. Irene and her family were moved to a Jewish ghetto in Munkács, which was an old brick factory not meant to house people. All of the girls had to get their heads shaved. When this happened, Irene's mother gave her a headscarf, making her look older, which likely spared her from selection at the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. When they were sent there, Irene's family was killed except for her and her older sister, Serena. The two of them were selected for forced labor and moved to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. They survived until Soviet troops approached the camp and the SS troops fled. Irene, Serena, and their aunt, Rose, went to Prague to look for other survivors.

The three of them lived with some surviving relatives in the Sudetenland for several years before they moved to New York in 1947, thanks to sponsorships and financial aid from the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. In 1949, Irene married Martin Weiss and moved to Virginia, where she taught for the Fairfax County Public School for 13 years. Irene and Martin Weiss also volunteered at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and have three children.

<https://www.ushmm.org/remember/holocaust-survivors/volunteers/irene-fogel-weiss>



Waitstill and Martha Sharp, 1939. Photo credit: Yad Vashem, Public Domain.
<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/sharp.html>

Waitstill and Martha Sharp Organized Refugee Programs

Waitstill and Martha Sharp were Americans who spent many months during WWII distributing food and helping Jews and intellectuals escape Europe. Waitstill was born in 1902, eventually graduating from Harvard Law School before meeting Martha in 1927. Martha was born in 1905 and studied social work at Northwestern University. Waitstill became an ordained Unitarian minister, and they had two children.

Because of American Unitarians' close ties to Unitarian churches in Czechoslovakia, the Sharps were outraged at the annexation of the country by Germany. The Sharps, along with the American Unitarian Association, dedicated themselves to helping refugees as many Unitarian leaders, political dissidents, Jews, and many others fled German-occupied areas.

Waitstill and Martha traveled to Prague in 1939. Soon Czechoslovakia was totally invaded by Germany, and chaos engulfed the Sharps' new post. Martha focused on individual immigration cases, and Waitstill worked on overall relief projects. For 6 months, they distributed funds and food, helped refugees with paperwork and future employment, and, on one occasion, secretly escorted refugees to England. They returned to the United States just as WWII broke out.

The Sharps and other Unitarian leaders established the Unitarian Service Committee; the couple then traveled to Lisbon, France, to help thousands of political refugees escape, including the German-Jewish author Lion Feuchtwanger. Martha traveled to Marseille to help escapees, including many children, with travel arrangements, money, and access to food. Her organization of children's transport became a model for the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children.

In 1944, Waitstill started a position with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in Cairo, Egypt, in 1944, while Martha helped refugees in Spain and Portugal. Having spent so much time apart, the couple eventually divorced and remarried after the war. In 2006, they were both designated as Righteous Among the Nations for risking their lives to help Jews.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/martha-and-waitstill-sharp>



Haika Grosman in Poland, 1945. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Moreshet Mordechai Anilevich Memorial. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/haika-grosman>

Haika Grosman Led Resistance in Poland

Haika Grosman, born in Poland, was a member of a wealthy Jewish family. As a young woman, she was active in a Jewish socialist movement, which organized communication between Jewish people stuck inside of ghettos. She adopted false identities and attempted to unify various resistance groups. In 1944, Grosman formed a group of six women in Bialystok, Poland, called “the anti-fascist committee.” The group secured ammunition, communicated with partisans in the forest and rebels in concentration camps, and even marched with Soviet troops to take back the city. After the war, Haika was bestowed with many honors and immigrated to Israel, where she became politician. She spent the rest of her life establishing social programs, women’s rights, and rehabilitating Holocaust survivors.

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/grosman-haika>

Madeline Deutsch and Her Mother Stuck Together Through Auschwitz

Madeline Deutsch was born to a middle-class family in Czechoslovakia. Before German and Hungarian annexation of her home, her father ran a business from home, and her mother took care of the family while she went to high school. In April 1944, they were forced into a ghetto before being moved to Auschwitz. She and her mother were separated from her brother and father, who would not survive the war. Madeline’s mother saved bread for her so she would have the strength to continue. Madeline and her mother were sent to work in an ammunition factory for 1 year until Soviet forces liberated them in 1945. Afterwards, they lived in a displaced persons camp until they moved to New York in March 1949.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/madeline-deutsch-describes-the-sacrifices-her-mother-made-to-help-her-survive>



Dorothy Thompson making a “V” for “Victory” sign, 1940. Photo credit: National Archive and Records Administration.
<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/dorothy-thompson>

Dorothy Thompson Warned America About the Horrors of Nazism

Dorothy Thompson was an important American journalist during the 1930s and 1940s. She brought attention to the threat of Nazi Germany to democracy and European Jews.

