




*A Daughter's Memoir*

**Catherine Madison**

# **The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir**

*Catherine Madison*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir

Catherine Madison

## **The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir** Catherine Madison

During his years as a POW in North Korea, "Doc" Boysen endured hardships he never intended to pass along, especially to his family. Men who refused to eat starved; his children would clean their plates. Men who were weak died; his children would develop character. They would also learn to fear their father, the hero. In a memoir at once harrowing and painfully poignant, Catherine Madison tells the stories of two survivors of one man's war: a father who withstood a prison camp's unspeakable inhumanity and a daughter who withstood the residual cruelty that came home with him.

Doc Boysen died fifty years after his ordeal, his POW experience concealed to the end in a hidden cache of documents. In *The War Came Home with Him*, Madison pieces together the horrible tale these papers told—of a young captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps captured in July 1950, beaten and forced to march without shoes or coat on icy trails through mountains to camps where North Korean and Chinese captors held him for more than three years. As the truth about her father's past unfolds, Madison returns to a childhood troubled by his secret torment to consider, in a new light, the telling moments in their complex relationship.

Beginning at her father's deathbed, with all her questions still unspoken, and ending with their final conversation, Madison's dual memoir offers a powerful, intimate perspective on the suppressed grief and thwarted love that forever alter a family when a wounded soldier brings his war home.

## **The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir Details**


Date : Published September 1st 2015 by Univ Of Minnesota Press

ISBN : 9780816698776

Author : Catherine Madison

Format : Hardcover 232 pages

Genre : Autobiography, Memoir, History, Nonfiction, War, Historical

 [Download The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir Catherine Madison**

---

## **From Reader Review The War Came Home with Him: A Daughter's Memoir for online ebook**

### **Lynda says**

This book is so well-written. It will be a treasured resource and recommendation for those who work with veterans and their families.

---

### **Doreen Petersen says**

Graciously received this book from Netgalley for an honest review. I absolutely loved it and the way the author brought to the forefront the PTSD many POW's and soldiers suffer from, some of whom go untreated. This really is a must read!

---

### **Brandi says**

I received an advance copy of this story from NetGalley.

I have to start out by saying that I'm not a fan of military-life novels due to personal experience. Yet, this heart-rending tale drew me in by way of its emotional rollercoaster. Some passages were difficult to read in that they held such emotional weight, and yet I couldn't stop reading; I simply had to know the outcome.

I sympathized with the narrator in her personal difficulty being a survivor's loved one and also with the seeming antagonist that made her life so difficult. I couldn't sympathize with the undercover antagonist, the War, and felt more anger the more sad and difficult the tale became.

I loved the experience of reading this book because it pushed me past my comfort level with such complicated subject matter, as well as challenging my knowledge of one of history's 'forgotten' wars.

---

### **Jason Schneeberger says**

Thank you University of Minnesota Press and Netgalley for this advance reader copy. The official release date is September 1st 2015.

THE WAR CAME HOME WITH HIM is a non fiction look into the life of a man who was prisoner of war during the Korean War and the mystique surrounding him when he returned home. The POW is author Catherine Madison's father and this book tells her journey to find out why her father was such a different man after he came home from the war.

War is mankind at its worst and this book goes into good detail, describing what "Doc" went through. Not a soldier, but rather a front line doctor during the war, Doc thought he was only going to be in South Korea for 90 days and ended up becoming a POW. It's amazing that anyone could survive some of the situations that he and his fellow comrades went through.

The story is told simultaneously while Doc is a POW and afterwards when he is at home, alternating chapter to chapter between the two. The book is written very well and really sheds light on just how bad war is and how it affects not only those who fought it, but their family as well. The pieces of information that Catherine finds and how she is able to figure out her father's story is quite fascinating to read about. If you're a fan of true war stories, you're going to definitely want to read this one. I give it 3.5/5!

---

### **Susan Dixon says**

This book does something rarely seen in accounts either of war or of PTSD: it shows the connection between the two not through clinical documentation but through story. Catherine Madison's account of growing up with a father who had endured three brutal years as a POW in Korea demonstrates how PTSD *works*. Madison's father felt he had survived because of deeply-held values and that may be true. His difficulty separating that experience from the very different requirements of parenting, however, created a home atmosphere in which his family had to live with the ripple effect of his unresolved anger and suffering.

Madison alternates her father's story with her own, a technique that demonstrates that his experience was not something in the past, something that he had put behind him. His occasional use of the Korean words he had heard in the prison camps, for instance, are a particularly poignant reminder that his POW experience was constantly alive for him. The many times he explodes at his daughter for no reason she can imagine show the reader what she did not know at the time - she was shadow-boxing with the same enemies who were haunting him.

