

guns

Eric Harris

Period 4

R.D.

Guns! Boy, I loved playing “guns” as a kid. It is one of the few things I miss from childhood today. Living in a rural town in Michigan for three years, I played a lot in a forest. My brother, two friends and I would always be running around shooting imaginary bad-guys. The woods behind my house were vast, empty, and old. It smelled of a musty tree or maybe of pine trees most of the time in there. Those woods left so many memories in the mind it’s amazing. Such as how scary they looked during hard rain storms or how dark they were at night. I was even afraid to go into the woods during nighttime, for fear of the unknown. For the most part, however, my memories are fond ones. My brother, Sonia, and I had countless missions in those woods, hunting for enemy troops and stopping invasions. We would set up little tree fort made of loose sticks and branches, and use them for our bases and camps. “Fire!” I would scream, as we all made as many fast gun sounds as we could, waving our deadly plastic toys around. Almost every time we had a firefight, we would pretend one of us would be injured. We always would carry little bandages and tape with us to dress the wound. Luckily, the bullet would always go right through so we wouldn’t need to perform surgery. Sonia, being her crazy self, would run right into the battle screaming and firing at all the bad guys, as we gave cover fire. It seemed to vivid, our fighting, and so real. Now that I have actually fired weapons I realize how unrealistic we were, but hey, we were just kids!

“Where’s the air support?!” my brother screams, as I reload my M16. “Hell if I know!” I retort. “We got more incoming APCs on our 6’s, set those mines quick!” Sonia hollers. The bad guys were surrounding us, but we had plenty of ammo to last us for hours. I toss a few stick grenades into the trees ahead, and duck as they go off killing the wave of enemy troops. Kevin was setting the mines for those trucks and Sonia was

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launching rockets at the platoon on our left. "Grenade!" I scream as I see a stick fall in our base. Sonia and I jump out over the tree trunks as the grenade destroys our base. "We gotta move, now!" Sonia yells in my ear under all the shooting. We run right past my brother and he joins up in the evacuation. Just then our air support flies by overhead. "There's the gun-ships!" says my bro., as we dodge tree limbs, bullets, and mortars. We stop at a group of rather large trees and turn and return fire. The air support is dropping napalm on the advancing troops, and launching rockets at the trucks. We pull out a huge machine gun and set it up on a stationary position in a tree. Sonia and Kevin start spraying bullets everywhere as I use hand-to-hand combat on a few bad guys that made it to us. By the time I finish them off with a really strong stick, it's time to go inside and do some homework, and Sonia needs to go out to dinner with her family tonight, too. All in a day's work as a kid, I guess.

One of these days, real soon, I will call up Sonia and see if she still remembers me. And see if those woods, our forts, and our hide-outs are all still there where I left them over seven years ago.

first step  
pioneers

**Eric Harris**

**period 1**

**2/18/97**

**Mrs. Caruthers**

In the course of my life, I have moved to different houses or locations about six times. The last three times I have moved, I left behind some of the greatest friends I ever had. Since my father was a United States Air Force pilot, we had to move often. It is always hard to leave close friends behind. And since most of them live on the other side of the country, I will probably never see many of them again. A few I stay in touch with, but most I have lost. It is hard losing a friend, like Alexandra did in "O Pioneers." I will discuss the last three places I have lived in and the friends and memories I have left behind. I have lived in two homes in Oscoda, Michigan and one in Plattsburgh, New York.

The first home I lived in was located in a largely wooded area, so we didn't have many neighbors. Oscoda is a very, very small town. Of the three close neighbors I had, two of them had children my age. Every day we would play in the woods, or at our houses. We would make forts in the woods or make them out of snow, we would ride around on our bikes, or just explore the woods. It was probably the most fun I ever had in my childhood.

After living there for 3 years, we moved to live on the Air Force base. It was hard leaving my friends, especially my best friend. Even though we were still only a 10 minute drive away, we only saw each other maybe three times after that. We lived on the Air Force base for about half a year. I made friends there, some were good, but none were as good as my friends at my old house. Since we lived on the base, we had lots of neighbors. The houses in those old bases are like a lot of small condos. My friends and I had a lot of fun there, too. We still lived close to a large wooded area so we would travel around in there almost every day. We were all the same age too, so that made it even more fun.

But, as our family knew, we moved that summer. This time we moved to Plattsburgh, New York. It was real hard leaving my friends again. And that time I had to say goodbye to my first best friend for good. Plattsburgh is in upstate New York, along the shore of Lake Champlain. Home of the Lock Ness Monster's cousin, Champy. We lived on an Air Force base there too. It wasn't as cramped as the one in Oscoda, but it was still small. At first I had no friends there, even though there was many kids my age.

