

PLAYING WAR WITH REAL GUNS

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I knew it would happen someday, but that morning, I was unprepared. I was in the second grade at Green Bay Road Elementary School. Our teacher was sending us down to the Learning Center in pairs. She picked me and another boy who was next alphabetically.

As we walked down the hallway, I felt my stomach tighten up. I was trying to be brave, but let's face it, I hated needles.

Once we reached the Learning Center, we joined the rest of the second graders in a line that looked like it would take forever to get through. I was glad that there was such a long line because that meant that I had time to prepare myself. I was so nervous and afraid that my stomach hardened like a rock inside of me. A train could have collided with my stomach, and I would not have felt it.

By the time I reached the half-way point in the line, my palms began to sweat, and every movement, and every second, seemed to be magnified. It took forever for me to reach the beginning of the line.

Finally, I was the second one in line, when suddenly, the girl in front of me fainted. I had just found some courage while waiting in line for so long, but after her fainting, I was more scared than ever. I was afraid that I too would faint.

A woman dressed in a nurse's uniform took my left arm and pushed up my sleeve. She rubbed something on a cottonball, and then on my arm, which had now become the target.

There was a man behind the nurse, who was dressed in a sailor's suit. He had his back to me. Once he turned around, I saw what looked like a "cannon" in his hands. He said those famous words you hear from every doctor, "relax...this won't hurt a bit"! I was no second grade dummy. I knew it would be very painful. He didn't fool me for one second.

Then he began to move the "cannon" closer to my arm. I closed my eyes. It seemed like years before he moved it away from my arm.

After this painful Tetnus Shot, I began walking towards the school nurse's table to get a bandage for my "gun shot" wound. About two feet from her table, everything began to get blurry, and I felt a strange heaviness in my head...

The next thing I knew, the nurse was peeling me off of the floor. From there I was sent back to class. When I reached my seat in that very familiar classroom, my neighbor asked me how it was. I answered him rather sarcastically, "It's great, if you like to play 'WAR!'".