

But the really simple act with the proportions of a win in the Irish Sweepstake was to hold and read a newspaper. The Anglo-Egyptian news sheets familiar in Middle East days and the Service journals forming our daily news medium in Italy were not newspapers: even the least interested of readers and the harshest of critics will concede that. To read a Melbourne newspaper was akin to having sight restored after years of blindness. One might almost allow oneself the ponderous observation that happiness lies in the little things. Let us dwell for a heavenly moment on the sight, texture, and taste of a piece of 3 in. thick sponge cake!

Two grey days of a calm but threatening Tasman. Thirty-one days out from Suez. The work of the ship goes on and those many spare hours are filled in the same fashions, but the more methodical among us are sorting gear and making a preliminary pack. Opportunities, when space is crowded and likely to lead to last-minute chaos, are too good to be missed, they say. Fresh water is turned on all day, hot fresh water, and respite from fatigues and other duties means a chance to do a last limited laundry.

To-day has seen parades, parades, parades; for pay, for rail warrants, for ration coupons—and for telegram forms!

“Two days to New Zealand. We berth in Wellington on Saturday morning,” one says, and one’s pulse quickens with a nearer, deeper thrill. But to hold a telegraph form, pencil in hand, lifts the heart in bounds of sheer exciting realization. This is true! We *are* going home! We are almost there! This is no long-drawn dream. This telegram will be delivered in a matter of hours. Not long months, nor weary weeks, nor dragging days, but in hours! One is almost paralysed with enthralling prospect. What can one say in such a telegram? Just that. “Only hours now.”

This is the only occasion in a lifetime that one may wake from a dream and find it true. This fact of return, so very near accomplishment now, is emerging sharply from the haze of unreality, as an Italian stone-walled mountain village emerges clear-etched against its background of blue and brown and grey when shrouding Appennines mists are dispersed by mountain breezes. To-morrow will be just another day at sea, but we hope that Friday afternoon or evening will bring us a sight of the Long White Cloud.

Oh, to come home to your country  
After long years away,  
To see the tall shining towers  
Rise over the rim of the bay.

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## P.O.W. INGENUITY

“I think that the finest bit of improvisation was the construction of our first radio receiver. It was built during the latter part of 1941 and was an incredible achievement under the worst possible conditions. Airmen were rarely allowed to work outside the camps owing to a highly developed homing instinct; they were strictly confined and there appeared to be little chance of obtaining radio parts. Frankly, when the idea was first suggested, I considered it impossible, but our radio men believed that a set could be made on the premises, though valves would present a major headache. They were soon working under the direction of Curley Bristow, Davey Young, and Harry Stubbs. Wireless H.Q. appealed for brass coins, tar from the felted roofs, and tin boxes. What we suffered for our unborn wireless set! Even our own lighting system was stripped for wire. Shortly afterwards we heard encouraging reports. The condenser had been completed, and what a condenser! In its construction the trio and their helpers had used a book and sheets of silver paper from the twenty-size cigarette packets—these were inserted between the pages of the book and the whole boiled in grease. I am no radio technician, but I was and still am impressed by the ingenuity of men who can produce a radio condenser—without tools—from a book, silver paper, grease, and old wire. We acquired the valves and the earphone, you might say, dishonestly. At least, they were stolen: the valves from a radio shop in a nearby town; and Bristow, in a moment of brilliance, removed the works of the Defence Officer’s telephone”—Warrant Officer A. J. Dixon, in *The Listener*.