

**SERGEANT AUSTIN ALVIS HORAN**  
**4232 – 3rd Tunnelling Company / 5th Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company**

Augustin (Austin/Gus) Alvis Horan was born in Richmond, Tasmania on 2 May, 1869 the son of William and Maria (nee Melody) Horan. He was educated at the public school then studied for a degree receiving an Associate of Arts, the highest qualification in Tasmania. Military training was gained from two years with the Tasmanian Volunteers. About 1886 the family moved to New South Wales where his job was railway traffic manager and later superintendent for the largest coal corporation in the southern hemisphere. In November, 1890 he became a member of the Public School Board and the following year the Department of Lands approved his appointment as one of the public trustees of the Helensburgh Cemetery, NSW. By 1893 he was on the board of the Mechanic's Institute, Helensburgh and these were relinquished when he relocated to the goldfields of Western Australia in 1894 and joined the Western Australian Government Railways. As district traffic inspector in 1899 he was mentioned in the following newspaper:

*Evening Star* (Boulder) Friday 17 March, 1899:

**DEATH OF GEORGE SINCLAIR**

The adjourned inquiry touching the death of George Sinclair was resumed yesterday afternoon before Dr Bennett, J.P. and a jury consisting of Messrs Cummins, Beck and Cox.

Austin Alvis Horan, district traffic inspector, gave evidence as to making an examination of the spot where the remains of the deceased were found.

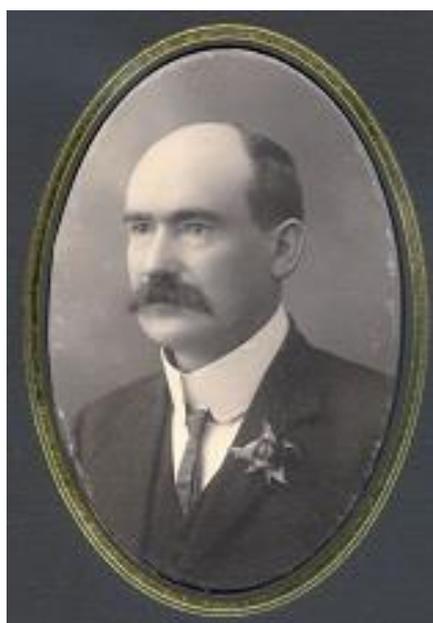
*Article abridged*

He had been asked to run for previous State elections but it wasn't until 1904 that he agreed to stand for the Labour Party after preselection and was elected on 28 June, 1904 to represent the electorate of Yilgarn. The new member's brief biography was published in the:

*West Australian* Friday July 1, 1904:

**BIOGRAPHIES OF NEW MEMBERS – MR A.A. HORAN**

Mr Austin Alvis Horan (Yilgarn) is a native of Tasmania, and was born in 1870. He passed through a term of service in the Tasmanian railways, and then went to the south-western portion of the island and engaged in mining and private business pursuits. For some years he took a prominent part in public and political matters, being the chairman of school boards and local public bodies. He is a Justice of the Peace of Tasmania. Coming to Western Australia, he joined the railway service and received rapid promotion. He holds at present the position of chief clerk in the eastern goldfields railway system.



Mr A.A. Horan – Member for Yilgarn  
1904-1911

Photo sourced from Biographies of  
W.A. Parliamentarians

At the 1905 election he was re-elected with a strong majority.

A snippet of parliamentary news was printed in the:

*Truth* (Perth) Saturday July 28, 1906:

**GRINS AND GROWLS**

The Government printers have dubbed Horan of Yilgarn as "a genial fellow," who gossips in the House on everything he hears, be it true or false. This is the most recent instance of "damning with faint praise."

He nominated for the 1908 election which appeared in the:

*Southern Times* Saturday September 5, 1908:

**LIST OF NOMINATIONS - YILGARN**

William M. Allen

\*Austin Alvis Horan (L)

*Article abridged*

Re-elected for a third term to represent Yilgarn electorate from 1908 his residence in 1910 was Kay Street, West Perth. He also invested interests in the district which were advertised in the:

*Southern Cross Times* Wednesday November 16, 1910:

APPLICATION FOR A GOLD MINING LEASE

NOTICE is hereby given for Gold Mining Lease No 1481 by Austin Alvis Horan, of Perth for grant of G.M.L. to be known as Dicky Bird containing 24 acres from G.M.L. 1107 (site measurements given).

Dated this day 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1910. A.A. HORAN by his Agent A.M. McIntyre.

Objections against the application above must be lodged at the Warden's Office on or before 9th December, 1910.

APPLICATION FOR A GOLD MINING LEASE

NOTICE is hereby given for Gold Mining Lease No 1482 by Austin Alvis Horan, of Perth for grant of G.M.L. to be known as Legislative Finch containing 24 acres from G.M.L. 1481 (site measurements given).

Dated this day 8<sup>th</sup> November, 1910. A.A. HORAN by his Agent A.M. McIntyre.

Objections against the application above must be lodged at the Warden's Office on or before 9th December, 1910

*Articles abridged*

The following was published in the:

*Sun* (Kalgoorlie) Sunday December 18, 1910:

PERSONOGRAPHS

Wallace Nelson on Austin Alvis Horan:

If there is half the joy in good whisky Burns declares there is, Horan must have made more men happy than any man alive or dead. He had probably paid for more drinks for other people than any man in Australia.

It's an almighty big order, that. And still there are people who complain that a Parliamentary salary is insufficient to live on, let alone at shout for all hands with, at all times.

He stood for preselection for the Labour Party for the 1911 election but was defeated by Charles Hudson which prompted him to contest as an Independent candidate. About the same time he was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society which brought criticism published in the:

*Bunbury Herald* Tuesday August 1, 1911:

TOPICS OF THE HOUR

Coronation honors are being distributed, and amongst them we note "Austin Alvis Horan, Esq." M.L.A. for Yilgarn, who has been created a F.R.G.S. This is doubtless to give A.A. an opportunity to study geography, so that in later days he will have no difficulty in locating the exact position of Southern Cross should he ever wish to do so., This study will naturally enough embrace kindred matters, such as post and telegraph and train services, which are essential to every well-ordered community, and the details of which so strangely recently escaped the memory of A.A.H., whereby (as he alleges) his cake was made dough for selection by the workers, and he is now compelled to become a Liberal-Labor Independent Fellow. Anyway, if he does lose the M.L.A. tag of three letters, he gains another tag with four letters. But he also loses that valuable asset from his watch guard, which comprises free first-class travelling, and the use of the best club in W.A. On the whole the M.L.A. was the most useful, unless Government give A.A.H., F.R.G.S, a job to lecture in the Mother Land on the illimitable chances of Australia for immigrants from the world over. His "honorary" geographical knowledge should stand him in good stead in such case.

Horan only polled 37.4 percent in the two candidate duel on 3 October, 1911 and left State Parliament after serving three terms of office as M.L.A. for Yilgarn from 1904 to 1911. A valedictory farewell was given to bid farewell by prominent citizens of his electorate. [reproduced in Footnotes below]

The electorate of Yilgarn had been under the Redistribution of Seats Bill where Dundas had been divided and put into Yilgarn therefore many former constituents were lost in the redistribution now called South Province. Nevertheless in the 1914 Legislative Council elections Horan stood as an Independent Labour candidate but lost to John Kirwan. Candidates were advertised in the:

*Great Southern Leader* (Pingelly) Friday April 24, 1914:

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTION – THE NOMINATIONS  
SOUTH PROVINCE

Austin Alvis Horan, of 2536 Egan-street, Kalgoorlie, secretary.

James Lyon Johnston, OF Burt-street, Boulder, secretary and

John Waters Kirwan, 62 Ward-street, Kalgoorlie, journalist.

Nominations for the 1914 May election were also advertised interstate in the:

*Advertiser* (Adelaide) Saturday May 16, 1914:

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ELECTIONS  
LIST OF CANDIDATES

The biennial elections of the Legislative Council will take place to-morrow. South Province:—Austin Alvis Horan; James Lyon Johnston; John Waters Kirwan (retiring). *Article abridged*

Illness plagued him towards the end of 1914 to early 1915 and the following was announced in the:

*Coolgardie Miner* Saturday January 2, 1915:

SOUTHERN CROSS NEWS

The many friends of Mr A.A. Horan will rejoice to know that he was well enough to leave the hospital on Thursday last. He has gone to Kalgoorlie for a few days.

A proposal for a mapping expedition of the State's mineral deposits to record for future planning had the interest of Mr Horan and while convalescing he voiced his support in the:

*Southern Cross Times* Saturday March 6, 1915:

(TO THE EDITOR)

Dear Sir—Genuine pleasure was mine when I read in the 'West Australian' that you are developing that bold prospecting idea of yours. It is an enterprise that requires great courage to initiate and great tenacity to keep going, and your action indicates that notwithstanding physical handicaps your inspiring disposition has not suffered. The Government might well have gone further and placed £5,000 to your credit, as they do not appear to have added any cash to the project. If the proposed Taxation Bill gets through and if as alleged, work for unemployed prospectors and others is its object, then a great proportion of it being collected on the goldfield should be expended there, and to no better purpose could it be allocated to than your expedition. As a reward for the energy you have displayed in advocating the proposal under notice, I sincerely hope good finds will result, as the country is sadly in need of a saviour. It is possible that I may be able to accompany the party, as I was to have joined Mr Blatchford in January, but weeks in the Perth Hospital and X-rays have detained me here for the present.—I am, Sir, etc.

A.A. HORAN

Convalescents' Home  
Cottesloe, March 3.

At the recruiting depot in Kalgoorlie on 9 August, 1915 the forty-eight year old unmarried labourer of Egan Street applied to enlist for active service abroad and passed the medical examination. Personal particulars taken reveal he was 180cms (5ft 11ins) tall with a chest expansion of 89-95cms (35-37½ins). His eyes passed the eye test with good vision and had two distinctive vaccination scars on his right biceps. Declared fit his application was accepted by the recruiting officer.

Attestation Forms were completed and describe him further weighing 76.3kgs (168lbs) with a dark complexion, brown eyes and dark hair. Religion was Roman Catholic and birthplace given as Jerusalem, Tasmania. Next-of-kin nominated was his widowed mother Maria Horan of Caleroo Street, Lithgow, NSW and allotted two-fifths of his pay in support of her. He signed and took the 'Oath of Enlistment' the same day.

Acknowledgements to the new enlistees were published in the:

*Western Mail* (Perth) 13 August, 1915:

KALGOORLIE RECRUITING

Kalgoorlie, Aug. 9

During the past three days over 100 men have volunteered in Kalgoorlie for the Australian Imperial Forces, and of these 66 were accepted. Amongst those who were passed for service is Mr A.A. Horan, who represented Yilgarn in the Legislative Assembly for some years.

*Truth* (Perth) Saturday August 14, 1915:

PITH OF PARLIAMENT

Mr A.A. Horan, late member for Yilgarn, has volunteered for the Dardanelles.

At Blackboy Hill camp, near Perth he was assigned on August 16 for basic training to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Depot Battalion until transferred to the Aust Army Service Corps on 16 September, 1915.

Further news of volunteering for service was published in the:

*Moora Herald and Midland Districts Advocate* Tuesday August 24, 1915:

PERSONALIA – AT HOME AND ABROAD

Mr A.A. Horan ex-member for Yilgarn who was recently working on the Trans-continental railway line is now at Blackboy Hill camp from whence he will do the Turkey trot.

While in training camp gave further support to the Mineral Expedition with a telegram which was published with an article in the:

*Southern Cross Times* Saturday September 4, 1915:

THE BIG GOLD HUNT

The gold hunt marks a most important epoch in the history of gold mining, for it means, not only that a big part of men are making a systematic and exhaustive search for gold and other minerals, but it also means that a start has been made to amass and compile a fund of knowledge that should be of inestimable value to future generations. It is known that there are deposits of copper, schillite, graphite, tin etc. in the big area to be search, and even so should they prove to be too low in value to pay at present, it will be a step in the right direction to have them charted, and to have on record a true knowledge as to their actual value, width and probabilities. If the whole of the State is tested on the lines laid down, the cost of the State will not be very great.

A NICE WIRE

‘Wish your expedition every success; its formation is a great tribute to your energy and determination.

A.A. HORAN’

*Article abridged*

Recruiting for the No. 6 Tunnelling Company had commenced on March 7, 1916 by Captain Lawson and his four officers. Instruction classes were formed of officers and N.C.O.’s as there was insufficient time to attend the Engineer’s School in Sydney. Recruits were forthcoming in abundant numbers and the aim was to have good physical types of skilled W.A. Miners.

On 14 March, 1916 he was transferred to the No. 6 Tunnelling Company for further training. His rank was Sapper with the regimental number 4232.

At Blackboy Hill camp the new company paraded daily with sister companies until March 27 when the Company moved camp to Belmont camp. Horan arrived at the camp where four sections were created and training continued through April and May. The remainder of May was occupied in the usual training: musketry, trench work and night work while equipment and clothing issue was also in progress. Here a difficulty was met in that the general size of the men was considerably above the average and some little trouble was experienced in getting all accurately fitted.

Further acknowledgement to his enlistment was published in the:

*Sunday Times* (Perth) Sunday April 9, 1916:

#### TWO FORMER POLITICIANS

A.A. Horan, formerly M.L.A. for Yilgarn, is a sapper in the Miners' Corps. He looks better than he has done for years.

He was promoted to the rank of Corporal on 2 May, 1916. The No. 6 Company paraded through the city streets of Perth and reported in the:

*The West Australian* Wednesday May 31, 1916:

#### THE TUNNELLING COMPANY PARADE THROUGH CITY STREETS

Although the numerical strength of the troops which paraded the city streets yesterday morning was considerably less than that of previous parades, and despite the fact that citizens have become accustomed to the sight of khaki-clad warriors, the men of the No.6 Tunnelling Company and the Claremont N.C.O. school met with a hearty reception as they swung along to the inspiring music of the Blackboy Hill band. The line of route was freely bedecked with flags, whilst the large crowds, if somewhat undemonstrated denoted none the less by their presence their keen appreciation of that sense of patriotism which found its highest expression in the long line of soldiers answering to the call of Empire. In physique and general bearing the men were equal to their comrades who have gone before. Leaving James-street well on appointed time, the column swung into Beaufort-street and over the bridge in to Barrack-street. The members of the N.C.O. school, about 113 strong, under Captain Thompson, followed the band, the No.6 Tunnelling Company, with its first reinforcements, totalling nearly 400 men, under Captain Lawson, bringing up the rear. At the head of the Tunnellers was borne the flag recently presented to the company.

