

Playground Duty Merits Combat Pay

As I stated on several occasions, playground supervisors should receive combat pay.

There is no other job in this world where conditions are as hazardous, the enemy so well-trained and human life is treated with so little regard.

My friend Esther and I used to crouch in a trench near the vent fan of the cafeteria to keep warm and talk of home.

"They're awfully quiet out there," I sighed, looking out over a field of children.

"It's always quiet before the battle. Remember how quiet it was before the Frisbee attack last year?"

"How many adults did we lose in that battle?"

"Three, counting Mrs. Marsh who was tied to a slide and left through the lunch hour."

"My feet are cold and wet. I wish I had a change of dry socks."

"You know what they'd do to us if we left our post, don't you? Give us an extra six months out here."

"Hey, the kids are regrouping. Tell me it isn't what I think it is."

"I'm afraid so. They're lining up to play crack the whip. You wanta go on this one?"

"Do I have to?"

"Do it for the Gipper."

"You mean little Ronnie Gipper who was airborne for 10 minutes and landed in a cornfield three miles down the road?"

"That's the one."

"Wait a minute," I hesitated. "They're having chicken fights on the horizontal bars. This may be a trap to get us in the middle."

Esther held her breath. "You may be right. I'll tell you what we should do. You maneuver around past those boys who are shaking down the second graders for the milk money and on beyond the group who are destroying themselves on that patch of ice. Then double back by the kids sailing over the bars on the swings and act like you're going for the group that's putting eggs on the slide, only don't fiddle with them. Go for the crack-the-whip line. Got it?"

"I got it," I said burrowing my head in my coat collar, "but what are you going to be doing?"

Esther threw herself on the ground and clutched pathetically at my legs. "Give me a break," she sobbed. "I've only got two weeks left here before I begin library duty. Don't ask me to go out there!"