Then once school started, and even some help from my older brother, I had some friends. It took a while for our friendships to grow, but soon we were best friends and did everything together. Kris [REDACTED] the best friend I ever had, lived about 2 blocks away. Every day we would find something new to do. Some days we would walk along the shore of the lake and just mess around there. Sometimes we would look for old bullet shells from around 50 years ago and we even looked for Revolutionary War and Civil War era items. Kris once found the diary of a slave under some old Civil War barracks. We also found buttons, bullets, old bottles of whiskey or other liquor, and even some items from some very old train wreck. We had quite the collection of items, which most of them I still hold today. Sometimes Kris and I would play baseball (actually it was just home-run derby) with our friend from Norway, Jens. Jens was a good friend, he was the shiest person I had ever known and he wasn't used to our American customs, but he was always there. Kris and I made it our mission to make Jens into a normal American kid. We would go to the base gym almost every day and just mess around there. The gym was a very large facility, complete with full basketball court, racquetball courts, and a running track *above* the basketball court. We spent countless hours there, just hanging out and talking. Kris and I would ride our bikes all over the base too, we loved to ride bikes and the base was just full of interesting places. Soon news came that the base was going to be closed. This prompted a major campaign. There were large public parties held and everything. Then came Independence Day. The base had a large field in the center of all the housing areas, and every year they would hold a spectacular fireworks show. Kris, Jesse, and I (our other best friend) had the best seats in the house. We were about 100 feet away from the launch site of these fireworks. So they were exploding right over our heads. Then later that night there was a large party with bands playing and singing. A few weeks later, Kris moved to Georgia. This was hard to swallow. We had spent more time together than we did with our own families, and now he was gone. I still had Jesse though. And with what little time I had left in Plattsburgh, we did as much as we could together. Then, after my dad retired from the Air Force as a Major, we moved to Denver, Colorado. It was towards the end of the summer, so Jesse and I had spent some good times together. It was the hardest moving from Plattsburgh. I have the most memories from there. When I left Jesse, and when Kris left, I had a lot of feelings. I felt alone, lost, and even agitated that I had spent so much time with them and now I have to go because of something I can't stop. It doesn't take long to make a best friend, but it only takes 2 words to loose one. Those are, "We're moving." I still stay

in touch with Kris, and I try to with Jesse and some other friends from Plattsburgh. But there was a few that I didn't get phone numbers or addresses from. Such as my best friend in Oscoda.

Loosing a friend is almost the worst thing to happen to a person, especially in the childhood years. I have lived in many places, but the last three places have been the most fun and the greatest experiences of my childhood. Although memories stay with you, the actual friend doesn't. I have lost many great friends, and each and every time I lost one, I went through the worst days of my life. Since loosing a friend is something I have experienced many times, I know what Alexandra feels like in "O Pioneers." And it isn't something I would not like to feel for a long time.

### Just A Day

I seem to remember our fishing trips well. They were always preempted, never extemporaneously brought out by my father the night before his intended day of relaxation. How could one look forward to a trip if they did not know about it? Go to bed early, we have to get up at 5! Under normal circumstances, this would bring out a barrage of arguments & pouting, but going fishing was not an everyday thing. This was a good thing, as opposed to getting up for school or some other bulls\*\$t. I would wake up to black skies & coffee bean aromas making their way around the house. I never liked coffee, but I loved the smell. I would dine on fancy breakfast cuisine, otherwise known as Cocoa Puffs. My brother would already be up, trying to impress our father by forcing down the coffee he hadn't grown to like yet. I always remember my brother trying to impress everyone, and myself thinking what a waste of time that would be. I would go to the garage & get my fishing tackle together, & throw it in the back of our '74 Ram. By then my brother & father would have all the food & coolers ready, & they would be packing, ready to go. The drives up to the mountains were always peaceful, a certain halcyon hibernating within the tall peaks & the armies of pine trees. It seemed back then that when the world changed, these mountains would never move. They would remain at peace with themselves, and with anyone who would respect them. We arrived at the lake, but I don't remember what the name of it is. The lake is almost vacant, except for a few repulsive, suburbanite a\$\$holes. I never liked those kind of people, they always seemed to ruin the serenity of the lake. I loved the water. I never went swimming, but the water was an escape in itself. Every so often, the waves would form a small pattern, & change current in an odd shape. I would always cast into those spots, thinking that the fish were more attracted to these parts of the water. Time to bait. I never liked salmon eggs, too much gooey crap that gets on your fingers. Instead, I went with a lour, even though this was a lake. I knew I would have to use eggs if I wanted any fish, but that didn't matter at the time. Cast, Reel, etc. countless times, and my mind would wander to wherever it would want to go. Time seemed to stop when I was fishing. The lake, the mountains, the trees, all the wildlife s\$\*t that people seemed to take for granted, was here. Now. It was if their presence was necessary for me to be content. Time to go!. Done. Back to society. No regrets, though. Nature shared the secret serenity with someone who was actually observant enough to notice. Sucks for everyone else.

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