After traversing Barrack and Hay streets the column entered St George's-terrace via Victoria-avenue. Opposite Government House his Excellency (Sir Harry Barron), with whom were the State Commandant (Colonel J.H. Bruche), Major P.H. Meeks and Major Wilkinson, A.D.C., took the salute. Passing along the Terrace the route was via William and Wellington streets to the station. The men paraded in full fighting equipment.



The No.6 Tunnelling Company - Photograph taken at the W.A.T.C. Course, Belmont, where the men have been in training

*The West Australian* June 1, 1916:

#### THE WESTERN MAIL

The war pictures appearing in this week's issue of the Western Mail:

In addition, the "Mail" contains a fine photograph of the No.6 Tunnelling Company, as well as an illustration of their march through the streets of the city on Tuesday last, and a photograph of the officers who have been appointed to command the men.



Tuesday's parade of troops. The No.6 Tunnelling Company and the members of the N.C.O. School, Claremont, marching through the city.

Meanwhile in Queensland early in May, 1916 the No. 4 Tunnelling Company consisting of six officers and 152 other ranks together with the 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements of fifteen other ranks making up two sections, embarked from Brisbane, Qld aboard HMAT A69 *Warilda* for Sydney, NSW.

At Rosebery Park, Sydney, NSW they joined their Headquarters and two sections (8 officers & 153 O.Rs.) plus 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements consisting of one officer and seventeen other ranks for final training.

The 7713-ton transport *Warilda* departed Sydney, NSW on May 22, 1916 and collected in Melbourne, Victoria the No. 5 Company recruited from Victoria, South Aust. & Tasmania made up of Headquarters and 2 Sections (8 officers & 173 men) (3 M.D.). One Section from Tasmania (3 officers & 76 O.Rs); also 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements for No. 5 Company (17 men from Vic. & 8 men Tas.)



**CPL. A. A. HORAN, ex-M.L.A.,**  
No. 6 Tunnelling Company. He thinks  
it's a lot better than politics.

Photo appeared in *The Sunday Times*  
11 June, 1916

The ship departed on May 25, 1916 for Adelaide, S.A. to collect one Section of 3 officers & 76 O.Rs with 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements of 8 O.Rs.

The No. 6 Company had paraded through the city of Perth where the fine physique of the men, who had marched with arms bare to the elbow excited universal admiration.

The transport arrived in port at Fremantle, W.A. on June 1, 1916. The whole company consisting of 14 officers and 325 O.Rs along with 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements of 1 officer and 32 O.Rs entrained at Belmont at 2 p.m., every man physically fit being present and boarded *Warilda* which left the harbour the same evening.

A wish for success in his military service was published in the:

*Sunday Times* Sunday June 4, 1916:

**PERTH PRATTLE**

Mr Horan, ex-M.L.A., was a corporal in the Tunnelling Co. that marched through Perth last week. He looks better than he has done for 15 years, and his regiments of friends including "The Sunday Times" wish him success in his military life.

Durban, South Africa was reached on June 16, 1916 and Cape Town on June 21, 1916 while St Vincent completed the African ports of call on July 7, 1916. Discipline was fairly good except at intermediate ports where Away without Leave caused concern. The fifty-eight day voyage experienced remarkable pleasant weather terminating at Plymouth, England on July 18, 1916. Four, Five and Six Companies comprising of 1064 officers and other ranks were detrained to Amesbury and Tidworth to begin training for the front at Perham Downs.

A cablegram of condolence was sent while at this camp which was reported in the:

*Coolgardie Miner* Saturday August 5, 1916:

CABLEGRAM

The following cable was received on Tuesday last by Mr J. Cecil:

Perhamdown Camp, 22<sup>nd</sup>

Cecil, Coolgardie,

Corporal Gabbie and self, extend sympathy to Mrs McDowall, convey

A.A. Horan (Yilgarn)

On 28 August, 1916 the Tunnelling Companies proceeded to France arriving at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Aust General Base Depot the next day.

Corporal Horan marched into the 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Reinforcement camp on 12 October and four days later joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Anzac Entrenching Battalion which was an advanced section of the Base Depot that organised works near the lines and through duties, usually of ten days duration, would accustom the reinforcements to war conditions before being assigned to a company in the field.

He was attached on 26 October, 1916 to the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Tunnelling Company in the field.

While in France a Soldiers' Guild had been formed and a complete list of soldiers was published in the:

*W.A. Record* (Perth) Saturday November 4, 1916:

CATHOLIC SOLDIERS' GUILD

Writing from France, Corporal J.J. Purtell says the Soldiers' Guild has so far given excellent results, and has been the means of restoring the Faith to the careless ones, and bringing back to God those who have forgotten Him for years.

He sends the following budget of names to be added to the membership of the Guild, and begs the prayers of our devout readers for their spiritual and temporal welfare: Corporal A.A. Horan *Article abridged*

On 16 December, 1916 Corporal went sick to the 139<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance with bronchitis then moved to the 138<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance and on to the 41<sup>st</sup> Divisional Rest Station. On December 17 went to the 2<sup>nd</sup> C.C.S. until December 23 and was conveyed on the Ambulance Train No.18 to the 13<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Boulogne. On 29 December, 1916 was evacuated from Havre to England on the hospital ship *Western Australia* and admitted the following day to the 1<sup>st</sup> Southern General Hospital in Stirchley with severe Bronchitis.

Base Records sent the following Telegrams to his mother as follows:

MRS M. HORAN  
CALEROO STREET  
LITHGOW, NSW

REGRET REPORTED SON CORPORAL AUSTIN A. HORAN ADMITTED 30/12/16 1<sup>st</sup> SOUTHERN GENERAL HOSPITAL BRONCHITIS SEVERE WILL PROMPTLY ADVISE IF ANYTHING FURTHER RECEIVED

BASE RECORDS 10/1/17

WSM

MRS M. HORAN  
CALEROO STREET,  
LITHGOW, NSW

NOW REPORTED SON CORPORAL AUSTN A. HORAN CONDITION IMPROVING WILL ADVISE ANYTHING FURTHER RECEIVED

BASE RECORDS 19/1/17

His name was listed as seriously ill in the Casualty List published in the:

*West Australian* Friday January 19, 1917:

265<sup>TH</sup> CASUALTY LIST

The 265<sup>th</sup> casualty list was released by the Censor yesterday, and is published below:

ILL

Corporal A.A. Horan (Lithgow, New South Wales), seriously;

*Article abridged*

*Sunday Times* Sunday January 21, 1917:

A.A. HORAN ILL

A.A. Horan, ex-M.L.A., now a sapper at the front, is seriously ill, a fact that his many friends in the West will regret.

On 19 February, 1917 was transferred to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aust. Auxiliary Hospital then discharged to furlough on 23 February and to report the No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs' camp on March 10. While there he appeared before the Medical Board and classified with B1A debility and attached for temporary duty on 29 March, 1917 with the A.I.F. Depots at Tidworth, U.K. arriving at Bhurtport Barracks the next day.

Corporal marched out on 16 April, 1917 for attached duty with the Aust No. 3 Section Railway Operating Division at Burdon on transfer for the 5<sup>th</sup> Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company.

He was admitted to Shorncliffe Military Hospital, England on April, 19 suffering from Bronchitis.

From Southampton he proceeded with the 59<sup>th</sup> Railway O.D. overseas to France on 11 May, 1917 and arrived the next day being sent to the 5<sup>th</sup> Broad Gauge R.O. Company.

He was promoted on 4 December, 1917 to be Temporary Sergeant due to Sergeant F. White being evacuated sick from the field on 21 September.

News of him was briefly mentioned in the:

*Sun* (Kalgoorlie) Sunday 27 January, 1918:

PERSONOGRAPHS

A.A. Horan is going well and strong at the front.

On 30 March, 1918 reverted to the rank of Corporal by order of the Commanding Officer and on 9 April C.O. was queried re promotion in rank – substantive grade not approved. He was promoted to Sergeant 14 May, 1918 and enjoyed leave to England from 18 July, 1918, rejoining his unit on August 3.

Leave to Paris was to be taken from 23 October, 1918 and listed to return to duty on 2 November. He states in an article (below) that he was in Paris when Peace was declared.

Orders were received to prepare for demobilisation on 28 January, 1919 and return to the Aust General Base Depot. They marched out for England crossing the English Channel on 17 February and disembarking at Southampton the following day. Sergeant marched from the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Convalescent Camp to the Reserve Brigade Aust Artillery at Heytesbury and admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Aust General Hospital at Sutton Veny the next day with Influenza and P.U.O. (Pyrexia, fever uncertain origin). On 24 March, 1919 was discharged after thirty-three days treatment to furlough and to report to Headquarters on April 7 for the No.2 Command Depot at Weymouth.

This hopeful snippet of news appeared in the:

*Sun* (Kalgoorlie) Sunday April 13, 1919:

PERSONOGRAPHS

A.A. Horan soon returns.

He was granted leave with pay and subsistence for Non-Military Employment (NME) for 6 months from 8/4/19 to 1/10/19 for training experience in Electrical Engineering. Included were two railway warrants to and from Birmingham, full military pay and subsistence of 6 shillings per day. Experience was with:

(1) General Electric Coy, 67 Queen Street, Birmingham

(2) Birmingham Technical College

(3) Northampton Polytechnic Institute, Clerkewell, London

Report from (1) dated 3/5/19 stated "Employed on maintenance section. Progress Satisfactory"

No reports have been received from 2 & 3 but the experience gained by Sergeant Horan whilst attached to those institutions should be very useful to him on his return to Australia.

Miscellaneous Remarks: Sgt Horan was in hospital from 27/9/19 to 14/10/19 during which he only received subsistence at the rate of 3/6 per day. The period 1/10/19 – 15/10/19 was the mid-summer vacation.

An extension of NME Leave was granted from 15/10/19 to 15/12/19 with pay and subsistence to attend the Northampton Polytechnic Institute, Clerkewell, London, E.C.1 for Electrical Engineer training.

On 15 December, 1919 was re-transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Aust Broad Gauge Railway Operating Co., and granted leave to furlough subject to recall the next day. On 17 December furlough was cancelled and attached for duty with Quartermaster, Headquarters but two days later was admitted to hospital. Furlough was granted on 5 January, 1920 and subject to recall.

At the Parish Church of St Silas, Lozells, in Aston, Birmingham on 15 January, 1920 Austin Alvia Horan (44), Bachelor was married by Licence of Established Church to Agnes Mary Doran (32) spinster of 240 Burbury Street, Lozells and daughter of Philip Doran (deceased optician).

Accompanied by his new wife, Sergeant Horan embarked on 22 January, 1920 for Australia on H.T. *Friedrichsruhe*. During the voyage he went to the ship's hospital but was not admitted. Base Records advised his mother on 6 February that he was returning home.

News of his imminent arrival was reported in the:

*Daily News* Wednesday February 18, 1920:

#### COMING HOME

Lieut.-Col Tilney advised that the following West Australians will disembark from the *Friedrichsruh*, due of the 25<sup>th</sup> inst.—A.A. Horan, F.W. Owens, R.H. Hansen, Lieut, S.A. MacNamara.

The ship docked at Fremantle (5<sup>th</sup> Military District) on 28 February, 1920. The ship's arrival was reported in the:

*Sunday Times* Sunday February 29, 1920:

#### ANOTHER TROOPSHIP SCANDAL THE FILTHY FRIEDRICHSRUHE

The troops on *Friedrichsruhe* arrived at Fremantle yesterday shortly after 2.30, and immediately the men got shore they made bitter complaints of the conditions under which they were returned to Australia. There were 1160 on board all told, including 70 A.I.F. Officers, six nurses and 693 other ranks. Two officers, 15 N.C.O.'s, 45 A.I.F. men, 7 soldier's wives, 12 ex-A.I.F. men and four children were disembarked for Western Australia. We have seen an official copy of the collective statement signed by all the N.C.O.'s and many of the men (there are no dissentients) which reveals a horrible state of affairs, and of the Federal authorities whitewash of this scandal they are prepared to condone anything.

A few days after his return home to Perth the following was reported in the:

*Kalgoorlie Miner* Wednesday March 3, 1920:

**TROUBLE ON TROOPSHIP  
SERGEANT HORAN ASSAULTED**

Perth, March 2.

It was reported that there had been an exodus of men from the Friedrichsruhe during the morning and a number failed to rejoin the vessel before her departure.

While walking down South Terrace, Fremantle, yesterday morning, Sergeant A.A. Horan, one-time member of the Legislative Assembly for Yilgarn, who returned from active service by the Friedrichsruhe, was assaulted by a soldier. It is believed that his assailant, with others followed Sergeant Horan from the boat and hit him with a bottle rendering him unconscious. Sergeant Horan was taken to the Base Hospital and to-night was reported to be making satisfactory progress. The police are investigating.

*Kalgoorlie Miner* Thursday March 4, 1920:

**PERSONAL ITEMS**

The "British-Australasian" (London), of January 8, states: Sergeant A.A. Horan, of Perth for many years a member of the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia, who has been serving with the A.I.F., has been discharged from Milbank Hospital, and is now on leave pending repatriation.

*Call and WA Sportsman* (Perth) Friday March 5, 1920:

**SOCIETY**

Sergeant A. A. Horan, ex-member for Yilgarn, arrived back from London Saturday with his wife. Now we'll see the political fur flying when the elections come round.

Sergeant appeared before the Disembarkation Medical Board at No.8 Aust General Hospital, Fremantle on 9 March, 1920 and his Statement of Case reads:

Proposed Disability:	(1) Injury to face, trunk (2) cardiac insufficiency
Essential facts:	Became short of breath Dec. 1919 Hospital 2/12 light duties Wounded (buried) face Dec 24, 1916 – scalp wounds & abrasion of hands No illnesses except Bronchitis, France; was evacuated to Eng. 3/12 (signature): A.A. Horan
Disability due to:	(1) military service (2) aggravated by military service
Present condition:	Feels well except for shortness of breath on exertion. No cough. Heart: A.B. 6 <sup>th</sup> space in mid.clav.line sounds regular 1 <sup>st</sup> sound not strong 2 <sup>nd</sup> sound not markedly accentuated. No oedema bases lung. Feet were swollen on boat. No murmurs. Chest: Distended veins upper thorax. Chest fixed and expands to lower region (diaphragmatic). No abnormal breath sounds.
Improvement:	With time
Labour market:	25% - pre-enlistment trade and general labour capacity
Recommendation:	Discharge permanently unfit
Further treatment:	Not at present
Surgical appliance:	No
Approval:	10/3/1920 Perth, W.A.

