

STANLEY MELBOURNE BRUCE

1883 - 1967



MP (Flinders, VIC), NAT/UAP, 1918–1929 • 1931–1933

Born in 1883, in Melbourne, Victoria, Stanley Bruce—Australia's 8th Prime Minister—was one of two First World War veterans to become Prime Minister (the other being Earle Page who first entered Parliament in 1919).

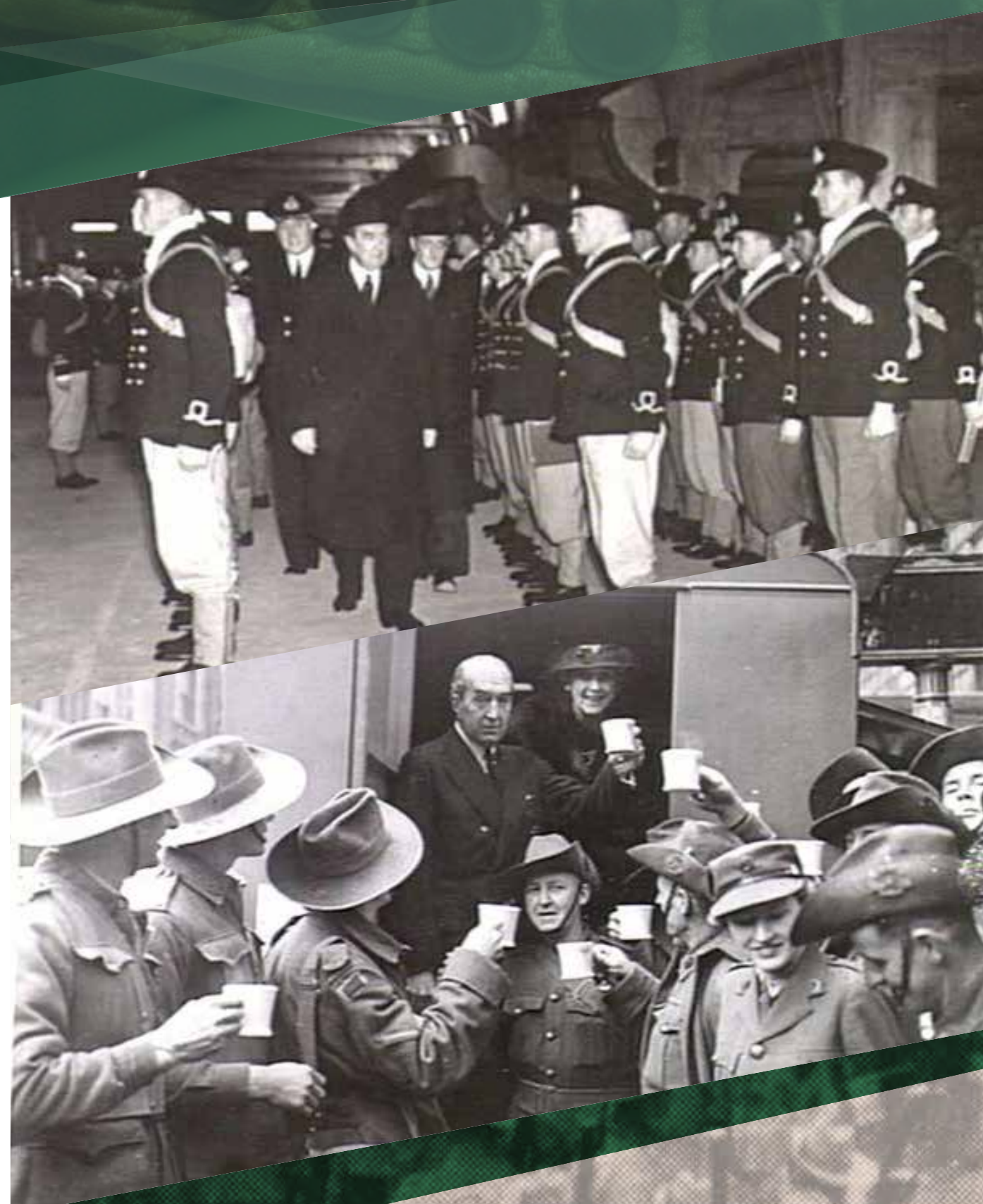
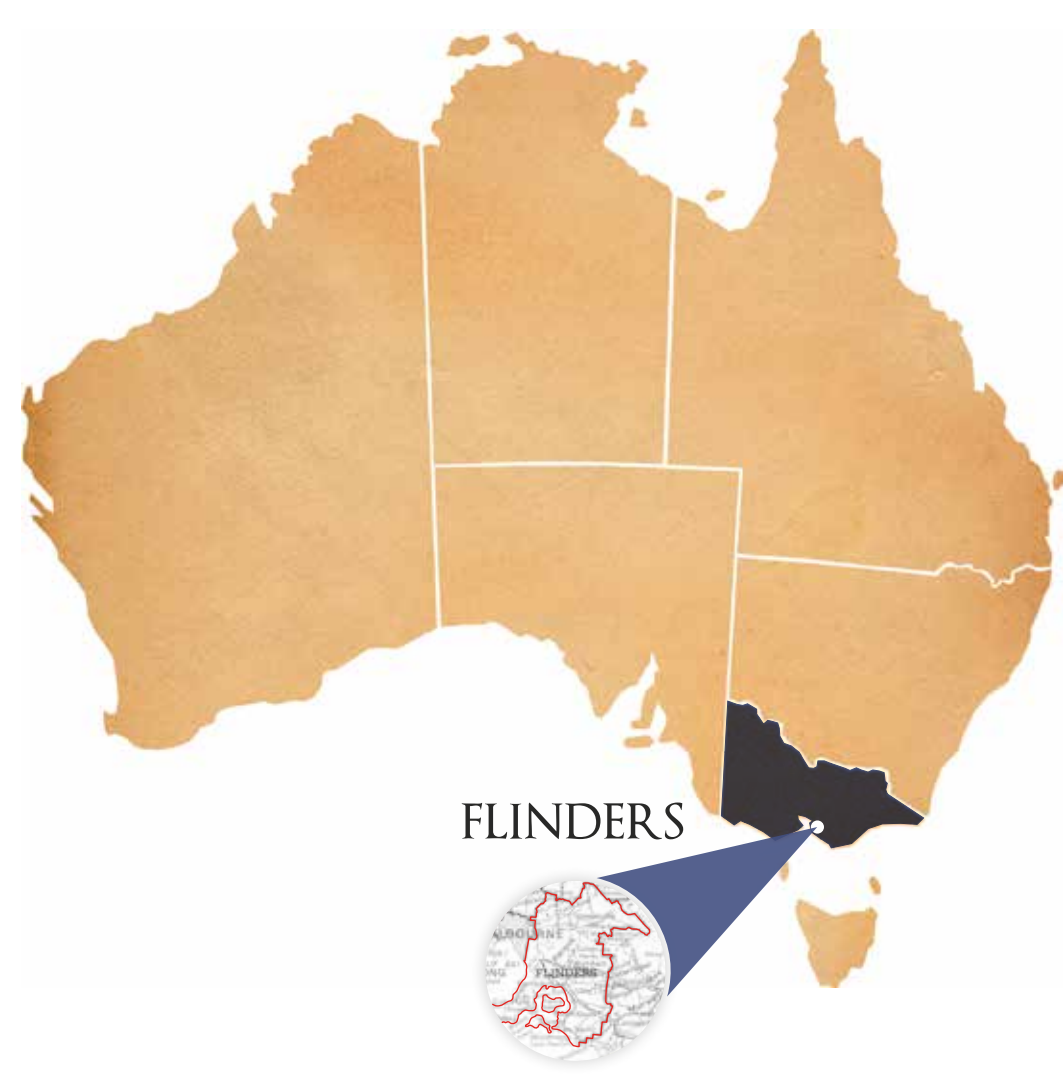
A graduate of Cambridge, Bruce studied law and was admitted to the Bar in England before joining the London office of his family's firm as Acting Chairman. In January 1915 Bruce was commissioned in the Worcester Regiment and quickly seconded to the Royal Fusiliers as a temporary captain. He was part of the Gallipoli campaign and was wounded at Cape Helles on 3 June 1915. Bruce received the Military Cross for his efforts at Suvla Bay. In October 1915, Bruce was again wounded and this time invalided back to England. He would later receive the French Croix de Guerre avec Palme for his battalion's role in supporting French troops.

Bruce returned to his family firm, and travelled back to Australia in early 1917 to take over as General Manager (his brother having left to join the British forces). He was discharged from the military in June 1917.

Bruce was elected to Parliament as a Nationalist in a by-election for the seat of Flinders in May 1918 and was re-elected in 1919 despite having been abroad for six months. (Bruce would cease splitting his time between the firm's offices in England and Australia only when he became Treasurer in December 1921.) Bruce was commissioned as Prime Minister on February 1923 after forming a coalition with the Country Party. He was Prime Minister until the landslide Labor victory at the 1929 election. At this election, Bruce became the first sitting Prime Minister to lose his seat.

Bruce returned to Parliament in 1931 and held the seat of Flinders until his resignation in October 1933 to become the High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, a position he held until 1945. He then served as chairman of the World Food Council of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the newly created United Nations from 1946–51. His last public office was as the first Chancellor of the Australian National University, a post he held until 1961.

Bruce remained in the United Kingdom until his death in 1967 and rarely returned to Australia. He was the only Australian ever raised to the peerage, and was created Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, an honour he received in 1947.



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Sources:

- The Australian Dictionary of Biography
- Australia's Prime Ministers, National Archives of Australia website
- 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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