

Kirk Douglas reaches major milestone

● **1916:** Born *Issur Danielovitch* in Amsterdam, New York, December 9

● **1932:** Wins wrestling scholarship to St Lawrence University, later wins second scholarship to U.S. Academy of Dramatic Arts

● **1942:** Budding Broadway career put on hold when he enlists in U.S. Navy to serve in World War II

● **1943:** Marries actress Diana Dill, divorced 1950. Two sons, Michael and Eric

● **1949:** Movie breakthrough as cynical boxer in *Champion* earns Oscar nomination – he earns two more for *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952) and *Lust for Life* (1956)

● **1954:** Marries Anne Buydens. Two more sons, Joel and Peter

● **1955:** Forms one of Hollywood's first independent film companies. It produces some of his most memorable films, including *Paths of Glory*, *Spartacus* and *Lonely are the Brave*. Establishes Douglas Foundation to make contributions to charities worldwide

● **1963:** Buys dramatic rights to Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, stars in play version on Broadway. Movie version, produced by son Michael in 1975, collects five Oscars



● **1981:** Awarded Medal of Freedom, America's greatest civilian honour, by President Jimmy Carter

● **1988:** Autobiography *The Ragman's Son* published to massive critical acclaim – remains on *New York Times* best-seller lists for 34 weeks

● **1990:** Appointed Officier de la Legion d'Honneur for distinguished services to France. A year later receives Lifetime Achievement Award from American Film Institute

● **1996:** Honoured with special lifetime achievement Oscar by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; similar award from Screen Actors' Guild in 1998

● **Dec 9, 2001:** Kirk Douglas celebrates his 85th birthday