In 1921, Dorothy Thompson pretended to be a Red Cross nurse in order to infiltrate the castle of former King Karl I of Hapsburg, Germany, who was allegedly seeking to reclaim the throne. Afterwards, she became a full-time correspondent for Vienna and central Europe for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the *New York Evening Post*.

In 1931, she began extensive research on the rising Nazi party and Adolf Hitler before he became German chancellor. Thompson interviewed him and sharply criticized him as “hysterical” and the Nazi party as a “cult.” Shortly thereafter, she was banished from Germany by the Nazis for her writing.

Back in the United States, she publicly decried the Nazis and American sympathizers, which included her disruption of a Madison Square Garden rally in support of German Nazis. She lectured the American public about the dangers of fascism and became a refugee activist for those trying to flee Europe. She continued to report on the horrors of German persecution of the Jews in print and on the radio.

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/dorothy-thompson>



Publicity headshot of Robert Clary from the William Morris Agency. Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Robert_Clary_1953.JPG

Holocaust Survivor, Robert Clary, Starred in *Hogan's Heroes*

Robert Clary was a successful actor and singer, best known in the United States for his role as Cpl. Louis LeBeau in *Hogan's Heroes*, a sitcom about WWII. Born Robert Max Widerman in Paris on March 1, 1926, to a large Orthodox Jewish family, he began singing and performing from a young age. When he was 16, he and his family were sent to Auschwitz at the hands of the Nazis. He was imprisoned there for over 2 years, and his 13 siblings and parents never made it out of the camp. Every other Sunday night, Clary sang and played accordion for an audience of SS officers, which he attributed to helping him survive.

From 1965 to 1971, Clary starred in *Hogan's Heroes* as the fictitious Cpl. Louis LeBeau, a member of an international group of prisoners of war attempting to defeat the Nazis from inside the Luft Stalag 13 camp, which was based on the real place of the same name outside of Frankfurt, Germany. LeBeau was a comedic character who hid in small spaces, got along well with the guard dogs, and poked fun at Nazis. Clary had an accomplished career on television and in theater before and after the show. He died in November 2022 at 96 years old as the last surviving cast member of *Hogan's Heroes*.

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/tv/tv-news/robert-clary-dead-hogans-heroes-1235263555/>

Famous Cyclist, Gino Bartali, Secretly Saved Hundreds of Jews

Gino Bartali was a professional cyclist from Ponte a Ema, a small village south of Florence, Italy. Born in 1914, Bartali began riding a bicycle at age 11 after needing a way to travel to school in Florence for middle school. By age 17, he won his first race. Bartali won the Tour de France in 1938 and defied calls from the fascist Mussolini regime to dedicate his victory to superiority to the “Italian race.” That same year, Italy passed anti-Jewish laws based on Germany’s Nuremberg Laws. In 1940, Bartali was drafted as an army messenger and continued racing and training. In 1943, when Mussolini was overthrown and Germany invaded northern Italy, conditions became much worse for Italian Jews. With the help of Cardinal Elia Dalla Costa, who was secretly helping thousands of Jews seeking refuge, Bartali transported counterfeit identification cards and documents to protect Jews. As a famous cyclist, he was able to masquerade his activities as bicycle training, hiding documents in the frame of his bike. He even hid a Jewish family in his cellar until liberation.