Military Discharge was issued in Perth (5<sup>th</sup> M.D.) on 1 May, 1920 as medically unfit.

Later that year he nominated as a candidate to contest the ballot for Yilgarn electorate and nominees were listed in the:

*Western Argus* (Kalgoorlie) Tuesday August 3, 1920:

#### STATE ELECTIONS

Nominations from persons eligible to contest the A.L.P. ballot on the goldfields to select candidates for the forthcoming Legislative Assembly elections were received by the returning officer, Mr G. McKennay as under: Yilgarn – E.W. Corboy, A.A. Horan, J. Monaghan, H. Tully, and W. Smith. The nominations of T. Green (Menzies) and A.A. Horan (Yilgarn) were held over pending a report to the next meeting of the A.L.P council.

*Article abridged*

The following photograph introduced his new bride to the public probably as part of his campaign.

It appears he did not contest the ballot for the 1920 election and went to work with the Water Supply Department in Perth. His address was 30 Lane Street, North Perth with the occupation of secretary.

The British War Medal (11152) and the Victory Medal (11025) were issued for serving his country to Sergeant 4232 Austin Alvis Horan, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling Company / 5<sup>th</sup> Aust. Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company.

In 1922 he was a Justice of the Peace for Middle Swan District, Perth, W.A.

Austin Alvis Horan died on 30 June, 1925 aged 56 years in the Perth Public Hospital. Funeral arrangements were announced in the:



Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Horan

The ex-Member for Yilgarn went to the war and brought back a bride  
*The Sunday Times* – Sunday August 15, 1920

*Daily News* (Perth) Tuesday 30 June, 1925:

#### FUNERAL NOTICES

HORAN—The Friends of the late Mr AUSTIN A. HORAN, later of the Water Supply Department, Perth, and of 97 Adelaide-terrace, beloved husband of Agnes Horan, are respectfully invited to follow his remains to the place of interment, the Roman Catholic portion of the Karrakatta Cemetery. The Funeral is appointed to leave his late residence, 97 Adelaide-terrace, Perth, at 1.45 o'clock TO-MORROW (Wednesday) AFTERNOON. Friends wishing to attend the Funeral may proceed by the 2.5 o'clock train from Perth.

DONALD J. CHIPPER and SON

Funeral Directors, 844 Hay-street, Perth

Interment took place in the Roman Catholic portion of Karrakatta Cemetery within section DA in gravesite 454.

A.A. Horan's headstone  
in Karrakatta Cemetery, Perth  
Photo supplied by Ozburials.com  
and used with permission



Several Obituaries were published as follows:

*South-Western News* (Busselton) Friday July 3, 1925:

PERSONAL

The death occurred at the Perth hospital on Tuesday of Mr Austin A. Horan, formerly member for Yilgarn in the House of Assembly, at the age of 57. Since his return from the Great War, the late Mr Horan was a valued contributor to the Press. In the early nineties he was a senior officer in the Railway Department.

*Daily News* (Perth) Saturday July 11, 1925:

THE LATE MR A.A. HORAN

The funeral of the late Mr Austin A. Horan, late of the Water Supply Department, Perth took place on Wednesday afternoon the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. Deceased was born at Birmingham, England, and had resided in this State for the past 30 years, and was well known and respected by a large circle of friends. The cortege moved from his late residence, 97 Adelaide Terrace, Perth and proceeded to the Roman Catholic portion of the Karrakatta Cemetery, where the remains were interred in the presence of a large and representative gathering, including Water Supply Department, Railway Officers Union, various branches of the R.S.L. and Mr T. Le Breton (representing the residents of Southern Cross). The chief mourners were: Mrs A.M. Horan (widow), Mr G. A. Horan (brother), Mrs G.A. Horan (sister-in-law), P.L. Ross and Mr and Mrs T.H. Ryan. The pallbearers were: W.C. Angwin (Acting Premier), M.F. Troy (Minister for Mines), G.C. Haywood (Under Secretary for Water Supply), D.M. Benson and A.S. Isaac (State Secretary and Vice-President of R.S.L.), E.W. Corboy and Geo. Taylor, M'sL.A., and W. M'Carthy, V.C. Amongst those present were: H. Giles, J.E. Hardwick, M.H. Hillary, H.G. Shepherd, H. Cropper, W.H. Diggins, W. Ruse, C.M. Taylor, H.M. Ross, B.S. Headney, R. Sheepy, B.J. Clarkson, F.M. Hehir, J.P. Goodwin, E. O'Connell, T. Byers, J.H. and S. Inglis, C. Pope, A. Swan, E. Gaynor, J. Murphy, E. Franklin, R. Moffatt, Mesdames: Press, Smith, Mr Gaynor, Franklin, A.W. Pearce and many others. Wreath and floral tributes were received from many friends. The Rev. Father Wm. Lyons officiated at the graveside and the funeral arrangements were carried out by Messrs. Donald J. Chipper and Son.

*South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus* (NSW) Friday August 7, 1925:

LATE A. A. HORAN

Of the late Mr A.A. Horan, once of Helensburgh, the Sunday times, of Western Australia remarks: So good old A.A. Horan has gone to his fathers. A genial soul, and generous to a fault. We first knew of him when he stepped out and took the mantle of member for Yilgarn—and he must have been a meticulously good member because the late Bullant M'Intyre never flayed him as he did the others. Horan had a nice roll in his Hibernian voice, and occasionally reached the heights of oratory in the old days of the House on the Hill when Freddy Monger and Bobbie Hastie made the welkin ring. Horan went to the war, and good judges say that of those Western Australians who had any pretensions of writing, the late "cross-cut" Wilson and Horan stood out as depictees of the tragedy of Gallipoli and France, of the sadness and despair the optimism and enthusiasm of our men, and their constant thought of and love for their beloved Australia. Horan's happiest years were his latest, so he confided to us, for whilst in England he married a lady who has ever since been a devoted partner and made him a happier, and if possible, a better man than he had ever hoped to be. Peace to the ashes of A.A. Horan.

Mrs Horan returned to Birmingham, England as the following year this notice appeared in the:

*Sunday Times* Sunday May 2, 1926:

SOLDIERS AND SAILORS

Photographs of a deceased A.I.F. soldier have been received by the State Secretary of the R.S.L. to him by Mrs Agnes Horan, of Birmingham, England. Particulars on the cross are as follows: "No. 1007 2<sup>nd</sup> Cpl W.A. Campbell, 5<sup>th</sup> A.B.G.R.O.C." The relatives of the deceased soldier may have the photographs on application to the R.S.L. Office.

Two In Memoriam notices were placed by his brother and wife in 1929 in the:

*West Australian* Saturday June 29, 1929:

IN MEMORIAM

HORAN—Sacred memories of my beloved husband, Austin Alvis (Gus) Horan, who passed away June 30, 1925. Always in the thoughts of his wife, Mary Horan.

HORAN—In loving memory of my beloved brother, Austin Alvis (Gus), who passed away June 30, 1925.

Inserted by his brother George, Midland Junction.

*Footnotes:*

The following articles, apart from the Valedictory Farewell (below), are his letters from the Front or reminiscences of his service abroad published in several W.A. newspapers during and after the war.

*Kalgoorlie Argus* Tuesday October 31, 1911:

VALEDICTORY GATHERING  
FAREWELL TO MR A. A. HORAN

A representative gathering of townsmen assembled on Wednesday afternoon, in the Southern Cross Municipal Chamber, to bid farewell to Mr Austin Alves Horan, who had represented Yilgarn in the House of Assembly for the past seven years. Mr George Wilson was voted to the chair, and among others to do honour to their guest were Messrs J.H. Stubbs, Samuel West, G.A. Wilson, Frank Walsh and Dr O'Meara, J's.P. and Messrs Mur, C. Jones, Kilner, Hayes, Beswick, Villiers, Alexander, J.A. Barry, A. Pretty, M. Murphy, Brooke, Crozier, F.S. and M. Stubbs, J.V. Kearney, C. Lockhead, Cr W. Henry and Mr C. H. Andre (Marvel Loch).

Refreshments having been served, the Chairman remarked that the toast was a very important one, and there was those present who had known Mr Horan longer than he had and who could consequently do more justice to such an important proposition. He had known Mr Horan since his entrance into political life, and they would agree with him that during his term in Parliament, he (Mr Horan) had done his utmost for the district he represented and was always ready to do anything asked of him on the earliest possible moment. He regretted he was not their representative now. He understood he was about to take a little trip to the East to recuperate his health, but he trusted he would not leave West Australia, but would return and settle in this very promising country, and sit again in the Parliament of the State, if not for Yilgarn than for some other electorate which would have the good fortune to secure his services. Nothing had been too much trouble for Mr Horan as a member, and he wished him a happy and prosperous future, and he trusted he would not be away long, and hoped they might soon have him among them again. He asked them to be upstanding and drink Mr Horan's health.

Messrs J.S. Stubbs, C. Jones, C.H. Andre, J.V. Kearney, O. McMahon, C.S. Lockhead, S. West, F.H. Kilner, Hayes, Barry and Cr Henry supported the toast, which was accorded musical honours, and drunk with much enthusiasm.

Mr Horan, when he rose to reply, was greeted with applause. He indulged in a retrospect, and narrated how, six or seven years ago, in that chamber, Mr Montgomery had congratulated him upon his election as member for the district, in succession to the late Captain Oates, who had rendered good service to this district during the time he had represented it. Prior to that, Yilgarn was really a little pocket borough, with only about 192 electors on the roll, but a redistribution of seats came along, and when he was elected there were close upon 10,000 people on the roll. He had three years before that, refused to contest the seat, because it was far more profitable to him to remain in the position he was, where he exercised control of a thousand people, than to enter Parliament. Later on, however, with the growth of democratic ideas, he thought the time had come when it should be Labour constituency, and he thought he was the only person who could win it, and had done so, and three times he had been compelled to contest it against the other side; and it had remained for a member of his own party to defeat him at last. He (Mr Horan) had made great sacrifices in order that the seat might be won for the Labour party, and had yielded up a position which had carried with it a much higher stipend—£500 a year, as against £200—and be subjected to the criticism of everybody. When he came to reflect upon it he was convinced that he ought "to have his head read." If a man were actuated by high and honourable motives he was looked upon with suspicion, and people said there must be something at the bottom of it. It was similar to find that the process of election had developed upon lines on which it appeared that Mr Hudson and himself had been placed in the "same category" as a Chinaman if the latter had been the elected candidate. After the Redistribution of Seats Bill had become law it was certain that either himself, Mr Walker or Mr Hudson would be missing from the next Parliament. Dundas had been split up and put into Yilgarn, and this he had lost many of his old constituents. He would ask them to look kindly upon what might appear any dereliction of duty on the part of Mr Hudson, because the district was not so accessible as it used to be. It was, perhaps, a satisfaction to know that the government which had brought about this so-called redistribution of seats had thus encompassed its own downfall. Political life was always subject to public opinion, and well it was that this were so, for they would find that public opinion was always for right in the long run. The pendulum might swing one way to-day and another tomorrow, but it would always swing back to its original position. The individual might drop out, but the movement went on. As Tennyson said—he thought in "Locksley Hall"—"Nature was careless of the single life, but careful of the type." Those who did not move upward with the times, would move downwards. He had had seven or eight years' experience of Parliament. They went in with

high ideals, but they soon recognised they were up against a stone wall. It reminded him of the statement made by the great Edmund Burke when he was rejected for Bristol—

“What shadows we are;  
What shadows we pursue.”

He would be remiss if he did not acknowledge that the election had been conducted under the most agreeable circumstances. A Prime Minister of England, Mr Balfour, when defeated for the City of London, where he was well known, said “If I had a fairy godmother, and if I had a son of mine that I required to give a standing in life, I would ask this fairy godmother that in no circumstances whatever should my son take to politics.” Still, he regretted that he was not going back to the House where had had come in contact with some of the best people in the State, and where they found men who had some attribute which placed them above the ordinary ruck, and which entitled them to be there. No matter on which side of the House they sat, it was a matter for regret that by the voice of the public they were not permitted to rejoin those with whom they had been so long in touch, for there was a spirit of camaraderie among them in Parliament. Mr Horan referred to the similarity of the policies and planks of both parties, which were converging toward one, and said he hoped they would soon have elective Ministries chosen by both sides of the House. They were changes going on at Home, as they knew, in regard to the House of Lords, and in China they had stood it for over 2500 years, until at last was heard the voice of the people demanding that it should have a say in its own governing, and he hoped that the Labour party, and democratic Government Labour party and democratic Government would always prevail in West Australia. After a lengthy speech Mr Horan bade them farewell. He was presented with a purse containing nearly one hundred sovereigns, and the recipient having acknowledged the gift feelingly the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the chairman and the singing of “Auld Lang Syne.”



**A. A. HORAN,**  
Formerly member for Yilgarn. Now  
a private in the Expeditionary  
Forces.

Photo appeared in *Truth* newspaper  
September 11, 1915

*Sunday Times* (Perth) Sunday January 28, 1917:

SAPPER A.A. HORAN

A FORMER LEGISLATOR AT THE FRONT

“YOU CAN’T KILL A W.A. POLITICIAN BY THROWING MUD”

An interesting letter from A.A. Horan, formerly member of Parliament for Yilgarn, and now a sapper at the front. At latest he was listed seriously ill:

“The seas between us baith ha’ roar’d since I enjoyed the hospitality of your happy household on the eve of my departure from W.A., and as I am resting for a few days to recover from the shrapnel wound in the right hand the remembrance of our long official connection impels me to send you a few disjointed line detailing my doings since then, with apologies for imperfections in method that must necessarily arise from distractions that surround me.

The day following your function we left Fremantle for Europe, one of our finest liners being laden with brawny miners from East to West, all fired with the fervor to old-time Crusaders in their anxiety to meet the enemy, and as I looked around I humorously recalled the lines written by the convict Wainwright for the first play staged in early Sydney—

“True patriots we, for be it understood,

We left our country for our country’s good.”

But ever-changing time had done much since the witty couplet was written, and her to-day Australians were journeying to the Old Land to do battle for England’s good and Australia’s honor.

