



POW : Promises Kept

Walter Boots Mayberry, As told by Linda Apple



A huge black cloud filled with metallic splinters burst under the bomber and caused it to rock violently, tearing holes in the aluminum fuselage. Two bursts hit close. The third hit the in-board engine on the right wing and it burst into flame. All was searing smoke and screaming metal and roaring flame. Boots bailed out of the disintegrating plane, falling head first. When he pulled the ripcord it jerked him up with such force it shattered two vertebrae in his neck. His hands were paralyzed and he couldn't guide his parachute. Boots floated helplessly to earth under the billowing thirty-foot silk canopy. All around him was a cacophony of anti-aircraft fire. Shrapnel and wreckage from destroyed airplanes hurtled past him. Fear and dread filled his mind. What if this wreckage hits me or my parachute and drags me down to certain death? In the deafening noise of all this melee, he cried out, God, help me! What Boots endured in the German POW camps would test the limits of any man. But near death, he finds hope at his most hopeless and discovers the strength to survive. Through his life, the promises he kept gave meaning and purpose to his life and inspired countless others.

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