**WILLIAM G. MCCALL**

Brick Location: A10

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO WAR

At the time and place of this story it was not too funny. My outfit was named THE JOINT ASSAULT SIGNAL COMPANY, which was usually called JASCO. We were attached to the FOURTH INFANTRY which were part of the troops of the American First Army. Our assignment was to go in on UTAH BEACH which was not too far from the village of Ste.-Mere-Eglise in France. Our job was to supply communications for ship-to-shore during the invasion of Hitler’s beaches in Normandy. We went ashore at just a few minutes past six a.m. We had quite a few casualties and other than some bloody hands caused from the barbed wire laid on the beach by the Germans, I escaped without any major injuries. After several days, after working our way into town and placing our communication cables along the way with most of the reels of 80 pounds of cable we each carried on our back, plus our Carbines (short-barreled rifles) and our backpacks. Oh, I forgot about the chemically-impregnated coveralls we wore in case we were attacked with poisonous gas from the enemies.

Okay, so much for details. Let’s get to the funny part.

Several days after the invasion on D-Day we were bivouacked along a hedge row. Along the hedge row we would dig down in the soil about eight or ten inches and then place our small tents over the hole we had dug, which usually could fit two guys. Now the fun part starts here. This one night I was on switchboard detail all by myself (and scared to death) when I received a message that German aircraft had dumped a bunch of paratroopers in the area. Seeing as it was totally dark outside, I peered through a slit in the tent and I saw someone walking down the hedge row. As I was trained, I yelled out “Halt”, but they still kept coming. The next thing I could think of to do was to find the Carbines which were loaded. All three of us started shooting, eventually running out of ammunition. About this time some of the guys came running out of their tents and it was discovered that I had shot lots of holes through the impregnated clothing of another soldier that I mistook for the enemy. So much for my stint…I never had to be on the switchboard detail again.

Submitted by:

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