After the liberation of Florence, he began training again, winning the Giro d’Italia in 1946 and the 1948 Tour de France. He never shared his role in saving hundreds of people except to his son, Andrea. After his death, his activities came to light, and in 2013, he was recognized as one of the Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/gino-bartali>

Francine Christophe’s Kindness Saved a Baby’s Life

Francine Christophe was born in August 1933, the same year Hitler took power in Germany. She and her mother were deported from France to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp when she was just 11 years old. Her mother packed two pieces of chocolate to give to her daughter to make her feel better. One day, she saw a pregnant woman who was struggling to give birth because of the horrible conditions. Francine gave the woman the chocolate at the camp hospital to help her through the difficult birth. The woman, H el ena, gave birth to the small baby, but it didn’t scream or wail. Six months later, when the camp was liberated, the baby cried for the first time. They all separately went back to France. Years later, Francine organized a lecture on psychology in the Holocaust, describing her story to a crowd of professionals. At a later point in the lecture, a psychiatrist took the stand addressing Francine directly to give her a chocolate, saying, “I’m the baby.” It was the child she helped save at the Bergen-Belsen camp, repaying Francine for her selfless act.

Francine Christophe published a book, *From a World Apart: A Little Girl in the Concentration Camps*, in 2000. The book details her experiences during the Holocaust.

https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/ZZO1y90K

Guy Stern Escaped Germany and Returned to Fight

Güther “Guy” Stern, born in 1922, fled Nazi Germany when he was 15 years old. After Hitler came to power, his family, terrified of the Nazi persecution of the Jews, sent Guy to live with his aunt and uncle in St. Louis, Missouri. Tragically, his parents and his two younger siblings were unable to secure sponsorship and perished at the hands of the Nazis.

After attempting to enlist in the Navy after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was denied because he wasn’t a citizen. However, he was drafted into the Army and became a naturalized citizen in 1943. Stern became one of the “Ritchie Boys,” a group named after a secret Army camp in Maryland in which 11,000 soldiers completed training on interrogation, translation, and information extraction from German and Italian documents. Between 2,000 and 3,000 members of this group were European Jews.

Stern landed in Normandy in 1944, several days after it was invaded. At least 60% of the actionable intelligence against the Axis Powers in Europe was obtained by the Ritchie Boys, including Stern. One of his strategies included pretending to be an erratic Soviet agent, threatening Germans with imprisonment in Siberia.

He used a method of mass interrogation that earned him a Bronze Star; he was also honored as a knight of the Legion of Honor from France in 2017. After the war, Stern attended college, earning his Ph.D. in 1956 from Columbia University. He taught German literature and cultural history for the next 50 years. Before his death in 2023, he also served as the director of the International Institute of the Righteous at the Zekelman Holocaust Center.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/17/world/europe/guy-stern-dead.html>



Portrait of Willem Arondeus in Blaricum, the Netherlands, 1915. Photo credit: Marco Entrop, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/1915-portrait-of-willem-arondeus>

Willem Arondeus Stopped Nazis From Finding Dutch Jews

Born in Naaden, the Netherlands, in 1894, Willem Arondeus was the son of theater costume designers. At age 17, he fought with his parents about his homosexuality, severing contact with his family who wouldn't accept him. He began writing and painting in the 1920s. Before the outbreak of World War II, Arondeus was living with another man, Jan Tijssen, the son of a greengrocer. They greatly struggled to make money, but he did get success after writing a biography of Dutch painter Matthijs Maris.

After Germany invaded the Netherlands in 1940, Arondeus joined the resistance. He and his unit falsified identity papers for Dutch Jews to escape the brutality of the Nazi regime. In 1943, his unit attacked the Amsterdam registry building to destroy records that could disprove their false identity papers. They set fire to the building, destroying thousands of files. Sadly, Arondeus and his unit were betrayed, arrested, and executed.

Before his death, he asked a friend to tell others after the war that "homosexuals are not cowards." In 1980, the Dutch government awarded him a medal for his heroics.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/willem-arondeus>

Days of Remembrance

Events & Initiatives



A synagogue in Oberramstadt burns during Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, 1938. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Trudy Isenberg. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/as-the-synagogue-in-oberramstadt-burns-during-kristallnacht-the-night-of-broken-glass-firefighters-instead-save-a-nearby-house>

German Night of Broken Glass Remembered

In November 2023, people and institutions across Germany commemorated the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass, when Nazis terrorized Jews by destroying homes, businesses, and synagogues. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was joined by Jewish leader Josef Schuster at an anniversary ceremony at a Berlin synagogue that was attacked by firebombs just a month prior. He warned that we must not tolerate antisemitism that still remains in democratic societies today.