Onward across the Indian Ocean was delightful and never need a translator of old Homer marvel at the author’s “Wrinkled Sea” had he but the privilege of floating.

“As idly as a painted ship  
Upon a painted ocean.”

As we did ever that expanse of water that is ordinarily the storm centre of willy-willies that attack North-West Australia.

Some of the people en route treated us with great kindness and hospitality, and the Australian soldier is held high in public estimation there. For the few hours we were ashore I was the guest of a Cabinet Minister, and at dinner many political problems of common interest were discussed. A very important problem that but for the war would

be a burning question in South Africa is the tendency on the part of the Union Government to ignore the status of the provincial bodies. The Australian Parliament is doing exactly the same, and whilst in W.A. I incurred no little obloquy. History shows with unmistakable clearness that nine out of every ten who attain to Governmental station address themselves immediately and assiduously to the expansion of their jurisdiction and the intensification of their powers, and in the light of this experience I hope the day is far distant when the State Parliaments will be shorn of any of their functions by the Commonwealth Government.

The people of another port were less enthusiastic and one could imagine some recollections of a former occurrence were rankling in their mines. Anyhow, I can say of this place, as the great Darwin wrote of Albany, W.A., I entered the place with expectancy and left it without regret. On leaving these waters we were joined by the modest fleet of transports and destroyers and we fancied ourselves as no inconsiderable section of the Empire's supports as great ocean liners respectfully saluted and passed on their way.

A little item that came under my notice some days after crossing the Line was the amount of ignorance that prevails among Australians as to the identity of the Southern Cross. There two or three sets of stars selected by various groups of soldiers as the correct thing, and the arguments frequently became fast and furious. I was generally selected as referee, and frequently had to give lectures on astronomy. When I told them that Alpha Crucis was 65 times as large as the sun and 185 light years distant, Beta Crucis 3000 times as large and 300 light years away, and so on, I am afraid they weren't convinced. One thing they recognised, that acting under universal natural law the infinitely large and infinitely small moved in well-ordered harmony, but it was left for mankind, the paragon of creation, with blood-red hands to tear each other in their prime. And whilst we marvelled at the splendour of God's works around us we also marvelled at the splendour of His indifference to the troubles of mankind.

Landing in England, our train journey to Salisbury Plains, the slowest I have ever travelled, was a series of triumphal demonstrations, the always faithful city of Das sending its mayor and alderman to regale us with refreshments; and so each town vieing with its neighbour in entertainment we passed through beautiful country of Blankshire and many villages made familiar by Blackmore in "Lorna Doone." We came as herald of summer, the sun shining that day for the first time for months, and as we stood enraptured by the beauty of the landscape we felt that England indeed was a country worth fighting for.

A few weeks' drill and a short visit to London to see the sights, and come to the conclusion, as I did, that it is better to sit at home in one's library and see London through the eyes of some fine descriptive writer possessed of an imagination than journey so far at the risk of being disillusioned. By courtesy of Sir George Reid I visited the Houses of Parliament, but the business in the Commons was so infernally dull that I soon tired of it. Happily, the time was not lost, as I had an opportunity of meeting the Prime Minister (Mr Asquith), Mr Lloyd George, Mr McKenna, and Lord Grey. It was a great honor to me to have a few minutes' cheery chat with each of them, and it was particularly consoling to find Mr Asquith looking happy and healthy, although carrying a burden greater than any Prime Minister who ever lived. Our old friend Sir George Reid has lost much of his rotundity, and seems the better for it. His joke about going to the war as an armed fort has lost its point through his loss of embonpoint.

We were shortly sent across to the sunny land of France, and although Disraeli has said that one of the purposes of war is to teach us geography I am not allowed to impart any of the information thus gained to you, for it might disclose my whereabouts. You will remember Carlyle caused the hero of "Sartor Resartius" to be born in Weissnichtwo, which being interrupted means "Nobody know where," and that seems to be all soldiers are required to tell their friends as to where they are located. A few days brought us into the firing line, and then the fun grew fast and furious, for, as the dramatic critic would say, there is not a dull moment in the whole performance.

You will recall in my amateur skating days I sometimes used to kick the roof almost off the Miners' Institute in Kalgoorlie. Well, before I was out ten minutes a shell lifted me in to air until I thought I had kicked the roof of High Heaven itself. The soft slush eased my fall back to Mother Earth, and I found the exploded shell had only covered me with mud. Clearing my throat I laughed heartily and called out to Fritz, the enemy, "You can't kill an Australian politician by throwing mud—he's used to it!" But the mud of France and Flanders is something you can only dream about and never describe. Victor Hugo gave up the task and wrote of the sewers of Paris by preference. Zola tried his hand also, but turned to something easier, and Grant Allen must have been a safe distance away when he, looking through agricultural spectacles, said that mud was the most valuable mineral in the world.

Under cover of pitch darkness, as frequently happens, quantities of material had to be transported over distances abounding with Sloughs of Despond, the scenes of many a fight. The soldiers deserved their double supply of rum to obliterate the memories that night, surpassing anything in the pages of Thucydides, the canvas of Vereschagin, or the dismal chant of Dante.

As tunnellers of course our work is mostly underground, and we live, like troglodytes, also underground. When travelling on the surface on the quiet one is exposed to snipers and all kinds of shells, whilst beneath the surface we have mines and counter-mines, so every minute is interesting and exciting, as it is possibly your last. But it is surprising how little one cares after his baptism of fire. Even in a rush if a comrade calls at your side there is "no sadness of farewell"—you are absorbed with your duty, and in any case an unfriendly bullet might whirl yourself to

the pearly gates even before him. Hence you simply “carry on” and count the cost after the objective has been won.

A great portion of our battle front is geologically interesting to me, as we are fighting on the same territory where the discovery by Perthes some 60 years ago of flint and stone weapons shook the foundations of our belief in the antiquity of man and compelled us to remodel our ideas. This, in the very same place where our troglodyte forefathers settled their differences with flint battle-axes, we are settling ours with aeroplanes, tanks, gases, high explosives, and all the devilish contraptions man can devise. The artillery bombardments that are taking place are beyond all power of description. No man who ever lived could describe them even if, like Madame de Stael, he were master of 50 languages. Tolstoy, when most powerful in “War and Peace,” and Zola at his best are only “like children crying in the night and with no language but a cry.” The pyrotechnic effects of thousands of mighty guns and thousands of shells all exploding at once time is utterly bewildering to the eyes, but the terrific sound which seems to strike you inside (not outside) makes for greatest destruction of the senses. I have stood on the summit of Ben Lomond in Tasmania in the midst of a thunderstorm that seemed to tear the heavens and earth to pieces in its violence, and you remember that Krakatoa in 1883 let loose the imprisoned forces of 200 years, sending out a tidal wave that swallowed 100,000 people and shot up scoric dust 200 miles in the air to charm a wondering world for years with roseate sunset glows. Nearly all those in the vicinity who survived that mighty cataclysm went raving mad with fear at the terrific sound that accompanied it.

When Tarawera in New Zealand blew up it had the same effect on the Maoris. But the thunders of Krakatoa may call to the thunders of Tarawera, and both reverberate in the ravings of Ben Lomond, and still fall short of the thunder of a great bombardment. Strange incidents abound. For instance a man was leaning against the wall of a trench, a rush of air forced him into the clay, and like a little statue of Buddha, he sits there awaiting the resurrection. But enough of this. A Scotchman who had lost his power of speech through shell shock suddenly regained it when someone paid him a half-penny short in this change!

Aeroplane s are as thick as swallows in summer, and it is an interesting sight to see these ‘grapping in the central blue,’ or he aircraft guns trying to bring them down. You see little puffs of smoke by the hundred high up in the air where the shells burst, and you admire the pilot of the plane as he rides in serene majesty outside the range of the explosion. It frequently happens that twenty or more of our ‘planes engage a large number of the enemy ‘planes, and it is the most inspiring sight conceivable to watch the conflict. Surely this is a real sport of kings reaching its climax when the one of ours defeats his opponent and then, like Lucifer.

“Him he hurls flaming from the ethereal  
With hideous ruin and combustion  
Down to bottomless perdition.”

In the course of a few days I will be again in the thick of it, doing my bit. Indeed, I am already anxious for someone to tread on the tail of my coat. There is a fascination, deadly though it be, in listening to the shrapnel flying overhead like some wailing banshee of the night, or the machine guns playing tunes to each other as they mow the soldiers down, or again in fancy dodging the whizzing bullets, but if one should strike me and

“If I should die, think only this of me  
That there’s a corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever Australia.”

*Sun* (Kalgoorlie) Sunday February 25, 1917:

‘TRUE PATRIOTS WE’  
AND SAPPER A.A. HORAN

W.B. Christie: In the highly interesting letter from Sapper A.A. Horan, late member of the Legislature of this State, which was published in your issue of January 28, our old friend makes reference to the prologue to what he describes as the first play staged in Sydney. Mr Horan is not quite correct in saying that this was the first play staged in Sydney—nor that the lines were written by the convict Wainwright.

I am sure the genial A.A.H. will delight in the correction. The lines are very interesting at the present time, in our view of the fact so many of our truest patriots of Australia have already “left their country for their country’s good,” although in a widely different sense from what is implied in the original, and that amongst them is the evergreen A.A. Horan himself, whose memory will always be of the pleasantest to his many friends in W.A.

*Article abridged*

*Daily News* (Perth) Tuesday June 5, 1917:

CORPORAL A.A. HORAN  
LETTER FROM THE FRONT – VIVID DESCRIPTION OF SURROUNDINGS

Corporal A.A. Horan, who, before enlisting, at one time represented Yilgarn in the State Parliament, writing from Birmingham on February 7, to his brother, Mr Geo. Horan, of Egan-street, Kalgoorlie, says:

“Separated from our main companies for military reasons, a party of Australians are attached to the Canadian Tunnelling Co., and work in a different sector to where our old time colleagues are located. But there are a number

of West Australians with me, and they more than hold their own with the Canadians. Our work is to drive tunnels, principally under 'No Man's Land,' and, as you know, the Hun is doing exactly the same against you. There is no lack of excitement whilst you are actually at work, as instead of making a rich strike of ore, as in Kalgoorlie, you are likely to strike an enemy torpedo and blow yourself and mates to smithereens. We have to timber everything, as the ground is very soft, and in obtaining our material from the dump, and in going to and from work (our sleeping place is another tunnel), we are exposed to the enemy's fire from no less than three fronts. My particular responsibility is to supervise the work during my shift (like a mine shift boss), and, as this entails a lot of running about, I encounter plenty of risks.

"Searching for sandbags one day, a shell dropped at my feet, and, exploding, it sent me high in the air. I landed safely back, but plentifully bespattered with mud. To some mates coming to my assistance, I called out, 'Don't worry—the Germans can't kill an Australian politician by throwing mud at him.' Steve Eastwood, and Ted Heitmann, M.L.A., each gave me a mascot or talisman, and they fulfilled their purpose by getting shattered to splinters in my breast pocket by a piece of shrapnel. A sniper's bullet went through my steel helmet, and the stock of my rifle was seriously damaged by a 'whiz-bang.' This proving in an unexpected way that your rifle is your best friend. All these were amongst my earliest experiences, and are taken 'no more notice of than saying 'Good morning' to a mate.

"The mining work is of absorbing interest, as not only have your own plans to be carried out, but you have to listen and feel for the other fellow, and circumvent him by driving under or over, in order to destroy his activities. In the hundreds of loadings that are going on—for the ground is honeycombed with them—mines are frequently blown; as immense quantities of explosives are used, the ground is violently shaken for miles around. The blowing of one of these mines shortly after we came here, gave us, within a day, our first taste of fire, and the Western Australians acquitted themselves very well. What appeared to be a violent earthquake shook us out of our beds in the early morning, followed by an immediate order to 'stand to,' and hundreds rushed out of their tunnels to face such an infernal din as they had never dreamt of. Mighty guns roared and lightings flashed, and it seemed as if a hundred Hells were round us; dozens of shells bursting with terrific reports simultaneously, so that all the batteries and mills on the Golden Mile and all the thunder you ever heard rolled into one would not equal the sound. It is idle to say that most of our chaps didn't turn white. Doubtless I did myself, also; to get frightened, and besides we had an advantage over infantry in the sense that we were taken by surprise, whilst those who have to hop over the top of the trenches and cross over 'No Man's Land' are advised beforehand and the tension of waiting makes them extremely nervous. The sound made by these high explosives is beyond all description. It does not seem to come from outside but seems to originate within your own system. Before I came to the war I thought Zola in 'The Downfall, and Tolstoy in 'Peace and War' had attained great achievement in descriptive writing; but no one living or dead was or is capable of representing on paper what is being experienced daily on our far flung battle line. Anyhow before night we had won back and secured even the Huns' crater, which we have held over since, though the casualties were heavy. I overheard a Canadian General say; if the Cannucks and Kangaroos (Canadians and Australians) had been placed in front of the British infantry, the slaughter would have been less and the action over quicker. In this scrap my right hand was considerably damaged by a shell splinter, but I contrived successfully to keep it out of official reports, as I was anxious to you that brief cabled reports might engender. A short spell and then back.

Again to work in fresh centres of activity, but not before I had plenty of splendid views of great battles in the air.

"It is a magnificent sight to witness a fleet of about 50 aeroplanes 'grappling in the central blue' firing at each other and being fired at by opposing guns from the ground as well. The sky being dotted with puffs of white smoke where the shells burst, the machines ducking, looping the loop or manoeuvring for position, occasionally bringing down an adversary from a height of thousands of feet—meanwhile the whirr of gigantic humming tops broken by the sharp crash of explosions—make the spectacle fit for Kings and commoners alike, as there are no dress circle or reserved seats wanted.

"And so, with feverish activity through shot and shell, we carried out various designs against the enemy, each day and night providing its own excitement, and all the while surrounded by

'That Serbonian Bog,

That doth engulf whole armies. For believe me, the mud of France and Flanders is most damnable. Whilst contributing my humble share to a scheme then nearing completion for blowing up the front lines of the Huns. I was challenged by the doctor, who finding my temperature 105 degrees ordered me to knock off work and insisted on my being carried off the job and thus new experiences came my way. My ailment was trench fever and trench feet, and much as I regrated leaving the work, a couple of days later, whilst lying in a clearing hospital behind Ypres, the ground was shaken for miles in indication that our mine had been set off. It wrought great destruction in the German lines, and the company was thanked by Field-Marshal Haig in General Orders."—Kalgoorlie "Miner."

