Cecil grew up in Timmsvale, a small village on the north coast of N.S.W, in the mountains west of Coffs Harbour. It's only industry was timber, and when he finished his schooling, Cecil worked at the sawmill. At the same time, he was doing a correspondence course in diesel engineering.

As a young lad Cecil used to canoe on the local creek with his mates. The kids loved to slide down on a wide board into the water. One day Cecil ended up with a large splinter in his buttocks, which ended up in a trip down the mountain to Coffs Harbour. He was more excited about the unexpected trip, than the procedure he faced to remove the splinter. He also enjoyed roller-skating {when his sister Claire didn't hid his STEAL skates}

Cecil and his mate Ned spent a lot of time panning for gold. Young and impatient as they were, they decided to build a sluice box, as this would bring in quicker returns. His younger brother Dumpy got the job of pushing the box up and down the creek, which was fine until yells from the bigger boys and a large black snake swimming towards him finished that day's mining.

Another mate Doug and Cecil loved fishing from the end of Woolgoolga jetty, which had a toilet at the end of the pier with a hole in it. They would fish through the hole, until one day a man told them to B------ off, or he would dump them head first down the hole.

Cecil was a loving and considerate son and brother. He was the third child in a family of eight children, and after he enlisted in the Navy, the family moved to Sydney. This allowed him to visit on short leaves, the last time being just before "Sydney" sailed away on her last and final voyage. He wrote home regularly every week, and he always looked forward to letters from home with news about family and friends.

The morning that he dressed and prepared to leave to join "Sydney", he told his younger brother Dumpy about his plans when the war ended. With older brother Bert, the three of them would buy a property and call it "The Stride Brothers". This was a young man's dream.

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