On November 9, 1938, the Nazis killed at least 91 people, vandalized 7,500 Jewish businesses, and burned more than 1,400 synagogues. Up to 30,000 Jewish men were soon arrested; many were taken to concentration camps. Kristallnacht was a major turning point in the persecution of Jews in Germany and Austria.

<https://apnews.com/article/germany-progrom-anniversary-kristallnacht-antisemitism-holocaust-6528197232a472d3853fbb4ee2e0bc49>



*Forced labor at Ravensbrück concentration camp, 1940–1942. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/forced-labor-in-the-ravensbrueck?parent=en%2F4015>*

Many Women Perished at Ravensbrück

In May 1939, the SS created Ravensbrück, the largest concentration camp for women. Over 100,000 women were incarcerated there over the next 6 years until Soviet troops liberated the camp. In 1942, Nazis established compounds at the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps for female prisoners. During the Holocaust, Germany and its allies killed pregnant Jewish women and mothers of small children who were “incapable of work.” They were immediately sent to killing centers and gas chambers.

Between 1946 and 1948, British military courts held trials for SS authorities, camp guards, and prisoner functionaries from Ravensbrück. Nine of these Nazis were sentenced to death. The French military captured the camp commandant and the director of forced labor and sentenced them both to death. Many other Nazis running Ravensbrück were sentenced as well. The final trial was in 1966.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/women-during-the-holocaust>



The Sobibor killing center and German living quarters, 1943. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Bildungswerk Stanislaw-Hantz. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/view-of-the-sobibor-killing-center-1?parent=en%2F58360>

Sobibor Uprising Saw Prisoners Revolt Against Germans

The Sobibor Uprising occurred on October 14, 1943, at the Sobibor Nazi killing center in German-occupied Poland. A group of Polish Jews, led by Leon Feldhandler, planned a secret mass escape. Lt. Alexander Pechersky, a Soviet army POW, provided a detailed strategy to kill some of the SS officers, steal their weapons and uniforms, and free the prisoners of the camp.

The group of the prisoners succeeded. When the guards became aware of the plan, they fired upon the prisoners, who returned fire. Over 300 prisoners fled from the camp, though many were shot, died in the minefields around the camp, or were captured. Only 50 of the escaped prisoners survived the war.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/sobibor-uprising>

Denmark Was the Only Nation to Resist Forced Deportation

Denmark was the only occupied nation to resist the forced deportation of Jews. A German diplomat, Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, secretly warned the Danes of German plans to deport Jewish people from their country. Denmark then organized a nationwide effort to smuggle Jews out of Copenhagen to Sweden. They also found hiding places in homes, hospitals, and churches thanks to the effort of Danish people. About 7,200 Danish Jews were saved by the nation's efforts. Around 500 Danish Jews were still deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia. Because of Danish officials' pressure on Germany, all but 51 of the deportees survived the war.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/rescue-in-denmark?series=35>

U.S. Policies Admitted More Refugees Than Any Other Nation

During the 1930s and 1940s, the United States had no policy for accepting refugees. Those fleeing the war in Europe had to follow the bureaucratic immigration process, which included quotas on how many people the country would accept. During this time, the United States implemented stricter measures for immigration. While it didn't accept as many immigrants as possible between 1933 and 1945, it admitted more refugees fleeing Nazism than any other country in the world.

When the United States entered World War II, the Nation focused on fighting the Axis Powers, rather than rescuing Jewish victims of the Nazis. In January 1944, the U.S. Government created the War Refugee Board, which sought to provide relief for those persecuted by the Nazis. The effort saved tens of thousands of lives.

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/series/the-united-states-and-the-holocaust>



The permanent Holocaust exhibition in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/permanent>

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Opened in 1993

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, was dedicated in 1993. The museum has welcomed over 47 million visitors, 100 heads of state, and over 11 million school children. The organization's goal is to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity.

As Holocaust denial and antisemitism rise in the 21st century, the museum organizers share the stories of survivors and witnesses to the atrocities committed during WWII. The museum has many resources for professionals, teachers, law enforcement, and the military.

