

Days of Remembrance Facts of the Day 2015



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Both Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month and Days of Remembrance for victims of the Holocaust are observed in April. For this reason, we have created two separate Facts of the Day documents, each of which is shorter than the Facts of the Day for months with a single observance.

Fact	Source
<p>In 1953, the state of Israel established Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, in order to document and record the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust as well as to acknowledge the countless non-Jewish individuals who risked their lives to save Jews. Yad Vashem began to award the title "Righteous Among the Nations" in 1963, and since that time, over 22,000 rescuers from 44 countries have been acknowledged for their efforts.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/research/research-in-collections/search-the-collections/bibliography/rescuers</p>
<p>Oskar Schindler was an ethnic German who joined the Nazi party in 1939. He moved to Poland after the German invasion and became wealthy through his army contacts and cheap labor from the Jewish ghetto. After witnessing the atrocities committed against Jews in the ghetto, he started housing his workers and other Jews in barracks at his factory. He created a fake munitions factory and placed the Jews on "Schindler's List" to protect them from the Nazis.</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-features/special-focus/oskar-schindler</p>
<p><i>"The persecution of Jews in the General Government in Polish territory gradually worsened in its cruelty. In 1939 and 1940 they were forced to wear the Star of David and were herded together and confined in ghettos. In 1941 and 1942 this unadulterated sadism was fully revealed. And then a thinking man, who had overcome his inner cowardice, simply had to help. There was no other choice."</i> —Oskar Schindler, 1964 interview</p>	<p>http://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-features/special-focus/oskar-schindler</p>
<p>Emilie Schindler was essential to her husband Oskar's efforts to protect Jews during the Holocaust. Once while Oskar was away, she encountered Nazis taking 250 Jews to a death camp. She convinced them that the Jews were needed at the factory. They were near starvation, and 13 had died. She worked tirelessly rehabilitating them, and all but three recovered. Survivors of the Schindler barracks saw her as a mother figure who did everything she could to protect and provide for them.</p>	<p>http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/bibliography/emilieschindler.html</p>

<p>Anton Schmid was an Austrian who was drafted into the German army during World War II. While stationed in Vilna, Lithuania, he used his position to help the Jews at every opportunity. Schmid aided Jews with jobs, permits, provisions, shelter, and transport to safer areas. He even hid some in his apartment and office. Although he was warned that the Nazis had heard of his activities, he persisted in helping the Jews until he was arrested and executed for treason in 1942.</p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/schmid.asp</p>
<p>Chiune-Sempo Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat, was in Lithuania in 1940 when foreign diplomats were asked to leave. While preparing to go, he met a Jewish delegation requesting Japanese transit visas so they could travel to reach Curacao, a Dutch colony they saw as their only option as most countries had closed their borders to Jewish immigrants. Sugihara defied orders from his superiors and worked tirelessly, issuing thousands of life-saving visas until he was forced to leave the country.</p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/sugihara.asp</p>
<p>Before his arrest for trying to save three Jewish boys by disguising them as students, French priest and boarding school director Lucien Bunel said, <i>“I am told that since I am responsible for all the children at the Petit College, I do not have the right to expose myself to possible arrest by the Germans. But do you not think that if that happened and if, per chance, I should be killed, I would not thereby bequeath to my students an example worth far more than all the teaching I could give?”</i></p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/bunel.asp</p>

<p>Jonas and Felicija Radlinskas were Tatar Muslims who lived with their three daughters in the village of Raižiai, Lithuania. In 1942, they took in Dora and Shifra Reznik, Jewish sisters who were the only two members of their family not killed by the Nazis. The sisters had been wandering for months before they arrived at the Radlinskas' home and the couple took them in and hid them. The Radlinskas protected the Rezniks for almost two years until the area was liberated in 1944.</p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/radlinskas.asp</p>
<p>Carl Lutz, the Swiss vice-consul in Budapest, Hungary, negotiated with Nazis and the Hungarian government to issue letters allowing 8,000 Hungarian Jews to emigrate to Palestine. He actually issued tens of thousands of the letters. Earlier, he had helped 10,000 Jewish children go to Palestine. He also established 76 safe houses around Budapest, calling them Swiss annexes. With his wife Gertrud, he freed Jews from deportation centers and death marches. The Lutzes saved 62,000 Jews.</p>	<p>http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/five-rescuers-of-those-threatened-by-the-holocaust-55112043/?no-ist</p>
<p>Jean Phillipe, a chief of police in Toulouse, France, used his position to help Jews and resistance fighters. In 1943, when he was ordered to provide a list of all Jews in his precinct, Phillipe instead resigned and joined the resistance. He was caught, imprisoned, and tortured. In 1944, he was executed. In his resignation letter Phillipe wrote, <i>"I believe that we have no right to deport our fellow citizens and that any Frenchman who becomes an accomplice to this infamy is a traitor."</i></p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/phillipe.asp</p>

<p>André Trocmé, the pastor of the Protestant congregation in Le Chambon, France, urged his congregants to shelter Jews after deportations began in 1942. The village became a haven for hundreds of Jews fleeing the Nazis. The entire community worked together to rescue Jews, viewing it as their Christian obligation. Despite being pressured, arrested, and imprisoned for five weeks, the minister refused to obey government orders to stop helping the Jews.</p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/trocme.asp</p>
<p>Henry Christian Thomsen was an innkeeper in Snekkersten, Denmark, who joined the Danish resistance. He saved hundreds of Jews by helping them escape Nazi-occupied Denmark. His inn was a meeting place for fishermen who used their boats to take Jews to Sweden, where they were safe from the Nazis. When the number of Jews seeking help grew, Thomsen bought a fishing boat to help transport them himself. He was caught and sent to a concentration camp in Germany, where he died in 1944.</p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/thomsen.asp</p>
<p>When Switzerland closed its borders to Jewish refugees, Paul Grüniger, who was in charge of the Swiss border police in an area on the Swiss-Austrian border, falsified documents to allow 3,600 Jews to enter and stay in Switzerland. Though he was convicted of breach of duty and left destitute, he never regretted his actions. He said, <i>“My personal well-being, measured against the cruel fate of these thousands, was so insignificant and unimportant that I never even took it into consideration.”</i></p>	<p>http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/gruninger.asp</p>
<p>Maria Olt lived in Hungary during World War II. During an appointment, she saw that her physician, Dr. Kuti Nevo, was wearing a yellow emblem. He told her that he feared for his family’s safety. Olt took Nevo, his wife, and their newborn daughter to a small village where she created false identities and documents for them, hiding them in safety until after the war. She borrowed money to rent apartments where she sheltered multiple Jewish families, providing for all their needs.</p>	<p>http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Olt.html</p>