

March 3, 1946

Island Boy Loses Arm in Hunting Accident

Four Planes Respond to Emergency Call

Rush Plasma and Doctor When Trip to Hospital Fails

WASHINGTON IS. — Accident-ally shot in the right arm with such force that an operation for amputation at the elbow had to be performed, 13-year-old Dick Bjarnarson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Bjarnarson had a narrow escape from death Sunday, and a fatality might have resulted had aid not been available by airplane. Luckily the boy is left handed.

Thwarted in an attempt at first to rush Dick to an Escanaba hospital 30 miles away, Dr. Farmer, island physician, called Dr. Dan Dorchester from Sturgeon Bay, who successfully performed the operation after administering a blood transfusion. The doctor made the quick flight here in the dark with Eunice Isaacson, a nurse, landing at Detroit harbor with the aid of car lights.

Put Gun on Stump

Dick, with two friends, David Foss and John Gunnlaugsson, was hunting crows in Jim Boyce's woods across from the Bjarnarson residence about 2:30 p.m., stopped to put his gun on a stump. Not resting securely, the firearm fell over and went off. Most of the shot pierced the elbow of the right arm, one grazed the ear and another scratched the chest. John, the only witness, called David, who was nearby, and the two helped their friend walk to the Bjarnarson home a quarter of a mile away.

As the boys neared the house, Dick's father, who had been on his way to deliver a fish to Carl Otterson, but had a hunch he should go home first, came into sight. The youth shouted for him to call a doctor, and he did so at once. It was not until the father returned to give first aid that Dick fainted from the shock and had to be carried indoors.

Plasma Ordered

Pilot George Meredith was called from Sturgeon Bay to bring blood plasma in his 3-place plane, and Pilot Wally Arentzen came at the same time from Escanaba. The plan was to take Dick to an Escanaba hospital due to a tail wind and shorter distance than Sturgeon Bay. The father went with Arentzen, and Dr. Farmer and the boy with Meredith. When over Rock Is., however, the latter's carburetor began to ice up at 2,000 feet, so the party was forced back, landing at Jackson harbor.

In the meantime, a third plane came over from Escanaba to get the boy's mother landing and taking off at the airport. Due to Meredith's difficulty, Arentzen crowded the boy and Dr. Farmer into his plane, but as he taxied for take-off, he sank through thin ice into shallow water where fishermen had been cutting.

Given Transfusion

All chance of getting to Escanaba gone, Dr. Dorchester was called and a phone connection was made with Escanaba to notify the mother who had been frantically waiting there.

The operation was performed in Dr. Farmer's office, and no complications resulted, although it was necessary to make a blood transfusion in addition to the use of the quart of plasma Meredith brought. The blood was donated by Dr. Farmer's sister-in-law from Milwaukee who was visiting here.