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Choosing Courage: Inspiring Stories of What It Means to Be a Hero

Peter Collier

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What turns an ordinary person into a hero? What happens in the blink of an eye on a battlefield (or in any dangerous situation) to bring out true courage? The men and women who have been recognized by the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation know the answers to these questions deep in their hearts. We learn of Jack Lucas, a thirteen-year-old who kept his real age a secret so he could fight in World War II—where he deliberately fell on a grenade to save his buddies during the Iwo Jima invasion—and Clint Romesha, who almost single-handedly prevented a remote U.S. Army outpost in Afghanistan from being taken over by the Taliban. Also included are civilians who have been honored by the Foundation for outstanding acts of bravery in crisis situations: for example, Jencie Fagan, a gym teacher who put herself in danger to disarm a troubled eighth grader before he could turn a gun on his classmates. Adding depth and context are illuminating sidebars throughout and essays on the combat experience and its aftermath: topics such as overcoming fear; a mother mourning her son; and “surviving hell” as a prisoner of war. Back matter includes a glossary and an index.

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