

Deffaugt, Jean

Mayor of Annemasse, a French town on the Swiss border, who was designated as Righteous Among The Nations by Yad Vashem in 1965 for his rescue activities during World War II.

Secret escape routes to Switzerland used by fleeing Jews intersected in Annemasse. Some Jews whom the Germans caught trying to escape were imprisoned in an annex of the Pax Hotel, where they underwent torturous interrogation by the *Gestapo*. Deffaugt made it a practice to visit the Jews incarcerated in the *Gestapo* prison; he brought them food, blankets, medical supplies, and other necessary items. He also tried to intercede on the Jews' behalf.

In one instance, the *Gestapo* agreed to release a young group of children into Deffaugt's care, after he agreed to return them if the *Gestapo* requested it. He soon put them in the care of a priest, who hid them until the Allies came to liberate the area just weeks later. After the liberation, Deffaugt brought all the children back together and returned them to Jewish hands.