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum>



Jews with armbands forced to shovel snow from pavement in Kraków, Poland, 1940. Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Archiwum Panstwowe w Krakowie. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1036996>

Film Depicts Family Story of Jewish Survival in Kraków, Poland

The film, *Stories For My Children's Children: Lessons From The Holocaust*, was recently featured at film festivals in New York City and California. The documentary was originally supposed to be kept in the family but has been shared to a wider audience. The feature centers on Sarah Putter Rolnick, a resident of Long Island, New York, whose parents survived the Holocaust. The hour-long film features photos and documents kept by Putter Rolnick. Her mother, Genowefa Pioro, spent more than 2 years hiding inside of a barn, cellar, and attic outside of Kraków, Poland, thanks to the generosity of another family. Putter Rolnick's family was nearly discovered on multiple occasions, and fear of discovery was constant.

Putter Rolnick's father was a Polish soldier who lost most of his family after being taken to enemy camps. Her father survived because he was one of the 1,200 Jewish people saved by Oskar Schindler, who was depicted in the film *Schindler's List*.

<https://longislandweekly.com/daughter-of-holocaust-survivors-shares-her-family-story-in-documentary/>

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Commemorated 30th Anniversary

On April 21, 2023, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum commemorated its 30th anniversary at a national tribute event. The event celebrated the partnership between Holocaust survivors, museum supporters, and partners from across the world.

The museum’s partners rededicated themselves to protecting the truth of the Holocaust and its relevance as more survivors and eyewitnesses have passed away in the 3 decades since its founding. Antisemitism, Holocaust denial, and racism are continuing issues that the museum fights through educational and fundraising initiatives. During the ceremony, the museum presented its highest honor, the Elie Wiesel Award, to its U.S. and international partners that have extended the museum’s reach. Distinguished documentary filmmaker Ken Burns was the keynote speaker at the event.

<https://www.ushmm.org/information/press/press-releases/museum-30th-anniversary-national-tribute-event-celebrates-partnership>

LA Holocaust Museum Began a New Expansion

In November 2023, the Holocaust Museum LA began a large expansion. The museum, based in Los Angeles, California, will add a campus designed by Israeli-born architect Hagy Belzberg, which will double its capacity to work with 150,000 students. The additions include expanded outdoor and indoor spaces, galleries, classrooms, a theater, and a holographic exhibit. These are expected to be completed in 2025.

The museum is the oldest Holocaust museum in the United States and the first to be created by survivors. The groundbreaking ceremony was attended by 15 Holocaust survivors, civic officials, Jewish community leaders, and museum leadership.

<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/2023/11/21/l-a-s-holocaust-museum-breaks-ground-on-major-expansion/>



American soldiers viewing the charred remains of camp prisoners. Photo credit: National Archives and Records Administration. <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/american-responses-to-the-holocaust>

Ken Burns Shared the Stories of the United States and the Holocaust

In 2022, American filmmaker Ken Burns directed a documentary series, *The U.S. and the Holocaust*, which illustrated America’s complex relationship with the rise and fall of Nazi Germany, Jewish refugees, and the Holocaust.

The three-part, 6-hour series explores how the American people reacted to the Holocaust, illustrating the bravery of some Americans, the antisemitism in others, and the indifference of many at the time.

<https://kenburns.com/films/the-u-s-and-the-holocaust/>

“Violins Of Hope” Keeps the Memory of Jewish Musicians Alive

Violins of Hope is a project of concerts to serve as a memorial to the millions of Jews lost in the Holocaust. It is an educational experience to teach people about music, Jewish culture, and the tragedies of WWII. The concerts are performed by musicians using instruments that belonged to Jews before and during the war. Most were donated by or bought from survivors, and many bear a Star of David. The collection is owned and managed by violin makers, Amnon and Avshalom Weinstein, father and son, out of Tel Aviv and Istanbul. The organization has performed concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic, the Cleveland Symphony, and many others. They visit schools to hold narrated concerts, providing the history of some instruments, and how they were often miraculously recovered from those who had to tragically abandon them.

