

Marsailles

3.2.45

Dear Mrs Kernan,

Three weeks ago I said goodbye to your brother Cecil in camp 344 Germany. He asked me to call on you on my arrival in England, but unfortunately we are going home via the Red Sea.

I knew Cecil from Italy and I can honestly say that he is one of the finest fellows I've ever met. He is the man who persuaded me to study bookkeeping and gave me my first lessons.

We travelled together from Italy and first landed in Stalag VIIIA in Germany. From there I was the first man to go out to work. Cecil was sent to a railway Kommando where he had a minor accident to his leg. A branch of a falling tree swiped him above the knee and he has been using that as an excuse ever since to dodge work.

We met up again in Stalag 344 and there Cecil started studying again and he has already written two exams. He is also very keen on sport and played a little rugby too.

In order to stay in camp, Cecil changed names and uniforms with an airman who wanted to escape. Unfortunately the escape was a failure and the airman was sent back from the working kommando. The result was that Cecil landed in the lockup for four days, and after that he was involved in a tunnel digging affair and was very nearly caught. Next he promoted himself to Corporal also to escape work and that gag worked till Joe came along.

As you know by now, the Russians are already in Lamsdorf the site of our camp, and though we heard in Switzerland that the camp was evacuated before they got there, I personally think and hope that they have reached our boys in time.

Please do not worry about Cecil he can look after himself, and he has three very good friends in camp, who will stick with him through thick and thin.

I am sorry I am not going to England, because I have so many things that I want to tell you.

I shall write again from South Africa. Goodbye and don't worry.

Gert Delport