*Western Argus* (Kalgoorlie) Tuesday June 12, 1917:

CORPORAL A.A. HORAN'S LETTER  
DIFFERENT KINDS OF HEROES – SOULS OF DEPARTED SOLDIERS

Corporal A.A. Horan, ex-M.L.A. for Yilgarn, who is on active service in France, continues in the following, the third instalment, the interesting account of his experiences. In the second part he was telling of the hospital at Boulogne, where he was a patient.

“Christmas morning,” he continued, “told us of Santa Claus, who had placed in my stocking the Australian Red Cross presents of tobacco cigars etc., which as a non-smoker were useless to me but were soon passed around. More beneficial, however, was a parcel from a good lady in Charters Towers, who sent a pair of woollen gloves, and thoughtfully put a piece of soap in each as a gentle reminder. A week in Boulogne and away again, but not before I had a chance of speaking to the fine young Australian mentioned (just 20) from Sydney. The frost bite had cost him both feet. This is frequently the result of an attack of trench feet. I hope when these people reach our shores their bravery will receive recognition from the public, although they may not be adorned with medals and mentioned in the papers. It should be understood there are many degree of courage, and if you are in the thick of a charge you become intoxicated with the furious frenzy of the fray, doing many things spasmodically, perhaps.

“Unaware you flash your soul out with the guns,  
And take your Heaven at once.”

Or by luck get through and catch the eye of the commander and be mentioned in despatches. But there is a greater number still who are set aside for other duties and who none the less deserve our appreciation. Take, for example the sentry, peering out into the darkness with concentrated gaze lest the enemy creep upon him, and standing for hours in mud and snow. His is cool, deliberate courage; the other is spasmodic, and if there be no King to invest him at Buckingham Palace or band to play the conquering hero home he is one none the less, and so that all might read it in the day time and at night, over his door while living and his grave when dead the word ‘Hero’ in letters of gold should be written for the sun to gild and the moon to silver.

“It was a long train journey from Boulogne to Lettovre, passing through, amongst many others, the historic cities of Rouen and Amiens, and whilst visiting for detrainment I was shocked at having a ticket pinned on me marked ‘O.H.M.S., Western Australia.’ What else could I conclude but that I had been ‘scrapped’ by the doctors for return to Western Australia. Like Cecil Rhodes, I exclaimed, ‘So little done; so much to do,’ and brooded heavily; but to my intense relief within an hour I was carried along the jetty, and opposite stood the “S.S. Western Australia, Fremantle,’ with the Black Swan surmounting. In truth I did not recognise an old friend with a new face, so beautifully did the vessel look in her new coat of white paint. True to its traditions, the boilers went wrong, and she had to be docked before another ship.

“I am now in Birmingham University which has been converted into a hospital, and am nearly quite well again. As I walk about the grounds, I recall the animated arguments I often had with the late Sir Winthrop Hackett when I moved in your Parliament for Government House to be utilised as a site for Perth University. We differed over the area allocated to the institution. Here and now the fortunes of war have given me a chance, too late, of course, to prove my figures. The principal is Sir Oliver Lodge, whom I met in West Australia, and he has just published a remarkable book in which he claims to have established correspondence with his son Raymond, killed eight months since at the war, and he is supported in this by Sir William Crookes, the discoverer of X-rays. The conversion of two such great men of science to the belief that death is but the gateway to another life having many things in common with this provoked much discussion, and the idea that our departed soldier heroes are in daily contact with us proves very inspiring to many thousands on the battlefield.

“By the time this reaches you I will be back in the firing line again, and everything, indicates that the coming of fine weather will bring together the greatest assemblage of men and munitions of war that has ever occurred in all recorded time. With the millions of others, my humble contribution of service will be freely given, and on this day, the 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Charles Dickens, I cannot do better than repeat the words one of his heroes said, although under very different circumstances, that, when the call to battle reaches me, and if it falls to my lot to make the supreme sacrifice, “Barkis is willin’.”

*West Australian* Wednesday June 20, 1917:

#### LIFE IN AN ENGLISH CAMP – LETTER FROM MR A.A. HORAN

Mr A.A. Horan, a member of the A.I.F. and formerly member of Parliament for Yilgarn, was in the Tidworth camp in England in April last. Writing to a friend in Perth under date April 1, he states:—

“My Dear Old Timer, My repairs have just been completed and I am marked A1 again and fit for anything I may encounter in France; and so before departing for the front once more I send you a line.

This is Palm Sunday and April Fools’ Day together and I doubt not if I were in Perth a drive around in your sulky would form the programme, but as this is impossible I will bring you in spirit here and removed any trace of rheumatism you may have in a lively snowballing contest. Snow has been plentiful in Belgium, France and England, and we are said to have passed through the severest winter since 1077. So to have lived through a record of 840 years and come up smiling is not too bad for an Australian. I have just taken a walk to the top of one of the adjacent hills that seemed to good old Sam Pepys when he crossed here in 1668 so high that he did frighten him, for the big garrison town of Tidworth, where I have been for the past few days, lies beneath.

“For the first time for months the sun shines for a few minutes and the Salisbury Plain, which isn’t a plain at all but rolling country lies around me covered with feet of snow. Away in the distance I see the lofty spire of the ancient Cathedral in the old city of Salisbury, while closer stand out in black relief the mystic pillars of Stonehenge, close on 4,000 years old. Nearer still I can see one of the mighty monoliths lying in the Avon River at Bulford, which, as you know the devil dropped when carrying these foreign stones from Ireland, and if you doubt it there is the stone to prove my words.

“Over to the west are the ruins of the palace of old King Lud, who ruled over Wessex centuries ago, but these are all very ancient, and so I raise my eyes and hat to something modern, for over behind the old king’s castle is the village of Appleshaw (of course, we call it Applecross) for it was there the navy member of the Commons, Col. Jno. Ward, whose Middlesex regiment thrilled the world with their behaviour on board the Tyndareus, first saw the light. Already a monument is being erected to him there. Surrounding me on every side at varying distances are huge military camps, each with a population larger than Perth, and sinuous black lines are moving masses of men in training. On the flat below are thousands of horses-Lancers, Hussars, Scots Greys, and Australians, all manoeuvring. Some are trotting in black circles like so many merry-g-rounds and with boyish glee I longed to mount a horse myself. Through the chilly air above comes the sound of mighty wings, and majestically floating across the plain are 40 aeroplanes in V-shaped formation like the swans fly over Perth at eventide.

“From the streets of the town below come the strains of martial music, for it is the hour for changing the guard and rhythmic as the measured tread of Sparta’s legions to the music of the Darian flutes they move to their destination, the headquarters of our old-time Premier, Major-General Sir Newton Moore, to whom I will refer again. The whole scene, compensating in its mantle of snow, is very beautiful. It is magnificent, but it is not war, and my mind goes quickly back to the horrors I have been through in France and soon to witness again. Last week when in Scotland I saw scratched by Bob Ingersoll on the wall of the cottage where Burns was born this line—“The place where man has bled for man is grander than all the snow-covered summits of the world.” And so I leave it at that, but I cannot restrain myself from mischief, for I roll up a great ball of snow until it is taller than myself and presently it breaks away and goes careening down the slope, growing ever larger. I had intended that it should come harmlessly to rest in vacant ground at the bottom, but something caused it to swerve and it goes for a number of baker’s ovens under construction I roar to the men, but nothing can stop its progress now. Smash it goes over the lot and flattens the work of several days. The sergeant bricklayer lets loose a flood of profanity that should melt the snow wherever he could be heard. He rushes into his camp and although I had tears of merriment in my eyes, I suddenly discovered it wasn’t all a joke; he had gone for his rifle and would surely pot me. But resourceful as every Australian is, I covered myself with the morning paper, froze still in the snow, and when he returned with his gun I was now where to be seen.

“I have mentioned our old time political Sir Newton Moore, whom I saw last in France, and you will be glad to hear he is doing great work for the Empire, both here and on the Continent. When he took over these great camps there reigned supreme all the confusion that new conditions created. Men were moved about with embarrassing uncertainty as to the purpose of it all. They were examined again and again, and the military experts, like the doctors, notoriously differed until the Major-General took a hand, and by a process of grouping in alphabetical classes “order,” that was Heaven’s first law, soon prevailed where chaos had dominated before. On the Continent he was amongst the first to see the benefit of light railways for the transport of munitions and supplies to the front. His persistent advocacy for these facilities eventually prevailed over much conservative officialdom, and to-day the newspaper writers’ marvel at the network of light military lines that follow up the Allies over-advancing front in France and Belgium. A new division of veteran Australians is being formed, and, as the Major-General is very popular with all the men, it is hoped he will take charge.

Although I leave myself immediately having been detained a few days here to assist in some Federal election matters for you quarrelsome people in Australia, I will be on the look-out to join the scoundrel that shot me in the arm, or say enemy scoundrels will do, as I feel fit enough to give them all particular hell.

A.A. HORAN, Sergeant.

No. 4232 No. 59 Australian Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company, abroad

*Sunday Times* Sunday February 10, 1918:

#### THE TORTOISE

Letters from dear old A.A. Horan, now doing his excellent bit at the front, recall a visit to the Perth Parliament House when A.A.H. was the guide, cicerone, philosopher, and raconteur.

One of his guests, a pressman, noticed that the bell which called the refreshment room steward was a miniature silver and shell tortoise.

Every time A.A. wanted to order a drink he seemed to place his fingers ever so lightly on the imitation reptile, the resultant ringing being loud and imperative.

“It seems to ring whenever you touch it,” said the pressman.

“There’s no SEEM about it,” said Horan, with one of the Cochin-China cachinations. “Look at it,” as she picked it up it rang again.

The steward returned. "Did you want a repeat of the drinks already, Mr Horan?" asked the steward with a smile. "Not yet," laughed Horan. "Let's get on speaking terms with these first." Then he picked the tortoise up again, at which it repeated the metallic racket, and pointed out its fatal beauties. "It has four legs, as you see," he explained, "and the slightest touch on any one of them rings it loudly, and brings the steward. "Touch the head or tail" he added, "and you are again let in for another round. The stewards take care to keep them well wound up now that all drinks must be paid for on the nail, though in the good old days of Ernie Locke and Cap'n Oats they often used to hit a bit of drill steel with a hammer several times before the barman woke up, and brought along the chit to be signed. "But these modern tortoise bells," mused Horan pathetically, "are constructed on the air trigger principle, and almost go off if you look at them hard. "If you bang your fist down on the table like this," said Horan, "you almost--- The bell rang again. "And if you swear above a whisper the tortoise has been known to signal for shicker. Once Bullant M'Intyre came down from the Cross, and sat her discussing a mine he wanted to float. "That bell rang seven times while Mac was explaining that they had seven feet of a footwall, containing scores of carboniferous nutmegs to the ton, while when he said John Sort would have to re-lay the line to carry away the dividends to tortoise put out its tongue and bit its mainspring in the middle. "One of our members—Joe Gardiner—once invented a stewards' bell to record the number of drinks and the cash paid for them. "The head of the tortoise was a shilling, the feet sixpence, and the tail threepence. If anyone banged his hand down suddenly on the bell it cost him nearly as much as the lumpers want per hour. "One day someone overwound one of Gardiner's patent tortoise-bells, and dropped it into Mulga Taylor's overcoat pocket. Mulga went home with it, and in dropping it put it again into working order. "Mulga's youngest child got hold of the bell next day, and when Mulga returned the tortoise to the House he owed the refreshment bar seventy-five pound four and ninepence. "Touch the tail of the tortoise again."

*Sun* (Kalgoorlie) Sunday May 5, 1918:

A SOLDIER'S LETTER – FROM MR A.A. HORAN  
SOME OF HIS EXPERIENCES

An epistle from A.A. Horan, to Mulga Taylor:

Belgium, 22-2-18.

Dear George,

Was delighted at receiving your card last week and most heartily do congratulate you on attaining the Speaker's Chair, nor am I alone in this as hundreds whom I have met that come from various States are also well pleased, and amongst the battalions of your friends are many who come from "beyond the rainless Barwon, beyond the red Barcoo," who are wont to recall old time memories of the spacious days of stirring times that found you battling for Democracy in Queensland when to do so required the grit and courage that now wins the V.C. on the battlefields of Flanders.

I am now with the West Australian Operating Coy and am quite at home with so many links that compel remembrance of former associations in your State, and we still have the bit in our teeth on the Western Front, each day succeeding its predecessor with ingenuity of design in either attack or defence, and the end is by no means in sight.

Our company is well in the play as every inch of our line is within the firing zone. The office where I write is often a target for shells, indeed at this moment Gothas are hovering round on their mission of death and destruction, dropping bombs on the just and unjust. And mighty powerful, too, are these bombs. A four-roomed brick house will leave but a hole in the ground with never a brick in sight after being hit by one, and a few days ago one landed in a field close by and killed 120 horses. One doesn't bother much about his own or anybody else's life out here, but there is an unanimity in preferring death by a shell rather than a bomb which drops from the clouds and takes you unawares. Besides you have a kind of hasty preparation for a shell as you mostly hear them coming, and when one is approaching I have often heard a soldier exclaim "Lord Have Mercy," and then in the same breath, as the shell burst and left him untouched, "you b-----."

All of which is so characteristically Australian that one cannot help laughing even if he lost his own head the next moment.

You will be glad to hear that our company for the few months we have been here have already annexed nearly a dozen D.C.M.'s, M.M.'s etc., which goes to show the recipients had no bed or roses, yet happily so far without a single fatality. Maupassant said that when we are at war and our lives are at stake any moment, we should amuse ourselves, and we live up to that standard as far as possible, and find a little time for play as well. We have encountered some top notch teams from England and Wales, yet our record for football is played 45, won 29, lost 6, drew 10. Cricket, played 12, won 9, lost 3. The Huns, however, do not like our frolics behind the lines. The

other Sunday one of their planes came over and having spotted us playing a match evidently reported to his artillery for shortly afterward a shell landed between the goal posts and left a hole you could bury a house in. It happened to be half time and all hands were at the canteen. What a mercy it is there are no teetotallers in the army, otherwise we would have been about a hundred less. But the unkindest cut of all came afterwards when Fritz flew back to see what destruction his big guns had wrought and would you believe it he swooped down on an unusually high kick and caught the ball in his flight. As George Laurie used to say in pantomime "it was a dirty trick." Recently I took a walk to where we were doing tunnel work last year. "That's where the dead men lie" in No Man's Land. A pretty serious scrap had taken place the night before, and I saw more dead than I would care to mention, and amongst them some old club mates from Perth. The conflict had been a sharp one, and as Burns said of the battle of Sherrifmuir "Some fell for rank and some for right, but monny bade the world guid nicht." The shells were still falling unpleasantly close and it was no place for an unarmed spectator, anyway I moved away and to my great surprise met Mr A.A. Wilson, M.L.A., who has had more comical adventures in a few months than he has been here than other have had for years.