While Madison does not herself draw any larger lessons from the stories she tells, I found the book to be an urgent call for a better understanding of how trauma affects the human psyche. Madison's father was able to build a successful post-war career but at great cost to those closest to him, those who never stopped trying to love him. It is yet another tragedy of war that he survived because of his character but was not able to adapt to a new life in which his survival techniques were no longer required.

---

### **Lin Salisbury says**

Through the refractive lens of the present, Madison tells the heartrending parallel stories of her Korean War POW father and her resulting harrowing childhood. After her father's death, Madison finds a folder labeled "The Whole Story" and learns for the first time of her father's experience as a prisoner of war—the death marches, starvation, and torture he endured over a three year period before returning home a virtual stranger to his wife and young child. Madison was an infant when her father, a captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps was captured in July 1950; he returns home a damaged and demanding man. Madison's graphic descriptions of the severe abuse and deprivation inflicted upon her father and other prisoners of the forgotten war juxtaposed against psychological abuse imposed upon her as a child by her traumatized father, are handled with a compassionate examination. A piercing memoir about the casualties of war at home and abroad.

---

### **Val says**

Catherine Madison writes a dramatic account of her father's captivity as a prisoner of war during the Korean Conflict while simultaneously recounting the vivid memories of her childhood. The chapters alternate

between her physician father's military service, emphasizing his POW experience, and her childhood encounters with the man who returned home from the war. This skillfully artistic work reads as a novel, lending to its intrigue as well as shedding light on the consequences of war using primary source accounts from a collection of secret documents found years later. The strengths of the book are its intellectual quality, the compelling nature of the story, and the introspection of both the author and her father, Alexander "Doc" Boysen.

Madison's experience as a journalist and editor lend to the intellectual merit of this book. Her expertise as a writer brings the story and its nuances alive. The sophisticated details prompt the reader to think deeply and critically about the dynamic effects of war, PTSD, and other consequences of combat for both soldiers and their families.

Her communicative imagery and gripping account maintain the reader's interest because of the veracity and depth of the story—a story of horror, suspense, and hope. What made the book most riveting was the realistic accounting from a physician's perspective who daily fought to treat his comrades but was prohibited mostly due to the contempt of his captors and the severe lack of medical supplies. The gruesome recounting of the rate at which American prisoners died, how they died, and the ruthless denial of treatment stir up emotion by bringing the reader face to face with the "Tiger" and other North Korean and Chinese captors. Then upon returning home, Doc went mentally and emotionally untreated himself, which most likely contributed to the dysfunction of and contempt toward his own family.

This book does not cover operations or battles during the war. Rather, it takes the reader on a journey through an in-depth look at the depravity of man which leaves an indelible impression as to how any culture could treat fellow humans so harshly and inhumanely. Not surprisingly, Doc does not engage in much in-depth introspection until his later years, and even then does not seem to comprehend the consequences of the disdainful approach with which he chose to treat his daughter. What appeared to be an attempt to offer protection and love was perceived as extreme parental control that was distant and uncaring. In the end, it seems that the veiled cries of his soul were often mistaken for the self-sufficient toughness of a survivor. The book steers away from politics and opinion, but may lead the reader to speculate about possible strategies to help veterans such as Doc who suffered a host of mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical trauma. Because the book is written as a novel, the author does not attempt to provide such remedies, but leaves the reader free to decide what judgment to render regarding what could or should have been done for America's forgotten heroes who survived some of the most brutal treatment only one short generation ago.

---

## Mariejkt says

"The War Came Home With Him" by Catherine Madison is not only the author's memoir but also her father's memoir of the Korean War. This book is set up where you read a chapter about her life then a chapter about her dad. Her dad was a prisoner of war during the Korean war. It is a hard book to read because the author does not hide or try to soften what her happened to her dad or even his attitude toward his family when he returned. Some of the horrific things that her dad wrote about experiencing would make some wonder if they are true but it is what has happened in war and war is not pretty. Its also not pretty how sometimes families can be treated after their loved one comes back because of what they have experienced. It is not an easy book but well worth the read. I highly recommend it.

I was given this book from Net Galley and not required to give a positive review.

---

## Shawna says

I truly admire the author's ability to be so even-handed in her depiction of her father. There were moments

when I was outraged on her behalf. (The nipple-pulling shower scene immediately comes to mind.) But she never condemns her father, allowing him to be complex and nuanced, but never fully known, even when he appears to behave as a complete and unreasonable bully.

I have to think the author must have gone through some amount of therapy to be able to view her father in this way. What she experienced on many levels was abuse, pure and simple. That he had endured a traumatic POW experience, for me, doesn't excuse or forgive the way he behaved.

