



## Dean McNabb

Growing up as a child until I was about 25 years old, I lived in Dartmouth, MA. We lived in a neighborhood called Summit Grove at 73 Gifford Ave. My Mother and Stepfather both worked during the day. So me and my two brothers Wayne and Al were raised by our Grandmother. My Brother Wayne is 2 years older than me and Al is 8 years younger. We were poor, but rich because we didn't know we were poor: and we were happy doing what kids do in a neighborhood. Play together and make up our own Rules. We just had Fun playing together.

I cherish the childhood memories from my life growing up in Dartmouth in Summit Grove. This is one memory that has stayed with me all my Life. How could I ever forget being a Neighborhood Hero.

I remember back then when we went to Elementary school for half days. I was probably 7 or 8 years old and was going to school in the afternoons. On this one warm sunny Spring morning I can recall watching a movie about Cowboys and Indians on our black and white TV. Grandma was cooking or doing something in the kitchen. I was alone in the Living Room( that's what we called it back then) enjoying the Cowboy and Indian movie

Somewhere during the show, the Indians were sitting around a campfire in their TeePee smoking their Peace Pipe. Well, the movie ended and I thought what a great idea.... A teePee, a campfire, Peace Pipe. Hey that would be fun.

So I grabbed a book of matches left by the ashtray where my Stepfather would sit and smoke and watch TV when he was home. On the right side of my house, we had a field that was about 100 to 125 feet wide and extended from Gifford Ave to Summit Ave; about 200 feet long. It was quite overgrown with brush.

I walked out into the middle of the field which was very dry at the time with my book of matches and built my teepee out of straw and sticks from the field.. Then I got some dry straw like grass from the field and I placed it in the teepee for my camp fire. I was gonna be like the Indians and be nice and warm and cozy, sit by the fire in my teepee and smoke my Peace pipe..

So I scratched the matches and lit the straw on fire. "Holly Crap" Now the whole Gall Darn teepee was on fire and the field was starting to burn. I was running like Hell into the house. My Grandma immediately could see what was happening and called the Fire Dept. I remember her saying: "Get under your bed and hide." The Fire Dept is coming.

Well....the Fire Dept came and let the fire burn down the field, which at the time was pretty overgrown anyway with brush, straw, hay, briars...whatever. For me, it was really a pretty scary day, but my Grandma never told my mother or anyone else that I know of.. She knew what the hell would happen if my mother found out.

However, that same afternoon all of my neighborhood buddies heard about all the excitement. When they got out of school they came over to the field to see what the Heck happened. It wasn't more than a day or two before they found out exactly what happened and who did it. They must have thought it was a great idea because they all patted me on the back and congratulated me.

My Buddies and I would always get together everyday after school and play whatever sport was in season. It was Spring and it was baseball season. One of my buddies came up with an idea to turn the burnt down field into a Baseball Diamond. "So that's what we did." What an awesome idea.



Up to the time of the "Fire" I really hadn't played much baseball; because we never had a place in the neighborhood to play. Well, now, I was the Neighborhood Hero; and I had a lot of teachers. I can hear them now: "Swing level" "Keep your eye on the ball" " No Chipsies on Windows" " If ya hit to Right field, its and out" "Oops, I gotta go, time for my paper route.:

"Neighborhood Hero" Yup, that was me. that most wonderful Season of my Life. We weren't poor, just very happy neighborhood kids making up our own rules and having Fun. , That was.

"A most

**wonderful time**

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