Close by I encountered two real live English Lords (General to boot) who thanks to the refining influence of the Australian soldier have become quite sensible and sociable men of the world. Mention of the poet Burns reminds me, I as invited by a Scotch regiment to a Burns night recently, being called upon I gave them five minutes of my best, that brought the mess upstanding and cheering. Next morning on parade the following dialogue took place between the general and major.

General: Who was it made that speech last night?

Major: An Australian sergeant, sir.

General: He was no common Australian sergeant. Tell me the truth.

Major: Honestly, that's right. He's in the Railway Company.

General: Well, you'd better be careful who you invite. All these spies are well educated.

And thus was my patriotism and eloquence rewarded.

We are all anxious for the next spring offensive. Many think it will be decisive, but I "hae me doots." Already the guns are roaring intermittently and whatever may result, one thing is certain, the slaughter will exceed anything in history. The Yankees' are arriving, and according to a French paper in the "West Australian" our old Nor'-Westerner had the honor to bring the first Americans to France, a medical contingent, that landed at Rouen. Someone has finally said "the Mayflower returned to England on Good Friday," and it is a pleasure Western Australia participated in that historic event.

With the best of all wishes—I am yours faithfully,

*South Coast Times and Wollongong Argus* Friday January 24, 1919:

SERGT A. A. HORAN

Lunch with the President

Writing to relatives in Bulli, Sergt. Horan says: I was in Paris when news of the Armistice came, and naturally we were all delighted, as it is expected the war is finished, and we next await news of our return home, which is a very large undertaking, and somewhat of a conundrum. But to be at such a stage in the conflict is a great comfort after so many varying vicissitudes.

I had quite exceptional treatment in Paris on several days. I had sent a letter to President asking for the privilege of attending the Chamber of Deputies during a sitting, and next day I was surprised to see a magnificent carriage drive up to my hotel, with men in gaily decorated uniforms, who came with the President's compliments to convey me to the chamber of Deputies. I had no choice but accept, and was shortly after entertained by the President of the Chamber, and was given a seat on the floor of the House where distinguished visitors are allotted, and told to wait for a special announcement. In a few minutes Clemenceau ascended the Tribune and told us Turkey had given in. The 600 members went wild with delight, and many hugged me affectionately if unmercifully, as they do in France, Calling an Anzac.

I was driven away to my hotel after a couple of hours, and the hundreds of other English officers and soldiers could not make out why such honors had been paid to an Australian soldier.

Another day I was anxious to visit the crypt of the great Cathedral of Notre Dame, where they say some fifty million of treasure is located, and no one is permitted to enter during war time. I wanted to look up some obscure items of early Australian history when the French explored in the south, and being an F.R.G.S., I wrote to the Cardinal Archbishop, and he consented, giving me an armed guard of six men.

After some time below, during which time I saw the Crown of thorns, brought back from Palestine by St Louis during the Crusades and claimed to be the once actually placed on our Saviour's head. It is now enclosed in a priceless jewel case. I got some of the information I wanted, but must hunt up the rest at Rouen.

Another day I went to the great Gobelin Tapestry factory, where men earning £1000 a year were at work ten years on a single piece, and have eight more years to go before it is finished. Scores of such parties were engaged in different designs.

Lady Denman, wife of a former Governor-General of Australia, once invited me to tea in London, and showed me her beautiful carpet which, she said cost £100,000. I scarcely believed it then, but I do now. What a bag the Huns would have got had they got to Paris.

*Sunday Times* Sunday June 15, 1919:

A RACY LETTER FROM HORAN  
SIGHT AND SCENES – IN LONDON AND PARIS

Some of the most interesting war letters received in the West were from the pen of A.A. Horan, formerly M.L.A. for Yilgarn. The latest was addressed to His Honor the Speaker and we are indebted to Mr Taylor for the privilege of reprinting it:

“April 27, 1919.

“Dear Mr Speaker—

“I am much obliged for the good wishes contained in your last letter, and most heartily reciprocate them. Our great conflict has advanced a stage, and whilst awaiting return, we watch, not without misgivings, to what extent the world is being made ‘safe for democracy.’

“For the present CHAOS is written across the map of Europe. England itself sits heavily on an industrial volcano. Various committees, inquiring into labor claims, are bringing to light the incongruities of the social order, and the future is full of unpleasant possibilities. A Coal Commission found that of a million miners a great number of families, seven to ten in each, lived in one room, whilst the idle owners for whom they recently waged war, occupied Park-lane mansions.

“A delegate startled the Prime Minister by declaring the wife of one of the bosses boasted of being the possessor of no fewer than 90 “nighties” whilst his wife could only afford one, and a Labor member told the House of Commons his residence was so small he had to open the window to put his trousers on.

“During the war, in camp and canteen, billet and bivouac, here has been no more receptive listener to the Australian Gospel of Freedom than the British Tommy, and now that he is demobilised he is taking such a stand that even the great ducal landowners of England and Scotland are fleeing from the wrath to come by selling their estates as rapidly as possible.

“Meanwhile King George shows the greatest interest in the nation’s affairs; indeed he would have seemed to have joined the Labor Party. Amongst his command visitors there are as many knights of the shovel as knights of the shire. Good Queen Mary drops in “Promiskus like” to East End slums, and sets the startled family at ease by sitting on the kitchen table (there was probably nothing else to sit on), discussing the while with Mrs ‘Arris, how much bigger the new baby will grow when the improved Housing Scheme is working. And to keep in touch with the Dominions the Prince of Wales in France occasionally takes the diggers down at their national game of ‘two-up.’ And so amongst all the Royal Families of Europe our own seems to have deserved an assured tenancy of its Royal Palace.

“During one of my visits to Paris had having spent many days viewing the sights of that great city and its environs I received in witness a sitting of their Parliament if possible, and to that end sent a polite note to the President of the Chamber of Deputies, adding as a postscript that I had same. Parliamentary experience (it was a genuine postscript, too, as during these four strenuous years the fact of having been a member had almost passed with the follies of my youth into the limbs of forgotten things). The most I expected was a pass in, but to my surprise next day the President’s carriage called for me and drove me to the Chamber, where I was introduced and entertained.

“The President expressed his gratitude to the Australian Army for being the ‘Saviours of Amiens and Paris,’ to which I modestly assented, adding that Australia was under an obligation to France, and mentioned the little known fact that a French Admiral had guaranteed Captain Cook a safe passage through enemy waters on his voyage to Australia. He was interested in this, but presently I had to turn to conversation, or it would appear we were glad Australia was English and not French.

“He was well informed on Australia’s wine growing capabilities, and hoped our soldiers would gain knowledge of wine production while in France. I assured him they would, but did not stipulate which end of the process. The sitting being about to commence I was given a special seat, and it was whispered an important announcement was to be made.

“Shortly afterwards the Minister for Marine ascended the Tribune and stated that Turkey had that day capitulated. Of course, the sitting was suspended, and then followed a very remarkable scene. The Chamber of over 600 members went mad with glee. Frenchmen always demonstrative, showed their delight by embracing and kissing each other (why they don’t elect 50 per cent women to Parliament I don’t know). Having been introduced to several they hugged me in turn, and grey-headed men kissed me on both cheeks.

“they called me ‘A Nanzac,’ which I wasn’t and told them so, but it was no use. I was to them the personification of Gallipoli and I as there and could be hugged. I felt uncanny and uncomfortable and shortly afterwards managed to get away.

“I landed from the carriage greatly relieved (incidentally I heard a monocle English Officer exclaim, “The audacity of these blasted Australians!). But the worst was to come, when a few hours later I strolled through the boulevards

and the Champs Elysee to the Palace Concord, through thousands of captured guns, to ascertain how the populace of Paris had taken the news.

"Amongst the countless thousands of happy-faced Parisiennes I was unexpectedly met by some of the deputies I had left at the Chamber a few hours previously. I was introduced to others, and presently one lady pressed for a souvenir, Monsieur," and so went my hat badge, then the 'rising sun'; from my coat and next 'Australias', 'Engineers', etc. Their persistence was undeniable.

"Thank Heaven, they had the lot and I would be free; but no, for across the "Place" came a chorus of red-lipped laughing girls, "Midlinettes' from the great Magasins of Dufayel and Au Printemps and with mischief in their eyes and scissors in their hands off came the buttons next. A few moments before I might have felt a hero, but a man's an awful coward when his pants begin to g.,' as Henry Lawson says and for the next few moments wished I was a Scotsman, and would have given a kingdom for a kilt. Fearing to what extent their affection might go I flung myself into a passing taxi, and then to my hotel, where I spent some time with a dictionary trying to find the equivalent for bachelors buttons in the French language.

"That night I went to one of the theatres with a party of Diggers (there is safety in numbers) and during an interval the Australians took possession of the stage amidst the greatest enthusiasm. I had there the pleasure of meeting the distinguished writer Canon Hannay (George A. Birmingham), Chaplain of the British Forces. He had many a good thing to say of Australians; one he especially enjoyed. One dark night he was passing a sentry post. "Who goes there?" roared the Aussie Guard. "Chaplain," responded the reverend gentleman, "Right ho, Charlie!' was the Digger's answer. We had, as old Samuel Pepys would say, much brave discourse, to my great content, and so to bed mightie merrie.

*Western Mail* (Perth) Thursday April 1, 1920:

W.A. AFFAIRS IN LONDON  
MR A. A. HORAN'S IMPRESSIONS

Mr A.A. Horan, formerly M.L.A. for Yilgarn, who recently returned to Perth after having served in the A.I.F. in France, states to a "West Australian" representative recently that the Western Australian Agent-General's office in London was well situated and well conducted, but he was certain the staff was not well paid, as Mr Rushton, who lately took up duty as secretary, was only too ready to emphasise.

"The high cost of living in London," Mr Horan continued, "is disastrous to men on salaries considered reasonable in Australia, and I hope something will be done on the next Estimates to remedy this. I had occasion to send congratulatory telegrams to Mr J.C. Connolly on his prompt action in giving publicity to many things affecting Western Australia. Sometimes his pen has been freely used to contradict libels upon this country, and the speed and force with which he has hit back in the great London dailies have been admirable.

"The Midland Railway Company's meeting is a hardy annual that spreads itself over a large space of the English newspapers, and it is to be regretted the Government of the State does not buy sufficient shares to secure representation of the company's meetings. I believe Mr Connolly is favourable to such a course, and as I was the first to propose in Parliament (in 1903), the construction of the Wongan Hills railway, I resent the reiteration of erroneous statements regarding that railway at the company's annual meetings.

"There is a vast amount of work done by all the officials in the Western Australian London agency that never comes under the notice of the public in this State but which is, nevertheless, essential for upholding the prestige of the State in the European capitals. The staff is also quite actively canvassing the best type of immigrants, and there will be a great number ready to sail when shipping conditions permit.

"Sir Newton Moore still takes an active interest in Western Australia and does a good deal as M.P. for Islington North (one of the great London electorates) in advertising our resources. On one of my visits to London from France I found him with Lord Harris (representing South Africa) actively urging the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr Bonar Law) to grant a bonus or subvention for gold production, and he had to fight enormous opposition from banking and academic quarters. By increasing the market value of their product he was anxious to give the owners of low grade gold-bearing shows, and miners generally, a chance to meet the high cost of living and materials. Sir Newton has considerable influence in the House of Commons and he may be said to be a citizen of no mean city, with all these words imply in financial London."

*Sunday Times* Sunday October 3, 1920:

REMINISCENT SCRAPS  
BY A.A. HORAN

A brief sojourn at the Base Hospital has enabled me to comply with numerous requests for another column of reminiscences. But first let me tell you a story appropriate to your recent denunciation of certain Perth land agents. The audacity of the genus is notorious and as it was Danton who during the French Revolution said, "L'audace, l'audace, toujours l'audace." I will call my hero Danton for nowhere in the whole life range of literature have I heard his equal.

Our Australian Danton was a land agent prior to enlisting and left his genial wife comfortably situated behind him. During his various visits from France to England the glad eye had been so often reciprocated that he became engaged and married. Returning after the conclusion of the war, but leaving wife No. 2 in England, he resumed the even tone of his way in his Australian home. An interruption however occurred on the arrival of a letter from England which somehow fell into the hands of his Australian wife (such things do happen, I believe, so newly-married men should beware.) Without more ado and without reference to her husband the next boat to England had the Australian as a passenger, where on arrival she promptly sought out wife No.2. In ordinary circumstances tragedy might be expected at their meeting, but instead marvellous developments occurred on quite unconventional lines. Wife No.2 was in a thriving little business and wanted a partner, and wife No.1 bought into it. Both of them are eminently satisfied that men were deceivers ever, so they engaged in happy, lucrative business, determined to drop from their memory the husband who had misled them both. But they had forgotten he was a land agent, and the bold, bad man went back to England a few months ago, and at latest was suing wife No.2 for commission on having introduced a client (wife No.1 to business!) (I will tell you later how her case gets on.)

One of Dickens most famous characters made the laconic remark "Human nature is a run 'un," and in order that the balance of the sexes should be established I must relate another story. One night whilst I was in camp at Blackboy Hill, in 1915 I was visited in my tent by a very well know resident of Fremantle—one who for years figured at every municipal reception at the Port. He showed me many letters from a big legal firm in the Terrace demanding payment of money to "the lady in the case." He was "innocent, but in dire distress; divorce would follow and his happy household wrecked. He knew I could help him if I only would." Unaccustomed too such problems I awaited his suggestion. "Lend me your uniform," said he, "a couple of transports are leaving to-night. Defective teeth prevented me enlisting immediately, but I know the ropes and can get aboard." A few minutes later, wearing my outfit and looking every inch a soldier, he disappeared into the darkness of Blackboy, and I struck him next in London about a year afterwards, a full-blown officer. Fate would have it apparently, that he boarded the steamer Ulysses that, got stranded on a rock outside Fremantle but he contrived to remain on board for a week, during which time the lady having learned of his disappearance successfully persuaded another single lover that he was responsible, and they promptly took the next boat East and spent their honeymoon there. And so let us hope the loan of my suit of uniform allowed the course of true love to run smoothly on two independent but parallel lines. But it was at least a close go.

