

c/o National Provincial Bank Ltd.,  
Lincolns Inn,  
Carey Street,  
London, W.C.2.

18th. December, 1945.

General Mark W. Clark, C.M., K.C.B., etc.,  
United States Army.

Dear General,

I enclose herewith a copy of a Commendation you were so kind as to award to one of my compatriots.

From the wording of the Commendation, which is undated, it would appear that, when you signed it, you were under the impression that the young British Parachutist to whom you awarded it, was still alive, whereas I think he had probably already died of his wounds in an Italian-German Hospital for P.O.W. in Perugia.

I was myself a P.O.W. of the Germans in this same Hospital and when young Edney was brought in at midnight on January 31st. 1944, with a severe stomach wound, the Italian Surgeon, knowing that I spoke Italian, had me fetched to the Operating Theatre to act as an interpreter, as it was necessary to find out when the wounded soldier had last had food etc.,

It was a hopeless case from the start, though the Italian Surgeons who were very pro-Ally, did their utmost to save his life. The soldier died, in my presence, on February 2nd. 1944, but in the meantime the Germans had allowed me to visit him for a few minutes each day. He was a very modest youngster, 20 years of age, and of the best Anglo-Saxon type.

I managed to get a good deal of the story of his last fight out of him and although he was very diffident about it, I am convinced that he put up a magnificent show against odds to save his comrades. Incidentally, he spoke with considerable esteem and affection of his American comrades, who I gathered, did their utmost to reach him when he was wounded before the Germans picked him up and sent him back from near Nettuno to Perugia, 100. miles north.

Before he died he gave me his parents address and I wrote them a few days ago. A copy of Mr. Rupert Edney's reply which enclosed your original Commendation, is attached. You will see how grateful the family of the young soldier are for your praise.

I am 69. years of age and took no active part in this war, though I was treated by the Germans as P.O.W. from October 1943. to June 10th. 1944, when I had the good fortune to escape. I was previously interned by the Italians.

I know that decorations for valour were more hardly come by in this war than in the wars in which I had taken an active part. Nevertheless, in view of your notable Commendation of Signalmen Kenneth Edney and, in view of the fact that his efforts to help his comrades were exceptional and led to his dying of wounds, I wonder if you would consider recommending him for a suitable posthumous decoration, either American or British.

If the late Signalmen Edney is not eligible for an American decoration, perhaps you would see fit to bring his name to the notice of Field Marshal Alexander whose Commanding Officer I had the honour to be for a brief period, in 1916. Apart from the intrinsic merits of the case, I have ventured to write this letter to you, not only because my wife is an American, but because ever since the last war I have advocated an alliance between our two countries as the only practical safeguard against war.

Yours sincerely,

C.E.A.S. Roche,  
Lt: Colonel late  
Irish Guards.

CER/PVS.