<https://www.violins-of-hope.com/>



Rabbi Brian Serle gives a presentation during the Holocaust Days of Remembrance event at Fort McCoy, 2023. Photo credit: Scott T. Sturkol, U.S. Army.

https://www.army.mil/article/266502/fort_mccoy_observes_2023_holocaust_remembrance_day_national_days_of_remembrance

Fort McCoy Hosted a Rabbi for 2023 Days of Remembrance Event

On April 20, 2023, Fort McCoy in Wisconsin held a special event for Holocaust Days of Remembrance. They hosted guest speaker Rabbi Brian Serle, the rabbi for the Congregation Sons of Abraham of La Crosse, Wisconsin. While there, he described the Holocaust and reminded everybody why we observe this occasion. “Holocaust Remembrance Day is commemorated all over the world with solemn music, sincere prayers, mourning for the innocent, murdered Jews and others, and speeches like this one,” he said.

The ceremony, which was organized by the Fort McCoy Equal Opportunity Office, concluded after a candle lighting and a song, “Ani Ma’amin (I Believe),” in Hebrew. This song was sung by Jews as they marched to gas chambers during the Holocaust.

[https://www.army.mil/article/266502/fort_mccoy_observes_2023_holocaust_remembrance_d
ay_national_days_of_remembrance](https://www.army.mil/article/266502/fort_mccoy_observes_2023_holocaust_remembrance_day_national_days_of_remembrance)



Fran Malkin speaks about her survival experience during the Holocaust remembrance event at Picatinny Arsenal's Lindner Conference Center, 2023. Photo credit: Jesse Glass, U.S. Army.

https://www.army.mil/article/266028/holocaust_remembrance_at_picatinny_arsenal

Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey, Hosted Holocaust Survivor in 2023

On April 18, 2023, the Picatinny Arsenal had a Days of Remembrance event hosted by the installation's Naval Surface Warfare Center, Indian head Division's Picatinny Detachment. At the installation's Lindner Conference Center, Fran Malkin, a Holocaust survivor spoke about her harrowing experiences with a volunteer moderator from the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest Holocaust Survivors Speakers program, Steve Moehlman.

Fran Malkin was born in Sokal, Poland (present day Ukraine), in 1938. During the presentation, Malkin discussed how strangers occupied her home and removed property during Russian occupation, then her father was killed alongside about 400 Jewish men after the Germans invaded Poland. In 1942, her family went into hiding; they were among 16 people hidden by Francisca Halamajowa for 2 years in a hayloft over a pigsty.

As an adult, Malkin signed up for the Leave-a-Legacy Writing Program for Holocaust survivors at Drew University. Her memories were included in *Moments in Time: A Collage of Holocaust Memories*, written in 2005. Currently, she is a representative on the Center for Holocaust/Genocide Study Board of Associates.

https://www.army.mil/article/266028/holocaust_remembrance_at_picatinny_arsenal



Nelson Blitz from the Jewish Community Relation's Council's Holocaust Speakers Bureau (left) with Mark Kitz, head of the Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors, and System Engineering Division Chief Michael Schwartz. Photo credit: Brian Cooper, U.S. Army.

https://www.army.mil/article/265925/a_day_of_remembrance_a_familys_personal_holocaust_experience

Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors Hosted Speaker

The Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors hosted a Day of Remembrance event in April 2023. At the campus on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, the event acknowledged and honored the survivors and victims of the Holocaust.

The guest speaker was Nelson Blitz from the Jewish Community Relation's Council's Holocaust Speakers Bureau. During his presentation, he spoke about his family's experience surviving the Holocaust. He displayed photos of his family in Germany before they were forced into ghettos; his father survived after being forced into a labor camp because of his cobbling and machine skills. His father also helped other Jews; he told Nazis that some had valuable skills so that they could work instead of being sent to death camps. Only a few members of Blitz's family survived.

For sharing his family's story, Blitz was presented with a commemorative plaque for the occasion by Mark Kitz, head of the Program Executive Office Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Sensors.

https://www.army.mil/article/265925/a_day_of_remembrance_a_familys_personal_holocaust_experience

Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport Shared Powerful Holocaust Story

For Holocaust Days of Remembrance in 2023, the Naval Undersea Warfare Center Division Newport in Rhode Island hosted a presentation with Holocaust survivor Peter Stern. Originally contacted by the organization Child Survivors, which arranges for Holocaust survivors to share their stories, Stern began sharing his story after decades of silence.