Something else that came through for me while reading this book was the sense of women's diminished options during the period the author was growing up. Women's rights really have come so far in just a few decades.

I nearly passed on reading this book because I'd already read Danielle Trussoni's memoir about her relationship with her Vietnam vet father in "Falling Through the Earth," and "Unbroken" by Laura Hillenbrand, about American POWs in Japan in WWII, but I found this is perspective of war and aftermath to be well worth my time. Not only did I learn a lot about the Korean War but it really lays bare how imperfect human beings cope with extraordinary events across generations.

---

## **emmabooks says**

(I received the Kindle version of this book, free of charge, from Netgalley in return for an honest independent review.)

### **Moving, Positive and Totally Gripping Memoir**

This is the story of Doc, a Korean War survivor; how he survived the War (and being a POW) and family life during his absence and on his return. It is also the story of his daughter Cathy, the author. Useful background information for readers unfamiliar with the Korean War is given as part of the narrative.

The book starts in the 1950s and continues up to 2002. Chapters alternate between the father's story in Korea and the daughter's story growing up, mainly in the US, with her returned father's authoritarian parenting style. The changes between timelines are smooth and work well - there are no sudden break offs, or cliff hangers at the end of chapters. There are only 3 main characters, Cathy and her parents. Other family members, friends and POW survivors and non-survivors play a peripheral, albeit essential, role in the book.

Themes that stood out for me included the chaos of war (from the soldier's perspective), the importance of friends, how a positive outlook at times of unimaginable suffering really does make a difference, and of course an insight into the Korean War. Also, of course, how to survive growing up with an overly strict, and often frightening, father.

What really drew me to this book, was the author's writing style. She uses brevity to give the information pertinent to the action, but does not embellish it. There are moments of total awfulness in some of the Korean scenes, and moments of wit - such as when Cathy has to clear her plate of unwanted asparagus "*Chewed until I couldn't chew anymore, then swallowed. ... When it wouldn't go down, its friends came back up.*" Few emotions are described as the writing is so clear that the reader knows how the person is feeling.

I found this book totally gripping. I empathised with Cathy trying to cope with her parents, enjoyed the scenes of her growing up, felt sad at the struggles her father was obviously going through, and was shocked at many of the Korean scenes. However, despite all, this is a positive book - and quite possibly the best book

I have read so far this year!

(See more of my reviews on: [www.emmabooks.blogspot.co.at](http://www.emmabooks.blogspot.co.at) )

---

### **Liz Neale says**

This book was a page turner. It captured what being a POW in the Korean War was like and what her father brought home with him and how it affected the family as a whole. The author goes very smoothly from present day to Korean War and back again.

---

### **Jia Jung says**

Found this book out of nowhere in my local library's catalog when I realized that reading up on anything and everything, particularly autobiographical/biographical in nature, about the Korean War would be essential to inform my own goal of writing my father's life story, and mine with it.

I didn't necessarily expect this to be far and away a more informative, incisive, and revealing book than any others, fact or fiction, that concern the country or the era.

Most of all, I was moved and in fact disconcerted by the extent to which I recognized the psychological ramifications of the war upon Ms. Madison's father, and the subsequent dynamics that trickled down to her family and herself as she grew up from a little baby into a woman and the mother of her own child. Her experiences and magnanimous perspectives in retrospect broke my heart but also inspired me that these things can, and must be healed.

My father was not a U.S. prisoner of war in Korea, but he was rendered a street child by the conflict and grew up with great suffering and abandonment, with the guidance of a few good G.I.s or missionaries in between. Seeing his moods in Ms. Madison's description of her father helped confirm that I am on the right track in thinking that daughters of men and generations hurt by the forgotten war have inherited a suffering that they can end without passing down to future generations...all the better if by a creative, explorative, narrative process.

I think this book should've been a national best seller, and should still be. Check it out, and tell anyone you know if you feel the same way.

---

### **Jodie Toohey says**

I came across *The War Came Home with Him* while shopping on Amazon. Other than being a historical account and involving Veterans, who I find have fascinating stories to tell, I also have something in common with the author. Technically, it's actually my father who has it in common with her. My grandfather, my father's father, was also a POW in Korea. It also changed him and he didn't talk about it. My father has been researching my grandfather's captivity, so I thought it might be instructive.

