

## What is the Desmond Doss Council?

Nearly two decades ago, the Desmond Doss Council was established under the direction of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Association (GCA) to handle a specific request made by Desmond T. Doss. His desire was for a film about his life story, one that would be a positive influence on the youth of his Church and the public at large. The request included granting the GCA all of his story rights. At his request a group of trusted volunteers—individuals closely associated with him, the Church and the Armed Services—were asked to create the Desmond Doss Council to guide this project.



The Doss Council was personally commissioned by Desmond to produce a documentary, *The Conscientious Objector*, and to negotiate with Hollywood for a possible true-to-life film. Before his death, Desmond met with the Council many times. To date, the Desmond Doss Council continues to be the legal and official source of any news and information relating to Desmond Doss, his life story and his story rights. The Council holds the copyright to the documentary and the biography “*The Unlikeliest Hero*,” a book by Booton Herndon. This book has recently been republished with the title, *Redemption at Hacksaw Ridge*.

The Doss Council also has oversight authority on all Doss archival material, memorabilia, and the use of his name for public or organizational identification, e.g., VFW and AL posts, bridges, veteran’s parks, etc.

## What progress has been made on Desmond’s request?

“*The Conscientious Objector*,” documentary film was produced and formally released in 2004, funded by many private donations made through the GCA as well as from the GCA itself. It was the first documentary to be filmed in high definition (HD) and was distributed on VHS and DVD. It includes personal interviews with Desmond as well as many of the soldiers he served with and whose lives he saved.

The documentary has been highly praised. It received numerous film festival awards and was given Academy Award consideration. It was broadcast nationally on PAX TV in 2005 and NBC’s *Spirit of the Heart Series* in 2012. It has also aired on Trinity Broadcasting (TBN) annually since 2006, and the American Forces Network (AFN) over a dozen times. It is distributed worldwide through Netflix and available for viewing on YouTube. In 2016 this documentary was re-mastered and re-released in high definition on Blu-ray with 5.1-surround sound.

### **Does Hollywood have the rights to do a film on Desmond Doss?**

Yes, in 2004, the theatrical film rights were formally assigned to Pandemonium Films and its CEO Bill Mechanic, a highly respected Film Industry Executive and Producer. After working for many years to put together the funding and an acclaimed production team, Mr. Mechanic began principal photography in September, 2015 on the film, Hacksaw Ridge, directed by Mel Gibson and starring Andrew Garfield in the role of Desmond Doss. The movie was filmed in Australia and Dr. Charles Knapp, chairman of the Council, was invited to visit the film set. His unprecedented access to producers, actors and film crew led to numerous conversations. There was great interest among the cast regarding the story of Desmond Doss. After a week on set, Dr. Knapp came away highly impressed that this movie will be the most powerful and dramatic way Desmond's story has ever been told.

The film is being released in theaters around the world in November 2016. Numerous pre-release screenings conducted with the public as well as faith-based groups has resulted in a overwhelmingly positive response. Endorsement by key individuals has resulted in highly acclaimed praise for both the incredible story and the way it's told on screen. Many believe Hacksaw Ridge has Oscar award potential.

Great care was exercised during negotiations to ensure the integrity of Desmond's character portrayal, which includes his moral and spiritual beliefs as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. This aspect of his story will not be fictionalized. According to those on the Doss Council, the movie Hacksaw Ridge, tells the story in a most authentic and realistic way. The film is faithful to the beliefs and character of Desmond Doss.

### **Is the Adventist Church producing a Hollywood film on Desmond Doss?**

No, the Adventist Church is not involved other than the connection the Doss Council has via the film rights contract with Pandemonium Films. The Church does not speak on behalf of the production company or any of the Producers; has no input into the script or content of the movie; and has no obligation for funding or approving it. This film is not being produced for the Church nor specifically for an Adventist audience. It is not about the Adventist Church, it's about a single Seventh-day Adventist, Desmond Doss, who stood for his beliefs during World War II, and received the Congressional Medal of Honor. It's a story of immense human interest and is being produced by Hollywood as a commercial film for the general public.

### **Why is this film important to the Church?**

The movie, Hacksaw Ridge, which dramatically shares the life of Desmond Doss, has the potential of creating an unequaled awareness of the attitudes and actions of a single Seventh-day Adventist. Desmond's beliefs are portrayed as an integral part of his story. These include his stand on not carrying a gun or taking life; his belief in God and the importance of prayer; his belief in and regular reading of the Bible; and especially the important role of the Ten Commandments in his life, especially the Sabbath. This could be

an unparalleled evangelistic opportunity for Adventists worldwide to share their own faith when neighbors and friends discover they hold the same beliefs as Desmond Doss.

**For more information**

The production company and the distributors are in regular communication with the Council. It's the request of the Doss Council that information be communicated accurately. Therefore if you are approached by the media or general public to comment on this film project, the Council urges that individual church leaders and members refer such questions to the Council. For the latest official updates and progress, please contact Doss Council chairman, Dr. Charles Knapp, [producer@desmonddoss.com](mailto:producer@desmonddoss.com).

Several members of the Doss Council, including chairman Dr. Charles Knapp, are available for interviews and speaking engagements. For availability, please visit: [DesmondDoss.com/speakers](http://DesmondDoss.com/speakers)

CONTACT INFORMATION Official public website: [www.DesmondDoss.com](http://www.DesmondDoss.com)  
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Backroom Church Resources: [www.desmonddoss.com/re](http://www.desmonddoss.com/re)