"Lock and load one round...fire at will...place your weapon (the M-1 rifle) on the rifle rest with the breach open"...blared the periodic, orders over the loudspeakers from the army officer in the fire control tower. The raw recruits were practicing "live ammo" exercises with their rifles at the rifle range under the absolute discipline and intense scrutiny of the training staff. "Safety first" was in practice everywhere. One recruit next to me was having trouble with his rifle and turned to the nearby training sergeant to ask for assistance. Unfortunately, as he turned to face the sergeant the rifle turned with him, moving from pointing down range toward the target to pointing at the training sergeant. "Meathead" was the kindest of the words that I heard the training sergeant scream as he kicked the recruit off the firing line. During eight weeks of basic infantry training we learned how to load, fire, and clean that rifle. But mostly, we learned how to use it safely. We fired it in facilities designed for personal and group safety (the rifle range). We wore personnel protective equipment (earplugs). We received intensive training in firearms safety procedures (keep your weapon pointed down range) and intensive supervision to ensure that we had learned our lessons. Thus began my initial exposure to the U.S. Army, the rifle and firearm safety thirty-six years ago.

Ten months later, after I had completed a number of courses at the U.S. Army's Medical Field Service School, I ended up as a member of their teaching staff for the basic and advanced Medical Laboratory Procedures course. Over a two-year period I taught medical parasitology, virology, mycology, and finally the advanced bacteriology course. Our students learned to isolate and identify all the common infectious agents of man.

In the teaching laboratory we performed "live ammo" exercises: we inoculated cell cultures with influenza, streaked agar plates and slants with Salmonella spp., Shigella spp., diphtheria, Diplococcus pneumoniae, Neisseria meningitidis, Klebsiella pneumonia, and Hemophilus influenzae and many other pathogenic viral and bacterial agents; we inoculated Saboreaud dextrose agar slants with Trichophyton mentagrophytes, Microsporum can-