*The War Came Home with Him* has alternating chapters starting with Alexander Boyson prior to his capture

and trading places back and forth with his daughter, Catherine's, story starting when she was a little girl. It beautifully tells the story of both of their lives, his before and after the time he was a prisoner, and hers of her life with him. It's heartbreaking how being a POW negatively impacted the author's life, but it's also hopeful in that it's clear the author has forgiven him, understands him to some degree, and has made peace. This memoir doesn't glorify war or gloss it over; it is what it is, through the author's eyes and the father's. The author's perspective is based on her memories and her father's based on her research and writings her father left behind, making it believable and, as far as I know, highly accurate. I also liked how the author arranged the chapters, subtly tying what her father went through as a Korean War POW to her own memories of how he was as a father, and how he brought that part of the war home with him.

*The War Came Home with Him* is interesting, tells a good story, and provides deep insight into the author's and her father's life. And I also believe it's an important book.

---

## **Liz Blank says**

At a book talk tonight 2/24/2016, at the Hamline Midway Library. There will be an audio version of the talk available in 4 weeks.

Catherine Madison closes the Fireside Series with a reading from "The War Came Home with Him", which tells the stories of two survivors of one man's war: a father who withstood a prison camp's unspeakable inhumanity and a daughter who withstood the residual cruelty that came home with him.

Doc Boysen died fifty years after his ordeal, his POW experience concealed to the end in a hidden cache of documents. In "The War Came Home with Him", Madison pieces together the horrible tale these papers told—of a young captain in the U.S. Army Medical Corps captured in July 1950, beaten and forced to march without shoes or coat on icy trails through mountains to camps where North Korean and Chinese captors held him for more than three years. As the truth about her father's past unfolds, Madison returns to a childhood troubled by his secret torment to consider, in a new light, the telling moments in their complex relationship.

Journalist Madison was editor-in-chief of *Utne Reader*, senior editor at *Adweek* and *Creativity Magazine*, founding editor of *American Advertising*, and editor-in-chief of *Format Magazine*. She has written articles for many publications, including the *Chicago Tribune*, *Star Tribune*, and *Minnesota Monthly*.

---

## **Alex says**

*The War Came Home With Him: A Daughter's Memoir* is a throat-clenching biography of a POW during the Korean War and an autobiography of his daughter, who poignantly tells her own story growing up with a man tragically changed forever after being a POW. Catherine Madison deftly gives a voice to her father, Doc—something he was never able to do for himself—in a way that honors him profoundly. *The War Came Home With Him* is painfully honest, not just in the details of life as a POW, but in the undeniable ramifications such immense trauma has on those few who manage to survive. Madison's honesty enshrines Doc's integrity, despite the obvious mistakes he make once home from war.

"My story of Korea—let it rest there...I imagine I have changed but do not know how nor have any inclinations of such," Doc wrote to his wife after being release from the POW camps, but before returning to the States. It didn't take long for the changes to become obvious. Fits of hyper vigilance, anger, paranoia,

dissociations and sadness became the routine for Doc, with his family on the receiving end. For example, Madison's mother urged her to invite her friends over to celebrate their high school graduation, but Madison declined. In her words: "I could not risk my father blowing up in front of everybody."

It would have been exceedingly easy for Madison to portray her father as a villain, a man taking out his pain on his children, but the author digs deeper in search of a greater understanding of the man she and her brothers called "Colonel Surgeon Father God." What she uncovers, largely after his death, is a story so painful it is easier to understand the result: war comes home with its soldiers, sailors, and airmen.

Madison never makes excuses for her father, she doesn't justify the time he punched her, or the countless times he let her down. Instead, she juxtaposes her story of growing up with his story in Korea, then later stationed in Japan as a surgeon treating Vietnam casualties. At times, Madison's story feels whiny compared with her father's horrific time as a POW, but this only adds to the meta-perspective of a narrative so intertwined, it's hard to distinguish between victim and abuser. As a memoir, Madison avoids making categorical statements about all service members, focusing on her personal experiences and those of her father.

We often try to drill war down to numbers, military operations, and politics. Quantifiable things like casualties, time, and area determine the traditional scale of a war, but tallying only provides a narrow estimate of the ramifications of war. Policy changes are also popularly discussed, such as the New Deal, McCarthy era policies, and The Patriot Act. Biographies of generals and poignant stories of soldiers. line libraries, but there is a gap in our accounts of war, the effects on the family.

As portrayed in *The War Came Home With Him*, the true casualties of war are immensely larger than reported when we consider the families forever changed. *The War Came Home With Him* is a reminder to the reader that "collateral damage" in war is costly, hurting families the most.

I highly recommend *The War Came Home with Him* to anyone interested in reading about the experiences of POWs, the Korean War, war-grief, trauma, and the impact on war and families. Actually, I recommend this book to anyone interested in non-fiction. Madison's writing is so compelling; I read the entire book in a couple of sittings, not wanting to put it down for even a minute.

Thank you, Net Galley and University of Minnesota Press for providing me with an Advanced Reader Copy!

---