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veryone knows that moms, especially single moms, don't get sick. But somehow, between caring for my three boys under 10, working two part-time jobs and dealing with the aftermath of divorce, my body forgot this important detail.

One Friday night found me weak and dehydrated from a double-barreled gastrointestinal flu. By daybreak the children stood at my bedroom door with boundless energy, endless questions and limitless Saturday-morning enthusiasm. What's a mother to do? I pulled out the big guns, and I prayed.

**When sickness strikes one single mom, she declares war.**



# General

by Sheila Petnuch Fields

# Mommy, Sir!

## BATTLE PLAN

I ended my prayer inspired. I would "enlist" the help of my three sons by "inducting" them into Mom's Army for the day. Since the three are military buffs, this captured their attention and took the edge off having to fend for themselves.

I became "General Mommy, Sir," and my oldest son, Matthew, assumed the role of captain in command of younger sibs Lt. Benjamin and Pvt. Daniel. They carried out their marching orders—even dressing the part, complete with toy rifles slung over their shoulders and plastic grenades strapped to their belts.

Assigned to KP duty, Capt. Matt oversaw breakfast. Lt. Ben delivered a small glass of seltzer to his battle-weary, bedridden leader and exited the infirmary with a salute.

Soon the platoon retreated to the family room to watch favorite videos of old war movies. I thanked God for the weather. The cold, gray day and wet snow made me feel less guilty confining the troops to quarters.

Roused from sleep by sounds of a skirmish, my surprise inspection revealed all was not quiet on the Western front. After ordering a cease-fire and threatening courts-martial to the quarreling soldiers, relative peace prevailed. I returned to sick bay to read, rest and regroup before summoning the courage to deal with dinner.

As I sat in bed realizing I had neither the strength nor inclination to dish up chow, my next-door neighbor called. She offered to penetrate enemy lines and get supplies to the Fields' camp. Toward evening, the four of us gathered and gave thanks for our C rations: cold turkey breast, crackers and ginger ale. The sun had set, and we had survived.

## EVENING COLORS

Knowing I am but a tender warrior in my Father's army, I gave thanks for God's faithfulness. He had seen us through another crisis. During the most debilitating moments as the virus waged war in my body, I became aware that my Commander-in-Chief stood by my side. In the thick of battle, I felt safely tucked behind His shield. The day reminded me one more time that no matter what the circumstances I face, I can, indeed, do all things through Christ who gives me strength. ♦

*Sheila Petnuch Fields and her troops bivouac in Wappingers Falls, N.Y.*