

we, eventually, arrived at a small village station, Pea Schenzo, (I don't think the spelling is correct) and from there had to walk about two miles to the Camp of Pea Chenso. This was rather a nice camp which had been established for some time. It was apparently well established for they had stocks of Red Cross parcels, and quite a lot of clothing: battle dress; under clothing; boots; and even those long under pants. Here there were quite a number of senior officers and also half a dozen South Africans who had been taken at Sidi Reseig where the S.A. 5th. Brigade had a bad mauling by the German armour.

I had to undergo the usual search I was shown to my room which I was to occupy on my own for a short while. Later I was moved into a room on the First floor shared by: Nightingale, a Kenyan Farmer; de Beer, O.C. of the Cape Town Dukes Regiment who had been taken at Tobruk; and myself.

I was still only clothed in shirt and shorts and old boots but I was soon fitted out with a battle dress (nice and warm), boots, shirts and underpants.

As I was badly in need of a hair cut I went to our camp barber where I met the Sergeant who told me the story of the two S.A. chaps I met in Rome. They had volunteered, when volunteers were asked for, to broadcast.

The Camp Commandant was anti-fascist and so we were treated rather well for we were able to buy a few extra bits of food through one of our officers who went into the village.

It was in this camp that, when Italy capitulated, the Commandant advised all P.O.W.s in the camp to get out before the Germans came and took over. He offered to take five of the officers in his car to the Swiss border, actually, I was told, they drove into Switzerland.

There were several Brigadiers here among the old lags and I at first thought it was rather strange that they spent a lot of time in the boiler room stoking up the hot water for our weekly shower and for the central heating. They were busy forging implements with which to dig tunnels etc.

From the building we looked away to the distant River Po valley and beyond the snow-capped Alps. A wonderful sight for which tourists pay large sums of money to see and here we had that wonderful view for nothing. Some people are born lucky.

There were all sorts or rather forms for taking exercise. There was Volley Ball, using your hands to send a football backwards and forward over a net against a team of 5 opponents, tennis with hands. There was teniquoits etc. and then every morning one could join in a walk in the country under escort. This was very popular as there were a number of very pretty walks.

The chaps who had been in this camp for a year or two had made themselves very comfortable being able to buy little odds and ends to make their rooms look more homely. There were rather nice grounds with two very large trees under which we used to sit in deck chairs we were able to buy. There were also a number of oak trees.

In these big trees numbers of sparrows used to sleep and I remember one late afternoon, when many sparrows had settled for the night, an Italian Officer rushed in and from his shotgun fired two shots into the tree. The result, two sparrows! They were evidently very short of meat. On another occasion, I saw a man, while we were out on a walk, walking through a field with a shotgun over his shoulder and hanging from his belt by its neck was a poor black bird.

Among the Brigadiers and Colonels in the camp, all Imperials, except myself, was an ex-Admiral who, although 70 years of age was a real fighter and wanted to take a part in this war and so he was found a job as a liaison officer in the front line where he was taken prisoner by the Germans.

He was Admiral Sir /