

Extra Sensory

By Bill Wolfe

I see you're reading a history book, kid. That's good.

You read in there about how we won The War? You did?

Does it say in there that the aliens almost beat us? No?

Just says we sent 'em packin' does it? Well, that's mostly true. But don't you believe it that we didn't have to work for it.

What's that, kid? Our superior fighting spirit and technology? That's a bunch of sh. . .uh. . . nonsense!

No it ain't okay. I promised your momma that I'd watch my language around you and that's what I'm gonna do.

Now where was I? Oh yeah, technology.

I was there kid, and I'm tellin' you that if anything, they was a little more advanced than we was. On the ground, anyway. Way I hear it, out in space we was evenly matched. It was ship-for-ship every time they tried to fight. Every time. Well, you really gotta have your back against the wall to be willing to die just to kill one of your enemy. That ain't no way to fight no war. Period.

No kid, this war was fought and won on the ground, by Infantry. And I don't mind sayin' that the only reason we won was that we got resupplied first. They was usin' their ESP to good advantage and was pushin' us back hard and fast until we got fresh ammo, grub and replacements. Especially the replacements. Lots of 'em.

That book don't say nothin' about their ESP?

Does it say they were all deaf-mutes? Born that way? Well, that part's true enough.

They was deaf and dumb, all right, but they had ESP, and it gave 'em one hel. . .uh. . . heck of an advantage when we had to fight 'em nose to snout down there in them swamps.

Huh? Nah, they didn't like swamps any better'n us. But same as us, they liked all that high-quality uranium ore down inside that planet. But we was soldiers, kid. Soldiers ain't supposed to care what the war's about.

And we didn't. Not those of us who had to slug it out with them in that rank, steaming, slimy mud. And I mean slug it out, too. It's a good thing we have a whole history fighting wars without any of the technological military advantages we have today.

Not that our troops were ready for it at the beginning. Not that theirs were, either.

Our damping fields will stop any electric motor, which completely canceled the superiority provided by their powered suits. And our unpowered ablative body armor was pretty good at dissipating their beam weapons unless they managed to concentrate their shots in one place. But they learned fast, those critters. Fast.

Our bullets chewed them up pretty good until they started salvaging pieces of their dead, worthless, heavy suits to use as makeshift shields and redoubts. By the end some of them were even wearing homemade helmets, vests and leggings that were dang-near bulletproof. But we learned. . .we learned. The trick was to shoot for where they were soft.

What's that you say, kid? No they really was deaf and mute. Didn't have the voice box to make sounds or the ears to hear 'em. But they did have these specialized organs that let them modulate and transmit their ESP signals and others that received them.

Hell, kid. . .uh. . .do me a favor and don't tell your mama about that, okay? Thanks, I appreciate it.

Anyway, they even made something like music that was just for their ESP.

'Course, it had to be better than that junk you young people listen to, today. How you can even call that music. . .

What's that? No, it didn't sound like nothing. I told ya' it was just for their ESP. I even seen one of their music makers, once. We thought it was a new kind of weapon and turned it over to the CO after a raid on one of their camps. It was long, shaped a little like a rifle but it had these six metal wires stretched across it. CO later told us that it was something they used to make ESP music, but now that I think about it, maybe he was just tryin' to keep us in the dark and it really was a weapon. SOS, if you get my drift.

Wasn't long after that raid that they started using their ESP to start kicking our ass. . .our backsides. . .all over that slimeball of a planet.

We knew we were in trouble when they started jamming the radio frequencies. . .all of them. Nothin' but loud static in your ears.

Radio waves? Well, they used them, of course, but they didn't really need 'em, you see. They had that damn ESP going for them and could communicate with each other over fair distances. Once they found out that we couldn't do that weird trick with our minds, they started making headway. I lost a lot of good friends before we figured out that they could coordinate attacks over long distances even with all the frequencies jammed.

Turns out their ESP would even tell 'em if one of us was tryin' to sneak up on 'em. It was weird, kid. . .spooky even. They could tell if something close by so much as moved, even when they wasn't looking.

How's it work?

You sure you wanna know?

Well, okay, but you gotta understand that I don't know any of the technical jabber.

Okay then. Seems they got this alien organ or gland or something that vibrates. And you'll learn in science class that vibrations can travel through any kind of material.

Well, they had this other organ that could read these vibrations in. . .and kid, you ain't gonna believe this. . .could read these vibrations and make sense of them in air. Nothing but air.

Once they jammed the radio frequencies. . . we was the deaf mutes.

The End