I have already mentioned one Danton, but I came in actual contact with another, one Gabriel Danton, a French-Canadian who, it was alleged, deliberately shot dead an officer of the Allies. I was a reluctant witness, as I had been out of bounds myself exploring the Belgian line beyond Ellrook, but the circumstances were remarkable with me, and for the listeners a very amusing touch. The actual facts were simple. Gabriel was on duty at a sentry post, when a blustering "half-breed" officer came along and refused to give the password or answer of any kind, and the sentry properly shot him dead. It transpired the officer had been a farmer and magistrate in portion of the remote Hudson Bay territory, and Gabriel had been accused of stealing a boat on some little river running into the Great Bay. The magistrate, the nearest within a hundred miles was very ignorant of the law and had never previously adjudicated. Someone lent him an old law dictionary, and to that he turned for enlightenment. Under the heading for "Boats" he saw "piracy" and piracy meant stealing boats in the high seas. But what are the high seas? Let the dictionary explain. Turning to "High Seas" the answer was, "Water, subject to tidal influences." The tide ran up the little river; therefore it was the high seas. The law was now as plain as a pike staff. The charge was piracy, and the penalty death by shooting. Gabriel was accordingly sentenced to be shot, and shot he would have been had not some trappers told a Nor'-West mounted policeman, who interviewed just in time. The war broke out shortly afterwards, and the next time Gabriel met the magistrate it was in Belgium, when he promptly shot him dead, having the law entirely behind him in the circumstances.

There were some rollicking Irishmen amongst the Dublin Fusiliers. Walking along the road from Locre one misty freezing night the avenue of trees, bereft of leaves but white with hoar frost and standing like legions of ghosts on either side, the babel of voices is lost in one clear Hibernian, who exclaims, "Yes, we'll have some big name shooting in Ireland after the war; we'll give all the officers five rounds rapid." And suiting the action to the word he fired the five cartridges. He hit no one, but somebody in authority arrested him. He was a Trinity College man, a messenger for his regiment, and was loaded with despatches and whisky for his O.C., a good deal of the latter having been sampled. I was present at the Court Martial held in a dugout on Kemmel Hill on one of the coldest days I ever endured. Presided over by an officer of the Durhams, who was very illiterate, the university man now sober had the court continually tied in delightful answers got the president in a frenzy, until at last rising until his head knocked the icicles from the roof he roared: "But you were drunk?" "I were," suavely replied the master of arts. I don't think much happened, but judging by the newspapers the "big game" has been confined to policemen so far in Ireland. Perhaps the military officers will get their turn next.

We had a quaint individual as a chauffeur for our company, who we very appropriately name "Dopey." I had more than one occasion to take very urgent despatches through France and Belgium, and if I had him as driver of the motor I would almost as liked go over the top. He would run into anything from a shrine to a sawmill, from a

general to a mule team, and always ended up disastrously. Finally we got rid of him, but I was surprised after the war to encounter him in Birmingham. He asked me for a testimonial, and walking into a big engineering office I dictated a glowing one to the typist. A week later at a function to Sir Oliver Lodge I met the scholarly democratic Dr Wakefield, Anglican bishop of Birmingham, who said he had employed a chauffeur, on my recommendation, who had nearly killed him. Very apologetically I had to admit that amongst many other sins I had once been a member of Parliament, and the ambition of many of my constituents was to get their sons in public service or police force, and so I had grown accustomed to giving testimonials naturally, always on the basis the bigger the fool is better the testimonial. But these joke won't work in England and I narrowly escaped a visit in sackcloth and ashes to the other cathedral where stand the statue of the saintly Dr Ullathorne, whose historic fight for freedom in Australia culminated in his transference as first R.C. bishop of Birmingham.

*Sunday Times* Sunday July 18, 1920:

REMINISCENT SCRAPS  
SIDELIGHT ON SOLDIERING – RAMDON AND RACY INCIDENTS

By A.A. Horan

In setting out to write an article on some of my war experiences I find myself similarly situated to Bobby Burns when inditing his immortal epistle to Loprait:—

“But how the subject theme may gang,  
Let time and change determine;  
Perhaps it may turn out a sang  
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

But first let me thank “The Sunday Times” for an unexpected acknowledgement I received on my return to Australia

The Children’s Hospital had benefited by cheques “The Sunday Times” had given for some of my letters that had filtered through from the front and had I known my scraps passed the censor and thus saw the light of day I should have gladly written the Children’s Hospital out of debt.

One is reminded of the late Sir John Robertson. When chairman of the Reform Club in Sydney he found that institution over £1000 in debt at the end of the year, and addressing the members said—“You gentlemen must drink this club out of debt.” Having a fine command of all sorts of language he didn’t call them gentlemen, but they understood and DID drink it out of debt.

It is not true, as stated in the press, that Sir Newton Moore, Capt. Bill Price and the writer were frequently “doing the Strand”. I have not seen apt. Price since he left W.A. for the war, but I did inquire about him once when on leave from France. Having filled up the necessary form at Horseferry-road I was instructed to wait and after an interval I received information that he had gone to France on a certain date (I went the same day myself), that he was located in the Ypres salient (so was I), that he had been blown up at the Bluff (a misfortune that had also befallen me), that he had been wounded in action December 24, 1916 (the exact date I “stopped one”, that he had been evacuated after going through each and all hospitals I had used, and to make the coincidence more remarkable still, he was then on sick leave in London, but was going to Edinburgh the next night. I was, of course, delighted to know I would meet him, as I was bound for Edinburgh by the same train, and marvelled much how I missed him so often before.

I urged the official to verify the records and was assured the information was accurate, but meeting an officer of my acquaintance in the corridor I commented upon the absolute agreement of Price’s movements and mine, speculating upon the possibility of the same star controlling our destiny. But my growing faith in astrology was suddenly shattered, when subsequently I was told the history was given for A.A. Horan, as they could not find W. Price’s: I never again troubled the inquiry office, although there might be some consolation in foggy London by visiting headquarters to find out where you had been the week before.

Australians on leave from France kept wide of the red caps at Horseferry-road, and for years I acted similarly, but before my departure I was obliged to call there several times, and on one occasion was approached by two ladies, equally distinguished in appearance and intellectual in conversation. The mother was looking for the paymaster and handed me over a letter from that officer indicating that a sum of £70, I think was available for her companion (the daughter), and then she stated the daughter had married FOUR Australians, three of whom had been killed in the war! They were all splendid fellows, she reiterated, but the fourth, was living, was no class, to which remarked the daughter by silence demurely agreed, as she walked to the pay office to collect the last of three lots of deferred pay, etc., amounting in all to some hundreds. Yes, the Australians were good husbands when they were dead.

In war-time train travelling in France was very tiresome. Occasionally I had to take long journeys, and 48 hours sitting up in a railway carriage is very enervating. I relieved my nodding head by resting my chin on a strap suspended from the hat rack overhead, and often slept in this position in the crowded apartment. (I think I first devised this method when travelling on the Midland railway in this State). Arrived at a French village, my soldier companions left me for refreshment and on the intense dismay of the residents assembled on the platform I was looked upon as one who had committed suicide.

Fully convinced of this, the French gesticulated, but never so wildly as when presently a soldier cobbler, the present Commissioner for Railways' brother (whose endurance would honor the Papacy and whose geniality would do credit to the Prince of Wales, stepped forward and with words redolent of Conan Doyle's famous hero exclaimed:

"God-dam!" said the brigadier,  
Don't hang before your time."

And with these words I was unloosed and awakened to the startled onlookers.

Amongst my most treasured souvenirs is a certificate to the effect that I was committing suicide, and it arose through my refusal to allow the doctors to cut off both my feet. Trench feet were very common, and there was a momentary craze amongst the doctors, who were cutting things off without the slightest provocation. Anyhow such as they are, my feet are still with me, and I returned to the hospital within a year and danced a jazz in the same ward.

But the forms one has to sign in the army is surprising. Forms, forms, everywhere! The only thing you didn't "fill up a form" about was when you went over the top and if the war had lasted much longer you might have had to do that. A British Officer was heard to complain that some fellow had the audacity to die before filling up a form about something.

The British Army is a great institution. I once ordered from a quartermaster a number of 1in bolt ends, and got a severe rebuke for not stating which end of the bolt I wanted!! "What sort of a machine is that?" said another quartermaster when I wanted a micrometer. I told him it was to measure thousandths of an inch, and gave him the Greek derivation of the word. He glared at me for quoting Greek and called to a lieutenant, "Give him a Chesterman's tape: that will measure a thousand inches!!

Recently observed in the daily press a boy in Victoria had met with an accident, and a large "portion of his brain had been removed." His parents should send him to England. He would quickly get a commission and rise to great eminence in the British Army.

Mention of quartermasters reminds me of a very amusing experience I had with the Canadians. I was sent down to the port as an off-sider to the quartermaster to bring back a "bunch" of 600 Canadians who had enlisted for the Nor'-West Mounted Police, but by an unexpected move they had been drafted across to France. They certainly were the finest body of men and not [blurred words] and although plentifully supplied with rations at the start they had squandered their supplies amongst the French until they ran short before their journey had ended. They were extremely grumpy one night, and we were at our wits end to beg, borrow or steal another ration for the crowd. However, we managed this and called a parade to distribute it, but scarcely had we begun our distribution than Fritz sent over a few shells, the first the gallant 600 had seen, and although they were in no danger they stampeded to various places leaving the tucker untouched. Like Bill Adams' army they were "all picked men too most of 'em," but another miracle had been wrought; the multitude had been fed and we could have filled 12 baskets with the fragment remaining.

Clothes are very dear in Australia, but dearer still in London and Paris. When counting my change in the last-named city I found I had been charged 12s for a pair of socks. Once when A.G. Taylor, member for Mudgee (N.S.W.), was touring his constituency some wag stole his socks and then openly asked at a meeting if the candidate wore socks. Lifting up his lengthy trousers—I think he stood 6ft 1ins-sure enough there were none visible. "No true democrat ever wore socks." Exclaimed Taylor, and with these trifles 12s a pair in Paris I thereupon renewed my fealty to democracy.

During the great railway strike in England I was on sick leave from a London hospital and through acquaintance with the general secretary Jim Thomas, of the House of Commons, often spent a few hours daily at Unity House. A crucial stage of the strike had been reached and the government was spending enormous sums in advertising their side of the contest through the great London dailies and on cinema screen that were read by millions nightly. There, and at Adelphi I often met G.B. Shaw, whose services had been enlisted to fight Lloyd George by exactly the same weapons, and our business was to draft manifestos containing a lucid condensation of the union's case. G.B. Shaw used to sub-edit our staff, and as he was allowed two thousand pounds a day for propaganda purposed we "did the thing properly" and won. Yes, direct action is a grand thing when you give plenty of brains and plenty of brass. Anyhow, I was pleased to give my very humble service to assist in emancipating the British workman who had been a slave for centuries.

A crusty old colonel at Ypres urged me to get our men to put in an extra set of timber per shift, the consideration being an extra tot of rum. I demurred at such a proposal as our men were not to be bought by such means, especially as there was no urgency for officers' dugouts. Later on, by the way, when necessity arose for speeding on without any rum and very poor tucker the Australians beat the Canadian tunnellers easily.

The men's refusal in the first instance provoked the colonel to such a display of temper and flood of language that I don't think he repeated himself once in a full quarter of an hour.

I think one might improve on Madame Dr Stael's famous declaration: "If I were mistress of fifty languages I would think in the deep German, deliver in the noble Greek, converse in the gay French, make love in the soft Italian,"

and I would beg leave to add “swear in the copious English,” as I know of no language equal to our own in such an emergency.

But the soldiers who swore in Flanders were more than equalled by the navy in the North Sea. One day I was at Sotheby (London) when a sale of varieties was proceeding and I observed Lord Fisher (since dead), eyeing alternately a book and its buyer. The book, a small edition of Shakespeare’s *Venue and Adonis*, one could put in his vest pocket; the buyer an American, who had just bid £15,000 for the treasure. The newspapers that afternoon had announced a revolution in Port Darwin, and told of the deportation of Governor Gilruth and his staff.

Approaching the great First Sea Lord, who I had the pleasure of meeting, previously, I remarked that Australia had been the first to translate into action his famous declaration, “sack the lot,” “Yes” replied the Admiral, “but had I been in Australia I would have said, “Sack the b----y lot.” An oblique indication that Lord Fisher knew his Australianese.

Travelling in the hospital train from Boulogne to Havre as a “stretcher” case I regained consciousness and found labels pinned on my clothing marked “Western Australia.” I immediately concluded I had been “scrapped” for a return home and like Cecil Rhodes, I exclaimed, “so little done, so much to do.” But I was mistaken, for later I found myself carried on board the hospital ship *Western Australia*—our old *Nor’-West* cattle boat—now converted and admirable suited to its new duty.

The nurse in charge told me a pretty story that I would not for the world discount at its repetition. “The ship,” she said, “had been captured from the Australians by an Australian cruiser, had been purchased from our Australian Navy by the ladies of Fremantle, fitted out by them and presented as an hospital ship to the British government. The Mayoress had a little in her own right, and her crest was a black swan which was painted on the ship if I could only get up and see it.”

Until then I did not know that to my hospitable and amiable friend Mrs Murphy, then Mayoress of Fremantle, belonged the black swan (*Cygnus insignia*) that made Westralia famous and thereafter I doubted not that to my equally excellent friend the Mayor (Billy Murphy) owned as a crest the Southern Cross. The old cattle boat, however, has a niche in history, as I brought to France the first of the American Army, a medical unit which went to Rouen.

Lord Denman was the most attentive of our ex-Governor-General and almost daily took a party through the Houses of Parliament winding up with dinner at his residence in Buckingham-street.

We had made a very complete round one day stopping a long while in each House listening to the debates, but I could have sank into the upholstery afterward when one of the diggers asked his Lordship where the House of Commons was—he had actually sat in it whilst a debate on Ireland was proceeding! Like a King in *Museppa*[blurred] he must have been an hour asleep.

Dr Johnson remarked that the best thing he saw in Scotland was the road to London, and the best day I had in Europe was the day I left it for Australia. Indeed did the crowded population of the Continent but know the conditions of freedom under which we live here they would flock to Australia in their millions; hence I heartily approve of your able leader recently on immigration.

