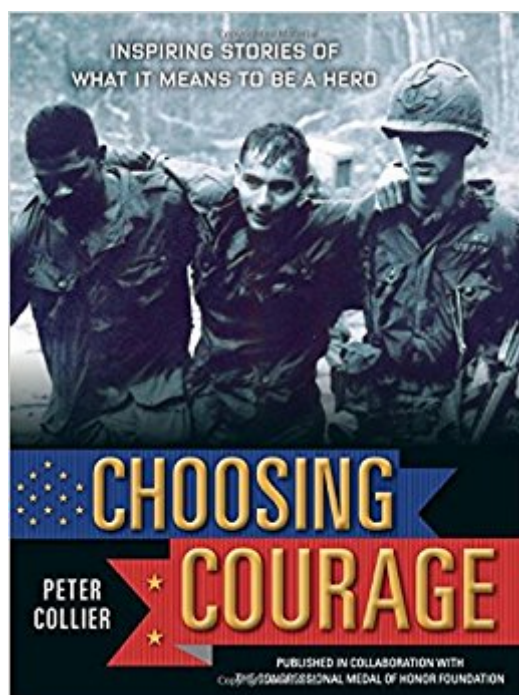


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# Choosing Courage: Inspiring Stories Of What It Means To Be A Hero



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Artisan (May 12, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1579655963

ISBN-13: 978-1579655969

Product Dimensions: 7.2 x 0.9 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #412,202 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #112 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Military](#) #171 in [Books > Teens > Biographies > Historical](#) #327 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States](#)

## Customer Reviews

Gracie Collier takes readers on an emotional journey into the trenches, through prisoner of war camps to makeshift hospitals, conveying the bravery that compels certain individuals to rise above their fear to protect and save others. Published in collaboration with the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, the book devotes each chapter to a different tale of a medal recipient and is often followed by a page or two of background or historical information. Although the Medal of

Honor was created in 1861, the book begins with stories from the battlefields of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. It includes a story from the attack on the World Trade Center, tales of heroism from Iraq and Afghanistan, Haiti, the Congo, and in the halls of an American middle school. Some of the 25 entries are told in the third person, while others are narrated by the hero in question. Most moving are the tales that are told by parents and children of the honorees. The book concludes with a note about the consequences of war and the history of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

VERDICT Middle grade readers will appreciate the consistent format, short chapters, straightforward language, photos, and background information, and will benefit from the factual material and the underlying lessons of courage. — MaryAnn Karre, West Middle School, Binghamton, NY

“Every story in this remarkable book is inspiring and deeply moving. The heroic accounts of bravery vanquishing fear and service before self should be mandatory reading for every child and adult in this country.” — Gary Sinise, actor, musician, and founder of the Gary Sinise Foundation

“The stories in this book . . . convey the human side of heroism.” — The Baltimore Sun

“Open to any page of *Choosing Courage* and prepare to be awed at the ability of ordinary people to do extraordinary things. These tales of heroism take the reader from World War II to Iraq and Afghanistan and to U.S. shores, where even a schoolteacher can face life-and-death situations.” — The Philadelphia Inquirer

“Collier takes readers on an emotional journey into the trenches, through prisoner of war camps to makeshift hospitals, conveying the bravery that compels certain individuals to rise above their fear to protect and save others. Published in collaboration with the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, the book devotes each chapter to a different tale of a medal recipient and is often followed by a page or two of background or historical information. Although the Medal of Honor was created in 1861, the book begins with stories from the battlefields of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. It includes a story from the attack on the World Trade Center, tales of heroism from Iraq and Afghanistan, Haiti, the Congo, and in the halls of an American middle school. Some of the 25 entries are told in the third person, while others are narrated by the hero in question. Most moving are the tales that are told by parents and children of the honorees. The book concludes with a note about the consequences of war and the history of the Congressional Medal of Honor. VERDICT: Middle grade readers will appreciate the consistent format, short chapters, straightforward language, photos, and background information, and will benefit from the factual material and the underlying lessons of courage.” — School Library Journal

“As he did in his 2003 adult work, Medal of Honor, Collier spotlights recipients of America’s highest military award in this book, published in collaboration with the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation. Collier broadens the scope of his tributes to include a handful of civilians who have been recognized by the foundation, yet his focus remains on veterans who distinguished themselves in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Two especially relevant profiles to young readers are those of a Nevada middle-school teacher, who persuaded a student to surrender his gun after he opened fire at school, and a North Carolina boy who, after forging his mother’s signature to enlist in WWII at age 13, threw himself on a grenade to save his fellow Marines at Iwo Jima. Similar accounts of self-sacrificing devotion and humility echo throughout these harrowing and, at times, horrific accounts of combat, intensifying their emotional impact. Interspersed b&w photos also help personalize the profiles, while sidebars provide succinct background information on the various wars. An illuminating and worthwhile resource.

• Publishers Weekly “While this book targets ages 10 and up, I believe it to be a great addition to the library of anyone who loves history.

• About Families

These stories tell about the true heroes - all men and women who go to war to protect our freedoms and rights as a country! An honest picture of what happens on the battlefields around the world.

No debate needed, our culture is in sad decline, due in huge part to the lack of accurate and interesting history education. This book accomplishes both. History is just dry recitation of facts unless it is wearing the flesh of real people. This book introduces junior high and high school kids to the best of the best. Real heroes who were recognized for their bravery. I have personally met and shaken the hands of three MOH winners, each one humble and yet forthright about what happened and the necessity of action. "I was just in the wrong place at the right time," one told me. "I just did what needed doing," said another. Did you know you’re statistically more likely to be struck by lightning than to shake the hand of a MOH recipient? I’ve shaken three of their hands, and I now flat out refuse to go outside during a thunderstorm. These men are to whom our kids should be looking for role models instead of spoiled, bratty actors, singers, and sports figures. And this book should be required reading for all students. Full disclosure: I received an advance copy of the e-book for free from the publisher in exchange for my unbiased review.

The cover of the book grabbed my heart and I also grateful it did. This book tells of true American heroes regardless of their race or religion. America today is obsessed with self-esteem, self-help,

self actualization, and the belief that each individual is their own god. This book is an honest look at people who I've shown what true heroism is; it is a refreshing reminder of what the American philosophy of life once was and should be taught fearlessly and with pride to our young people today. It touched me deeply.

Peter Collier has hit another home run. His book, Medal of Honor, first published in 2003, has passed the 330,000 mark. His newest book tells story of extraordinary courage by military men, by civilians, by former military men and by women. I especially recommend the book for young people but it would also make a great gift to veterans and history buffs. Having just completed a book (Courage, Compassion, Marine: The Unique Story of Jimmie Dyess) about the only person to have received America's two highest awards for heroism, the Medal of Honor and the Carnegie Medal, I am especially impressed with Collier's brilliant writing and editing.

A wonderful book used in the Character Development Program of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation.....

Outstanding. A must read.

I liked how it went in order depending on when they were. I would highly recommend this book for reading for fun or project

Outstanding stories written based on the facts

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