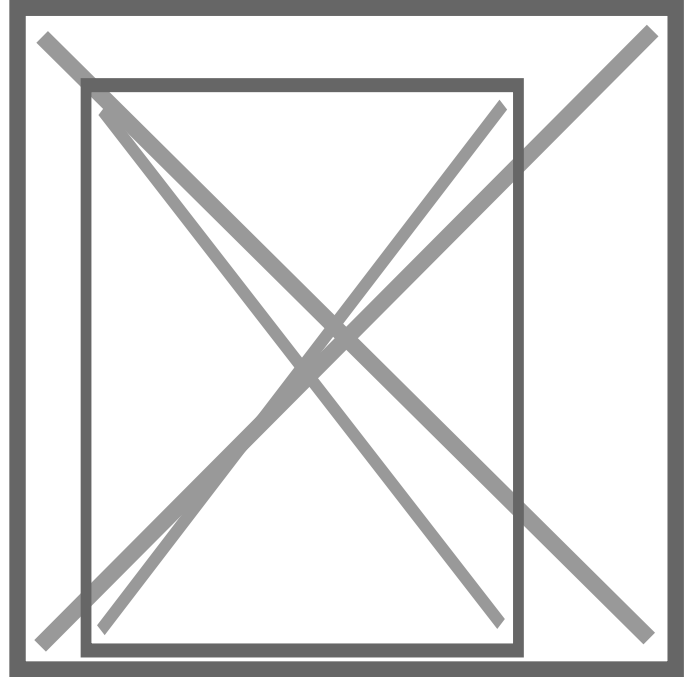


Alida Bosshardt receives Israel's highest award: Yad Vashem



AMBASSADOR EITAN MARGALIT presents Lt. Colonel Alida Bosshardt, O.F., with the Yad Vashem Award.

When the German forces occupied The Netherlands in 1940, Captain Alida Bosshardt worked in the Army's Children's Home in Amsterdam, which was situated in the middle of the Jewish quarter.

The Germans forbid The Salvation Army in 1941 to carry on with its work. Uniforms could not be worn and money and buildings were confiscated. But the Army did not surrender. To be able to continue its work, all Children's Homes were changed into private homes. The Army refused to become a part of 'Winterhulp,' an organization which was initiated by the Germans.

In the beginning of 1941 three Jewish sisters named Hendrina, Dimpina and Helena Terhorst, were taken in the Army's care by Captain Bosshardt because of the circumstances at home. Also, the mother of the three girls, who was pregnant, found temporarily shelter in the Army's Children's Home. Not long after the baby's birth, who was named Roos (Rose), the Army's Children's Home was ordered to become part of Winterhulp. Captain Bosshardt fled with the 70 children, of whom many were Jewish, to the northern part of Amsterdam. In July 1943 this part of the Dutch capital was bombed by the Germans, but none of the children were hurt.

By train and on foot they went to another part of the country, where the children lived at ten different places. They were forced to wear as many clothes as possible, even in summer. The eldest child

always had to carry a brass kettle and look after it very carefully, although they were not told why. Only after the war they were told that money and food vouchers were hidden in it.

During the many times they had to move, Baby Roos was covered by blankets because of her Jewish looks.

There was not enough money to buy food for the children, so Captain Bosshardt went out to collect food, although it was forbidden. She was betrayed and captured by the Germans. After two weeks the person who questioned her “forgot” to lock the door behind him and Captain Bosshardt was able to walk out on the street.

The Dutch resistance gave her addresses where the children could live. She managed to find a place for more than 75 Jewish children. No names and no addresses were written down, so the Germans could not trace them in the files.

During the “hongerwinter” (hunger winter) in 1944 the captain often went out into the country on her bike with wooden tires to find food. Often, she was given cigarettes, which she changed for potatoes. She did not tell this to the Army leaders, because they were against smoking and therefore it was forbidden to accept cigarettes.

During the Second World War Captain Bosshardt succeeded in keeping the four sisters Terhorst together and under her wings. Hendrina, Dimphina, Helena and Roos wrote to the Yad Vashem committee: “Although she had nothing, Major Bosshardt has been able to give us a feeling of warmth and protection in this period. The Major is like a mother for us and she still calls us ‘her children’. We thank our lives, our children and grandchildren to her.”

The Yad Vashem Award is the highest award given by the State of Israel. More than 11,000 people have received it, of whom 4,300 live in The Netherlands. On August 30, 2004 the Ambassador of Israel in The Netherlands, Mr. Eitan Margalit, awarded Lt. Colonel Bosshardt the medal and certificate at the Army Headquarters in Almere, The Netherlands.

—Ruud Tinga, editor in chief
The Netherlands and Czech Republic Territory