Stern's family was moved into a Jewish ghetto in Riga, Latvia, in 1941. After the Russian army attacked the camp, Stern's father saved a German officer's life. In return, the officer helped Stern's family hide in the Riga prison rather than returning to the ghetto. In 1943, the family was deported back to Germany and separated. His father died at the Buchenwald concentration camp, and Peter, his younger brother, and his mother were taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp. After being moved to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where the conditions were much worse, the Sterns were liberated by British forces. In 1947, Stern, his mother, and brother emigrated to the United States from Germany.

When asked why it was important for Stern to share his story, he said, "I want people to feel empathy for everyone that isn't them, because when you stop being empathetic to an individual, you can then easily go to the group and say, 'they are the other,' and then you're on that slippery slope."

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3373538/holocaust-survivor-shares-his-familys-story-with-nuwc-division-newport-navsea-a/>

Days of Remembrance

Quotes

“During my life, I helped thousands of people cross borders.”

“On every document rests the life or death of a human being.”

“The math was simple. In 1 hour, I make 30 fake documents. If I slept for 1 hour, 30 people would die.”

“All humans are equal, whatever their origins, their beliefs, their skin color. There are no superiors, no inferiors. That is not acceptable for me.”

“Every week, I saw a thousand people be deported. It was horrible suffering...there was just a huge, unimaginable quantity of people murdered.”

“If I couldn't have saved so many people, I would not have survived myself. Most of my friends who were survivors committed suicide. So many people were treated like animals with no respect. It's just really hard to bear.”

Adolfo Kaminsky

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/about-us/notes-museum/adolfo-kaminsky>

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/little-known-wwii-hero-tells-his-story-on-60-minutes/>

“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow, it empties today of its strength.”

“Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred. It is a power that breaks the chains of bitterness and the shackles of selfishness.”

“Surely there is no more wretched sight than the human body unloved and uncared for.”

Corrie Ten Boom

https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/102203.Corrie_ten_Boom

“I was a prisoner from the age of 13 to 17. I lived through a ghetto, concentration camp, four labor camps, and a death march. I was not strong, I was not smart, I was a little girl. I think that I survived the Holocaust by the grace of the Lord above and by the kindness of Jewish women that gave me a bite of bread, wrapped my body in straw to keep me warm, held me up when I was hurt by the guards, gave me hope, but also asked me to promise them that if I survived I would not let them be forgotten. Remember and tell the world what hatred can do.”

“I had not seen myself in the mirror for almost two years. A few days after we were free, the Russians carried us to the village, put us in little houses until the hospital was made. And as I was laying in one of those hospitals on a straw sack, I saw a door with a windowpane. And I thought, I’m free, let me look outside, how the free world looks. But as I looked through that little window pane, I saw a reflection. A reflection of the most horrible thing anyone can imagine. A skeleton covered with skin, with big blue eyes. And as I turned around to see whose reflection I saw, I realized that was my reflection. This is how I looked.”

Nesse Galperin Godin

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/series/women-during-the-holocaust-individual-stories>

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https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/102203.Corrie_ten_Boom

“We were fighting an American war, and we were also fighting an intensely personal war. We were at war with every inch of our being.”

“People told me their stories. But it was a skeleton you were talking to. I was a hardened soldier by then, but I couldn’t help myself. So, I was crying.”

Guy Stern

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/17/world/europe/guy-stern-dead.html>

<https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/us-and-the-holocaust/guy-stern-biography>

“I was a Nazi, and I believed that the Germans were doing wrong ... when they started killing innocent people, it didn’t mean anything to me that they were Jewish, to me they were just human beings, *menschen*. I decided I am going to work against them and I am going to save as many as I can.”

“I knew the people who worked for me. When you know people, you have to behave towards them like human beings.”

Oskar Schindler

<https://us-holocaust-museum.medium.com/oskar-schindlers-motivations-as-told-by-holocaust-survivors-601ea6630533>

“Without screaming or crying, these people undressed, stood around by families, kissed each other, said farewells, and waited for the command of [the] SS Man who stood near the excavation also with a whip in his hand.”

“[T]he allies decided in Nuremberg a case against a past Hitler, but refused to envisage future Hitlers, or like situations ... In brief, the Germans were punished only for crimes committed during or in connection with the war of aggression. Crimes against humanity were not an independent category of crimes in themselves. They were only considered crimes when their connection with other crimes could be established.”

