

**SMALL
GROUP
GUIDES**
from HarperOne

NO SURRENDER

A FATHER, A SON, AND AN
EXTRAORDINARY ACT OF HEROISM THAT
CONTINUES TO LIVE ON TODAY

**CHRIS EDMONDS
AND DOUGLAS CENTURY**

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1. Do you have relatives who served in World War II? If so, what, if anything, do you know about their service? Did you ever speak directly with them about that experience? Why or why not?
2. Chris Edmonds writes that his father, Roddie, grew up in a home that valued “the Golden Rule: love everyone” (p. 40). How might that shape him as he serves in the war and endures great difficulties later in life? What values were central to your family growing up?
3. “What had happened in Germany in the 1940s was no longer some remote slice of history; it was personal,” writes Chris. “What had happened a lifetime ago was my dad’s story—and now it was becoming my story too” (p. 88). Discuss the way history’s effects can echo through generations. Have you ever experienced history in a personal way? If so, describe that time.
4. *New York Times* journalist W. H. “Bill” Lawrence broke the news about the unspeakable horrors of Nazi extermination camps to readers in the United States on August 30, 1944. “For millions of Americans, it was the first news account of a crime so vast, grotesque, and industrialized that it still had no name” (p. 100). Try to imagine what it would have been like to read about the Holocaust for the first time. What might that have been like?

5. “There were no lines of escape. Roddie, Lester, Skip, Frankie, and Jack could see that they were being encircled by hundreds of Germans. They could also see other Americans being captured in the distance” (p. 162). What do you think went through Roddie Edmonds’s mind in the moments leading up to his capture?
6. “Every infantryman, [Roddie] told them, would assemble in strict military formation at the Appelplatz at the next morning’s roll call. Every soldier—even those named McCoy and Walker, Smith and Nicholson, Miller and Bruno—would tell the Germans that they were Jewish” (p. 226). What do you think compelled Roddie to defy his German captors in this way? Do you think you would have done the same?
7. “‘We are all Jews here,’ Roddie said. Roddie’s defiance spread throughout the ranks. . . . Roddie’s words and actions seemed to give every infantryman in the camp courage. Not a single soldier broke ranks, faltered, or flinched” (pp. 229–30). Why are courage and solidarity so central to leadership? What else can we learn about leadership from this moment?
8. Frankie records the arrival of US tanks at Stalag IXA on March 30, 1945, in this way: “[It was] the greatest thrill of my life. I cried with joy, for there, rolling into the gate was a grand American jeep. Chaos broke

loose in the camp. All prisoners busted out of their compounds and greeted Johnny Doughboy with hugs and kisses and genuine tears of joy” (p. 267). What did this moment mean to Frankie and his fellow soldiers?

9. “We weren’t liberated. We escaped,” Lester said (p. 274). Why does Lester make the distinction between being liberated and escaping?
10. Reintegrating into civilian life is an enduring struggle for many who serve in the military, as it was for Frankie on page 286. Have you, or anyone you know, made this transition? What was that experience like?
11. “We all have the potential to change the world simply by standing up for what’s right,” writes Chris (p. 316). Roddie’s story certainly proves this claim. Can you point to any other stories of people you know who exemplify this? Do you believe that this also applies to you? Why or why not?
12. At what points in Roddie Edmonds’s story did his faith in God most help him? How so?
13. How did serving in World War II change Roddie Edmonds’s Christian faith?

14. Chris Edmonds quotes President Barack Obama, who told him in regards to Roddie's decision to declare himself and all the men in his troop Jewish to the German soldiers, "I cannot imagine a greater expression of Christianity than to say, 'I too am a Jew'" (p. 313). How so?