Thanks, Mr. President: A Queens Nazi is being deported thanks to the persistence of Donald Trump and Ambassador Ric Grenell

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By Daily News Editorial Board

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<http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/ny-edit-nazi-20180821-story.html>

Thank you, President Trump, for doing what Democrats and Republicans before have failed to do for years: Deport a Nazi war criminal from Queens back to Europe. And thank you, Ric Grenell, the U.S. ambassador to Germany, for faithfully carrying out the President’s directive to get Jakiw Palij the hell out of this country.

Palij, who turned 95 last Thursday, is not just an old man. He is an old Nazi death camp guard, a volunteer in the SS who aided the Holocaust in occupied Poland, where millions of Jews were killed, and then who lied about his SS service to gain entry to this country after the war.

Discovered by the Department of Justice, he was stripped of his ill-gotten U.S. citizenship in 2003 and ordered deported the next year.

But the Bush administration failed to get Germany to take him. So did the Obama administration, for all eight years. Berlin objected, and the U.S. State Department didn’t want to push too hard, and that was that. As former Department of Justice Nazi hunter Neal Sher [wrote](http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/german-duplicity-nazi-criminals-article-1.3928757" \t "_blank)in these pages in April, cowardice carried the day.

But not Trump. In office only a few months and alerted by this newspaper to a Nazi living in his home borough in spring 2017, he told Grenell, his choice for envoy to Berlin, to get the Nazi out.

Grenell did it. From the time he took up his post this May, he made it a priority. Finally, after more than a decade of dilly-dallying, the Germans got the message.

Great credit must go to Rabbi Zev Friedman, head of Rambam Mesivta, a boys’ yeshiva high school on Long Island. He and his students for years protested Palij’s presence.

We learned of the case from him and, in turn, shouted from the rooftops.

We yelled and they heard: Rep. Joe Crowley, in whose district Palij lived for decades, pressed the Justice and State departments to act. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand rounded up every member of the New York congressional delegation, from right-wingers to left-wingers, to demand State make Germany accept the Nazi. Sen. Chuck Schumer, the minority leader, took the case straight to the Secretary of State.

The souls of 6 million murdered Jews and 400,000 U.S. war dead who fell to liberate the world from Nazism rest a little bit easier today.