“As I am devoting all my time to the Genocide Convention, I have no time to take a paying job, and consequently suffer fierce privations . . . Poverty and starvation. My health deteriorates. Living in hotels and furnished rooms. Destruction of my clothes. Increased number of ratifications.... The labors of Sisypus. I work in isolation, which protects me.”

Raphael Lemkin

<https://newrepublic.com/article/114424/raphael-lemkin-unsung-hero-who-coined-genocide>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/what-is-genocide>

"The thing that struck us about these newcomers (Jews) was their air of sleep-walkers. They appeared dazed. They spoke little, never seemed to smile, walked slowly in the park, as though nervous of doing wrong."

"The Poles knew only too well what that train indicated. To us 'deportation' was just a word . . . we were incapable of imagining the tortured skeletons later to be associated with the camps. But they had seen."

Sofka Skipwith

<https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous-women/skipwith.asp>

"My offense was to think that Hitler is just an ordinary man, after all. That is a crime in the reigning cult in Germany, which says Mr. Hitler is a messiah sent of God to save the German people."

"They are holding every Jew in Germany as a hostage. Therefore, we who are not Jews must speak, speak our sorrow and indignation and disgust in so many voices that they will be heard."

"Courage, it would seem, is nothing less than the power to overcome danger, misfortune, fear, injustice, while continuing to affirm inwardly that life with all its sorrows is good; that everything is meaningful even if in a sense beyond our understanding; and that there is always tomorrow."

"It is not the fact of liberty but the way in which liberty is exercised that ultimately determines whether liberty itself survives."

Dorothy Thompson

https://www.bookbrowse.com/quotes/detail/index.cfm/quote_number/416/only-when-we-are-no-longer-afraid-do-we-begin-to-live

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/personal-story/dorothy-thompson>

“I saw one [Jewish] man brutally kicked and spat upon as he lay on the sidewalk, a woman bleeding, a man whose head was covered with blood, hysterical women crying. . . . Nowhere did the police seem to make any effort whatever to save the victims from this brutality.”

“There are things so horrible that decent men and women find them impossible to believe. Their ends are the enslavement and annihilation of the Jews . . . [and] after them, of all the non-German peoples of Europe, and if possible, the entire world.”

Varian Fry

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/varian-fry>

<https://www.rescue.org/article/varian-frys-holocaust-rescue-network-and-origins-irc>

“I was 18, but I was, in fact, only 13 because those years were nothing. Those were erased from my life. So, I was 13 years old in an 18-year-old girl's body. And I didn't know anything. I was a frightened little girl. I could not communicate with anybody except the immediate family—my mother's sister and brother-in-law and their son, their only son. And then we went to New York, again, my mother's aunt and her cousins. I couldn't go out to the street. I was petrified. I was afraid that the Nazis are still out there. I was having nightmares for years and years.”

“Little by little, it became just worse and worse. It was a matter of weeks . . . I think we were invaded around the end of March, and in April already we were in the ghetto . . . Now what happened here was the German SS in cooperation, with total cooperation of the Hungarian police and the Hungarian gendarmes came to our homes very early in the morning at dawn, knocking real hard, and said, ‘Jews, get out of your house. Get out and line up in front of the house.’ We couldn't imagine what was happening. I mean it was just a horrible, horrible thing. The children were screaming, and all of us were afraid. We didn't know what was happening and what was to come.”

Madeline Deutsch

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504556>

“The German guard swung his rifle at me and my buddy hitting us with the butt in the face cracked one of my jaws tooth [*sic*]...”

“There were days in prison camp when we thought our liberation would never come or that our bodies would resist any more...”

“On every march, when ever we stopped to get some water from some creek or river—as we would be feeling [*sic*] our canteens the German guards would kick our canteens from our hands, thus all that water would be thrown away.”

Anthony Acevedo

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn42600?rsc=171096&cv=50&x=750&y=1084&z=3.1e-4>

“Real heroes are others, those who have suffered in their soul, in their heart, in their spirit, in their mind, for their loved ones. Those are the real heroes. I’m just a cyclist.”

“Good is something you do, not something you talk about. Some medals are pinned to your soul, not to your jacket.”

Gino Bartali

https://www.azquotes.com/author/45444-Gino_Bartali

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