Although I had many inducements to settle elsewhere, Western Australia has claimed me again, where with new but delighted responsibilities I will cheerfully undertake the obligations act out by Burns—

“To make a happy, fireside clime  
For means and wife  
Is the true pathos and sublime  
Of human life.”

*Sunday Times* Sunday December 12, 1920:

## REMINISCENT SCRAPS

By A.A. Horan

The request of many of your readers have brought me from beneath the shadow of my own vine and fig tree, where for some weeks I have been wrestling with the problems that beset “the man on the land” without even respite to smoke,” my calumet of peace that is conventionally granted. Smoking, is not however one of my accomplishments, but if a military historian can be accepted as correct then most assuredly I have been “smoking” since 1916. To be buried before my time was a fate I scarcely expected, but on a recent visit to a military tribunal in Perth the officer in charge read out that I had been shot in the head three times and buried at Ypres in 1916.

The sated officer was still further astonished when I exclaimed it was all perfectly true as far as it went. “But” said he, “the report is completed” and really he was right, for after a man is buried in the war zone the only thing to be added, if he has lick, to get one, is a wooden cross. The fact was the with many others I had been buried without “benefit of clergy” but Fritz blowing up a mine in advance of our programme, but evidently the military reporter, forgetting that I was a sandgroper did not recon upon the possibility of a resurrection by my scratching my way out and disposed of me in the laconic fashion alluded to. Or perhaps our different viewpoints rendered by resurrection, although a mighty important item in a day’s work to me, to him it was a detail unworthy of mention.

“And what about the three shots?” said the officer. “Well here are two wounds,” said I, “and I ducked for the third” “Jolly well time to, said he, as he folded his papers and returned to consult a brother officer.

Once, after undergoing repairs in a English Hospital I visited London and was promptly roped in by a former Premier of this State. Amongst the subjects we discussed was the proposal to grant a bonus for the production of gold and Bonar Law, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, was being interviewed next day. It was an extremely delicate question, as gold, itself the standard of value, it was feared by great authorities any interference would cause the whole financial edifice of the Empire to collapse. Yet as an ex-member of a mining constituency, I was in a position to say that the bulk of the gold-producing mines in W.A. were on the verge of closing down in consequence of the higher cost of everything, and gold mining was the only industry in the world that could not value its output in sympathy with the cost of its production.

I was very weak being just out of hospital and the tension of meeting so great a man as Bonar Law on such a ticklish subject justified my apprehension. Major O’Kelly, the genial medico at Horseferry-road, had ordered me a little whisky daily but the hotels didn’t open until noon, and the deputation was timed for 11. However, I contrived to get a “dolly” bottle full, and with great caution took a small nip to give me Dutch courage. The bottle and the remainder puzzled me as obviously I could not take it with me lest in my confusion in sorting out notes I [blurred words] the whiskey of the way out of pleading poverty for the mines of West Australia.

In was a dark room, and I spotted a Scotsman’s kilts. “Could you do a nip Jock?” I enquired, touching him on the shoulder. He hesitated to reply, but turning round I saw he had a captain’s stripe on is sleeve, and I felt myself guilty of less majeste. I apologised profusely, but he ended all argument to snatching the bottle and saying, “Mon, we’re a human,” and emptied it in one long draft. I always had the greatest respect for Scotsmen, but the way that man swallowed such a quantity of whisky entitled him to a decoration.

Lord Harris represented South Africa and Sir Newton Moore Australia and it was a hard struggle to convince, the great financial experts. I recall and amusing aftermath. Lord Conliffe, ex-governor of the Bank of England, and Lord Incheape, the great commercial magnate, were particularly hostile each of them writing letters to English newspapers. For political reasons it was not considered prudent for those closely identified with either House of Parliament to reply and so I took up the cudgels. Each of the gentlemen named as is the custom for Lords simply signed himself “Cunliffe” and “Incheape” and in reply I signed myself “Horan” and, wonderful to relate my letter was printed. It was a slashing letter, anyhow, and knocked the bottom out of the gold fetish and so I sent another to knock the sides in also, but I received in return a letter from the editor to call and see him. But I was afraid that editor could not withstand the shock of seeing instead of the scion of a lordly house which he had been for the moment unable to trace in Burke or Debrett, a slouch-hatted Australian digger lurch into his office.

I fancy I got even with one of my Lords before I left England. The big railway strike was on, and Lord Cholmondeley (no less) had volunteered to d porter work. Arriving at Waterloo Station I threw my kit-bag on his trolley with a cheery “Give me a lift, Chumley, old cockalorum” which he did smilingly. I gave him 6d as a tip, but it is fair to say he sent all his tips to the London hospitals. The incident was reported in the newspapers that have a wonderful system of getting the trities. Once in a crowded tram, and wearing my hospital clothing, I stood up for a lady. She declined the proffered sea. Whereon I said “Madam I am already wounded once, but I will consider myself wounded again unless you take this seat.” “Oh how lovely” she replied, and I sat down. That afternoon I thought I must have been communing with the spirits of Conan Doyle when I with millions of others saw the incident details in the London newspapers under the heading, “The Courteous Anzacs.”

I am not surprised the Edinburgh as recorded in the papers, voted “No change” in the licensing laws, and outside of Glasgow Pussyfoot’s mission has been fruitless. I went from Glasgow to Ayr for the special purpose of visiting the “Cottage where Burns was born” as well as Brigg o’ Doon, and within a stone-throw of “Alloway’s Auld Haunted Kirk,” I had a companion, an old constituent from Southern Cross when I had taken from London because he alleged he was a native of Ayr. But it wasn’t until we got there and I bombarded him with questions that he confesses he was only two months old when he left it, and hence-forth he [lines blurred] to interest me excepting when, doubtless for patriotic reasons, he attempted to dilute his liquor with water from Doon and fell into the rushing stream. We narrowly escaped losing half a dozen of the best which were destined as gifts to the different caretakers. I was successful however and in return so enthusiastic were three officials that they turned to a page in the visitors’ book, but which I forbore to sign. It contained three remarkable names—William Morris Hughes, Prime Minister of Australian Commonwealth; Sir) Samuel Hughes, Canadian Minister for Militia; and Judge Hughes, a former candidate for the American Presidency.

When the shells are bursting round you and the shrapnel flying in all directions leaves you untouched you think the world must be pretty large, but when you drop across people at unexpected places you conclude the world is small. Walking through Holyrood Palace, near Edinburgh, I saluted two Australian nurses whom I had no recollection of

ever seeing previously. One of them stepped forward and reminded me I had lent them my motor car at Westonia some years before. They had gone there from Perth in response to the local doctor's telegram for assistance at a mining accident, but on arrival found the doctor had been romancing and there was no accident. Hence they were stranded in the middle of the night, and required transport to Southern Cross. But it was a far cry from there to Holyrood before I first set eyes upon these good people.

When General Sir Ian Hamilton passed his scathing criticisms upon the methods of the Imperial War Office and their practice of sub-editing his despatches, there was much sympathy shown to the literary general and odium thrown upon Whitehall. But there were some occasions when the offic boys at headquarters must have smiled when perusing official documents from the various commanding officers in the field

At one time it was part of my duty to do some writing for an O.C., and I recall that in recommending a decoration for a very brave man I mentioned that he had received recognition "in the South African campaign." "There ain't no 'g' in campaign," snapped the O.C. as he struck out the offending words and wrote on top "BOAR War." Politely I suggested that alteration should be initialled, which he immediately complied with, and so, with many similar "corrections," the document went forth. It was indeed fortunate the person recommended received the honor, but I opine it was as much for the quaintness of the description as for the action itself.

It was close to the ancient battlefield of Crecy, and it would have been difficult to decide whether the recipient was being honoured for killing wild boars in the forest of Crecy or killing Huns in the trenches. That night in camp we laughed as we had just read a purple patch from Chesterton, which, with the editor's permission, I will repeat from memory as a contrast and close this article:—

"Not unlike autumn leaves, red-stained and dust-hued and tattered, they lay there as if swept into a corner. But even as their conquerors wheeled eastward their bugles blew the charge, and the English went through the wood that is called Crecy and stamped it with their seal for the second time in the highest moment of all the secular history of man.

"And all men knew in their hearts that the third Prussian thrust had failed and Christendom was delivered once more.

"The Empire of Blood and Iron rolled slowly back towards the darkness of the northern forests, and the great nations of the west went forward, side by side, as after a long lover's quarrel, went ensigns of Saint Denys and St George."

*West Australian* Saturday September 1, 1923:

#### WONDERFUL AUSTRALIA

BY A. A. HORAN

I was delighted to read Mr Brooks's statement in the "West Australian" of August 24, but was surprised to see a repetition of the annual wheeze association [blurred lines].....and sorrow and all the horrible things the letter S. stands for. Whoever originated that libel has a lot to answer for, but are we not to blame for allowing ourselves to be amused at the expression instead of showing our indignation by promptly knocking down the speaker who utters the words seriously.

All the "Diggers" from the Eastern States were [blurred] surprised at the first view of Perth as they were disappointed on first seeing London. On visiting Perth it is a case of love at first sight, but affection for the great metropolis of the Empire takes time to grow. This is no new discovery for Byron wrote of Don Juan that such a traveller.

"May not think much of London's first appearance,

But ask him what he thinks of it a year hence.

We who have the making of Australia are prone to forget that nature has endowed us with beauties of mountain, river, cave and valley, yet we praise these feature in foreign lands and disregard our own. Every Australian should also be a good Western Australian and just as the people of Sydney are forever reminding visitors of their "beautiful harbour," let us cultivate the habit here of telling everyone about our beautiful river, about our other physical attractions. Residents overlooking Perth water possess a wonderful privilege.

It is said that great Swedish naturalist, Linne, shed tear of admiration when he saw, for the first time, the English gorge in bloom, and to be able to look on the river at dawn, as the writer often has, must challenge sentiments of admiration from all so favoured. Amongst the pleasantest recollection of all-night sittings were the occasions when I found time to stand at a certain window of Parliament House that commanded a view of the river and watch therefrom the dawning of a new day over the Darling Ranges. The river was not water then, but alternately gold, mother of pearl, and silver, with soft light and changing colour, mingling with elfin shadows that called for a Turner's brush or Ruskin's pen to emprise on records as imperishable as the river itself. I was seldom alone, and at least contrived to induce some Government supporters to share my pleasure, and becoming entranced with the view, we did not hear the division bells. But the member for West Perth was dragged out of bed, and, coming late the chamber in pyjamas, saved the government. I hasten to add that this was before the present amicable member

for that constituency was elected, and I would hesitate to play a joke on the former member now, as he is a Judge of the Supreme Court.

But Beauty cannot be enjoyed without health and the unseen values that may unused in the

#### MINERAL WATER OF SOUTH PERTH

can only be measured in millions. This is an asset that has no rival anywhere, the spas of England and the Continent ranking poorly by comparison with the life-giving radio-active properties of these waters. I travelled to New Zealand once, and crawled out of the Rotorua baths uncured, but after a few dips at South Perth I could jump over the Zoo fence. "Diggers" generally, have benefited, and we should sound the praises of these baths far and wide, and so make life a little easier for Hickson and Veronoff.

The seaside resorts of Europe have had millions spent upon their decoration but they cannot buy the bright sand and clear water found in abundance wherever the long wash of the Australian seas brings health and happiness to our people. I am familiar with all the beauty spots of the other States, but you cannot give space even to doubt our own. Then I must content myself by saying I have sailed the "matchless" Rhine, and declare there is more than its match in several Australian States. I have taken the high road on the banks of Loch Lomond and pulled the "gowans line" on the brace of Bonnie Doon, and although these have been celebrated, in song and story—and rightly so—for the want of better, there is no difficulty in standing their equal here. The lakes and rivers of Ireland were easily eclipsed by those of my native land, Tasmania.

We do not uphold our own country as we should, although I will admit that it sometimes does not pay. One day, at a soldiers' club in Piccadilly, I found a magnificent series of large-framed photography of Australian scenery, evidently donated by Government but they were lying a heap in a lumber room with soldiers' kits crowded around in choicest Chesterfieldian, I moved a motion that they be exhibited in the library in place of a group of English hunting pictures with impossible rocking-horse equines following invisible hares. The motion was carried, but I was moved instead of the pictures for that night I received a wire from H.Q. to return to my unit in Belgium where I was urgently wanted. I was satisfied that it was a "frame up" when I landed back and my commanding officer exclaimed: "What the hell brought you back so soon!" There were a number of the nobility on the committees and dukes and "diggers" don't mix. But I think honours were even a year or so later when the great railway strike was on and Lord Cholmondeley volunteered as porter on the Waterloo platform. Arriving there by special train, I passed him my heavy kitbags to carry. The old gentleman smiled through his sweat, wheeling them along, and I only abbreviated his own name when I said: "Here Chum, buy herself a drink." It is only fair to add that his lordship donated his tips, amounting to several pounds each day, to the London Hospital. That Australia is deficient in

#### HISTORICAL INTEREST

is often advanced, but then the best countries like the best woman, have no past and yet we are very old, for is my boyhood's days in Tasmania I met a notable woman who was all past and no future for she was the last survivor of her race. (She died in 1876.) Her name was Queen Trucaimi and I recall what a "merrie monarch" she was, for no queen ever laughed louder. Her robe of state, a compulsory gift of the Government, resembled Harry Lauder's kilts, and, maybe, she was glad because she was freed from her worrying subjects for they were all long since dead. We have different points of view, but probably the Scientific Congress in Sydney would give the wealth of Tutankhamun's tomb to penetrate the mystery of her race that roamed the wilds of Australia ages before the cave man appeared in Britain.

But we have traces of higher mortals in Australia. At the London University, I hear, the great professor, Sir Arthur Keith, lectured on the Talgai skull from Queensland and, amongst his deductions, was one that the original Garden of Eden was on the Darling Downs. Bearing in mind David Christie Murray's beautiful description of the downs and having visited other supposed sites as well, I would sooner vote for the Australian.

There is a small stream at Middle Swan and when the day's surcease of toil permitted I often watched the platypus gambolling on the sand and in the pools sheltered by growing grasstrees. These interesting little creatures, as full of paradoxes as a book of Chesterton, are one of the world's oldest and greatest wonders of animal life, while the common blackboy, surviving now only in Australia, became extinct in other parts of the world millions of years ago, before the Pas-de-Calais had placed England on the map or the Alps had raised their snowy crests from the matrix of creation.