

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
80 Main Street
West Orange, NJ 07052
973-736-1800
www.jfr.org

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Contact: Joshua Steinreich
Steinreich Communications
(212) 491-1600
jsteinreich@scompr.com

JFR JOINS EDMONDS FAMILY AT WHITE HOUSE EVENT GIVING MEDAL OF HONOR TO MASTER SGT. RODDIE EDMONDS FOR SAVING JEWISH SERVICEMEN

WASHINGTON — The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) joins the Edmonds family and the survivors and descendants of Stalag IXA in celebrating Master Sgt. Roddie Edmonds posthumously receiving the Medal of Honor this week at White House and Department of War programs. The JFR was one of the first organizations to recognize Edmonds' World War II heroism, honoring him posthumously with the Foundation's *Yehi Or* (Let There Be Light) Award in 2016.

Master Sgt. Edmonds was captured by the German Army during the Battle of the Bulge on December 19, 1944, and sent to Stalag IXA, a prisoner of war camp. As the highest-ranking American soldier in the camp, Edmonds was responsible for 1,292 American POWs, including approximately 200 Jewish American GIs. When the camp's commandant ordered Edmonds to identify the Jewish soldiers for separation, Edmonds refused. Placing a pistol against his head, the commandant again demanded that the Jewish soldiers step forward. Edmonds responded, "We are all Jews here," refusing to identify them and thereby saving their lives.

Edmonds survived 100 days of captivity and returned home after the war, never speaking of his actions. He passed away in 1985, and it was only decades later that his son, Pastor Chris Edmonds, uncovered the full extent of his father's heroism.

In addition to presenting Edmonds with its *Yehi Or* Award, the JFR produced its award-winning documentary *Footsteps of My Father*, which recounts Edmonds' courage through the lens of his son and several of the Jewish American POWs he saved. The film has screened globally and received numerous honors, helping to bring Edmonds' story to audiences in the United States and abroad.

MASTER SGT. EDMONDS RECEIVES MOH
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His heroism has also been recognized by Yad Vashem, which named him Righteous Among the Nations, the only American soldier to receive that distinction.

Master Sgt. Edmonds' story is prominently featured in the JFR's nationally recognized Holocaust education program on rescue and moral courage. Educators across the country study his actions as a powerful example of leadership, conscience and responsibility in the face of evil. Through teacher seminars, student curricula and public events including documentary screenings, the JFR highlights Master Sgt. Edmonds' moral clarity and willingness to risk his life for others as a timeless model of heroism. His story continues to inspire students and educators alike, reinforcing the enduring lesson that one individual's courage can save lives and shape history.

“For years, the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous has worked to ensure that Master Sgt. Edmonds' extraordinary courage and moral leadership would not be forgotten,” said JFR Executive Vice President Stanlee Stahl, who attended the ceremony in Washington. “The awarding of the Medal of Honor affirms what the survivors of Stalag IXA have long known, that his actions represent the highest standard of bravery, humanity and responsibility.”

The JFR continues its work of providing monthly financial assistance to aged and needy Righteous Gentiles living in 10 countries. Since its founding, the JFR has provided more than \$46 million to aged and needy rescuers. Its Holocaust teacher education program has become a standard for teaching the history of the Holocaust and educating teachers and students about the significance of the Righteous as moral and ethical exemplars. For more information, visit <https://www.jfr.org/>.