

Father's Day

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I have a big gap in my childhood life when i think about fathers. My dad was a career army office and was gone for the duration of WWII...he was in the Pacific...and again during the Korean War (he was in Tokyo, at the hospital there, tending jaw and facial injuries coming in from Korea. We had been living in Tokyo but when the war began, he sent his family back to the USA)

All of that is TMI, I suppose. But this being Fathers' Day, I was thinking about the general topic. Both of my sons were/are (I have to use the double verb because one son died young) enthusiastic and wonderful fathers. Looking back at old photos of them with their children, I see very hands-on relationships. My father was less so. He was a caring and committed father, but I don't recall any wrestling or tickling or piggyback rides. Our life was a little more formal; and, of course, he was gone so much. My book "Crow Call" is about his return from the war when I was in third or fourth grade and he seemed a stranger to me after such a long time.

I'm aware, too, that many of my books have very strong and important father figures in them. There are "real" fathers, too, but what interests me are those that have an absent or distant father, and so the child protagonist has found a substitute. Off the top of my head, I am thinking of A SUMMER TO DIE, RABBLE STARKEY (one of my favorites, all but forgotten now), THE GIVER, MESSENGER...and I know there are others.

I'm sure that a lot of fiction reflects autobiography even when the writer isn't aware of it.

Here is me with my dad (from CROW CALL), and my son Ben with his boys:



Happy Father's Day to all dads!