

REGINALD JOHN BURCHELL

1883 - 1955



MP (Fremantle, WA) • ALP/NAT, 1913–1922

Born in 1883 in Adelaide, Reginald Burchell moved to Western Australia (as a teenager) where he worked as a railwayman and served for a time in the local militia.

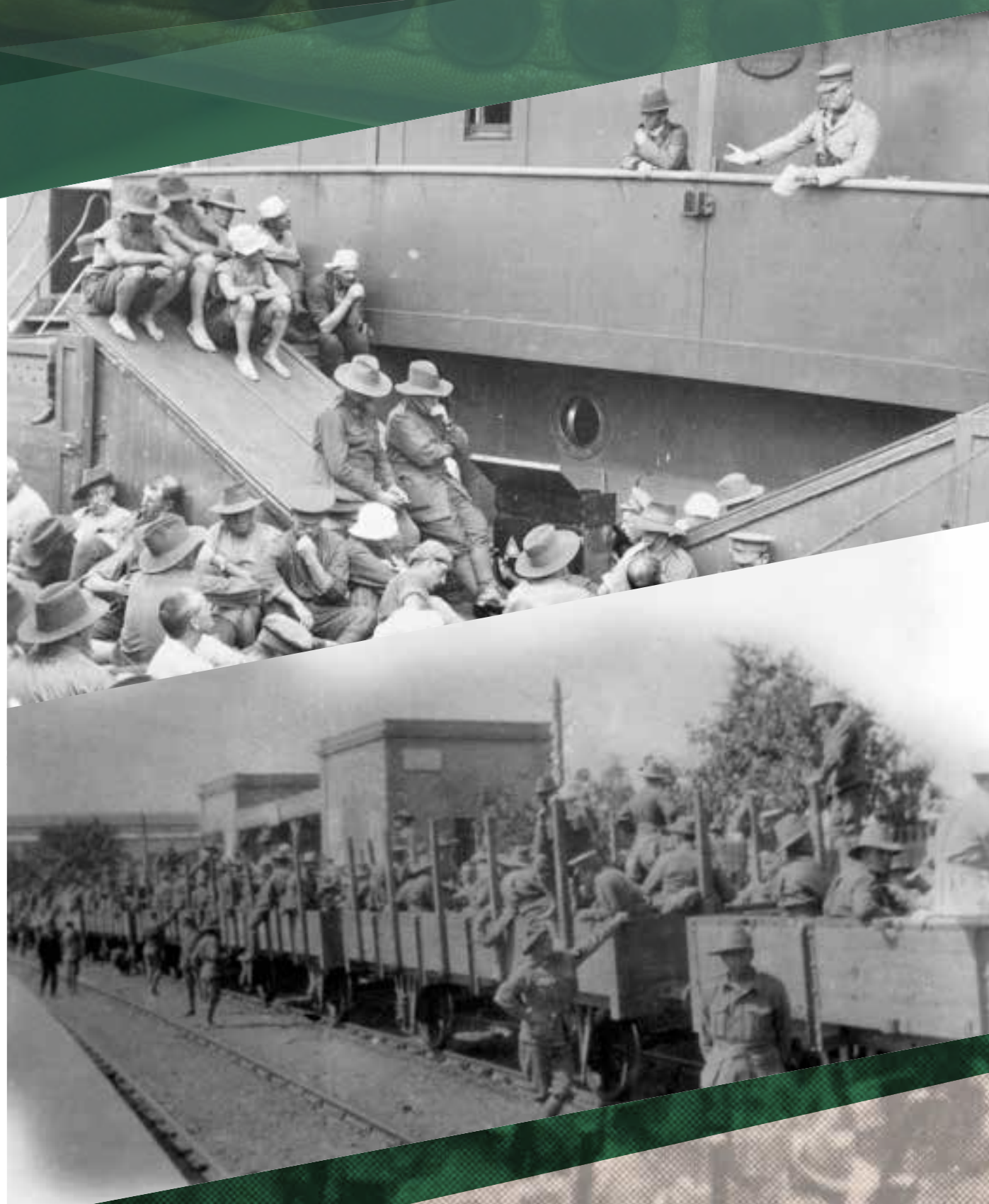
Having stood unsuccessfully for the WA Legislative Assembly seat of Claremont in 1911, Burchell was elected to the House of Representatives in 1913 as a member of the Labor Party. Expelled from that party due to his position on conscription, Burchell retained his Fremantle seat as a Nationalist at the 1917 election and again in 1919, remaining in the federal parliament until his retirement from politics in 1922.

Burchell enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in January 1917, embarking for France in May 1917 where he served as a lieutenant with the 4th Broad Gauge Railway Operating Company.

In 1918 Burchell was awarded the Military Cross for 'conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in controlling railway operations' involved in the evacuation of wounded, troops and rolling stock from the Etricourt-Roisel-Chaulnes sections (*London Gazette*, 26 July 1918). The citation notes that Burchell 'was continuously on duty for three days and nights and his care and watchfulness in handling the traffic with limited facilities rendered possible a successful evacuation, and saved engines and rolling stock from falling into the enemy's hands'.

Burchell continued to serve in the AIF until June 1919, reaching the rank of acting lieutenant colonel.

After leaving Parliament, Burchell worked as a manager with various companies including Hoadleys Chocolates, the MGM Film Company and Radio Interest Ltd. He retired in 1945 and died in Mosman, NSW, in 1955.



Parliamentary Library 2015

Sources:

- The Federal Electorate of Fremantle: a History since 1901, David Black, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
- The Parliamentary Handbook, Parliament of Australia
- Nathan Church, Hannah Gobbett, Martin Lumb and Rob Lundie, Commonwealth Members of Parliament who have served in war: Colonial wars and the First World War, Parliamentary Library Research Paper, September 2014



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- W.A.S Dunlop, 1914, Australian Imperial Force's 2nd Infantry Brigade marching through Bourke Street, Melbourne, Friday, 25th September 1914, National Library of Australia, nla.pic-vn4982243
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