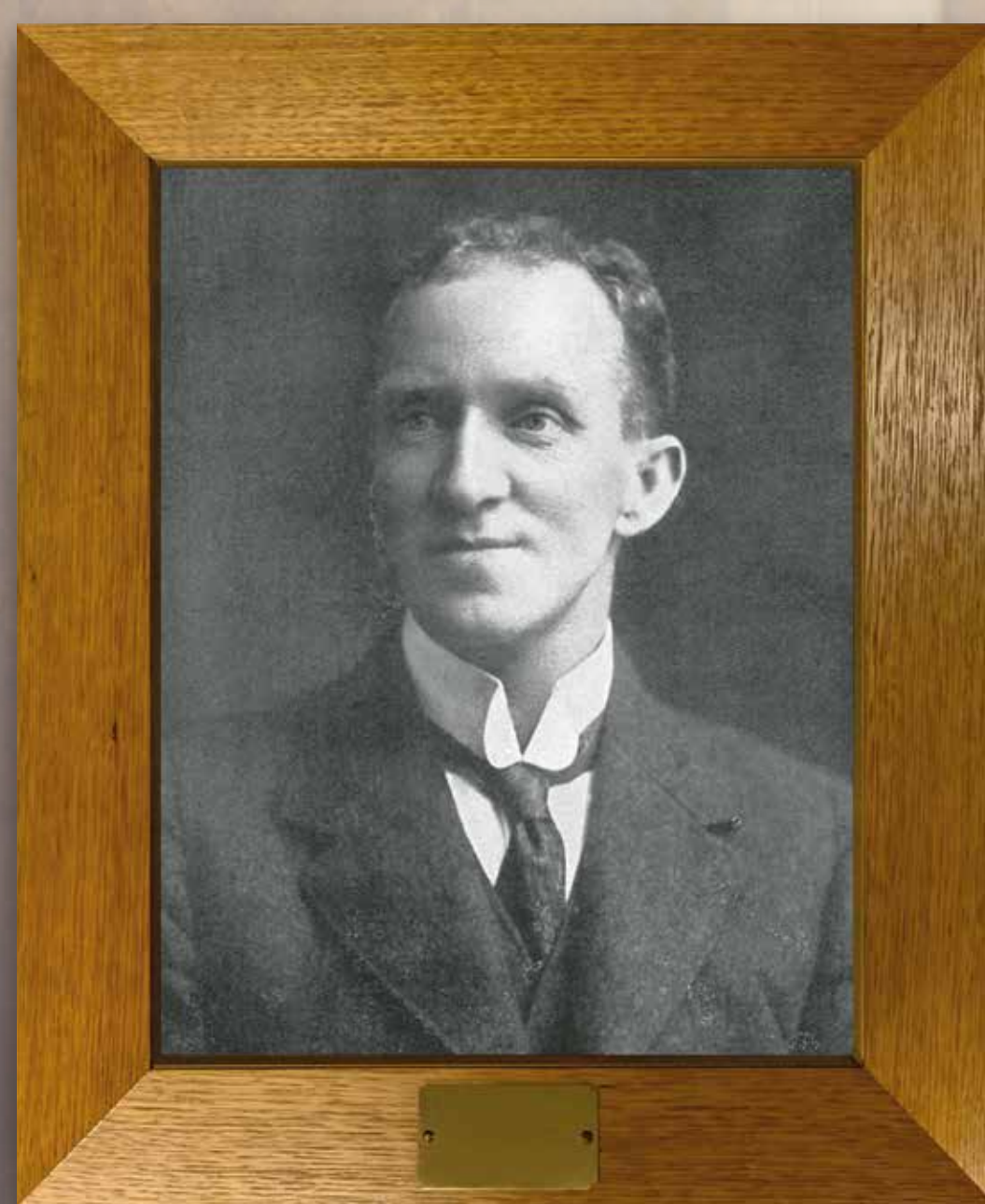


# EDWARD ERNEST HEITMANN

1878 - 1934



MP (Kalgoorlie, WA) • NAT, 1917–1919

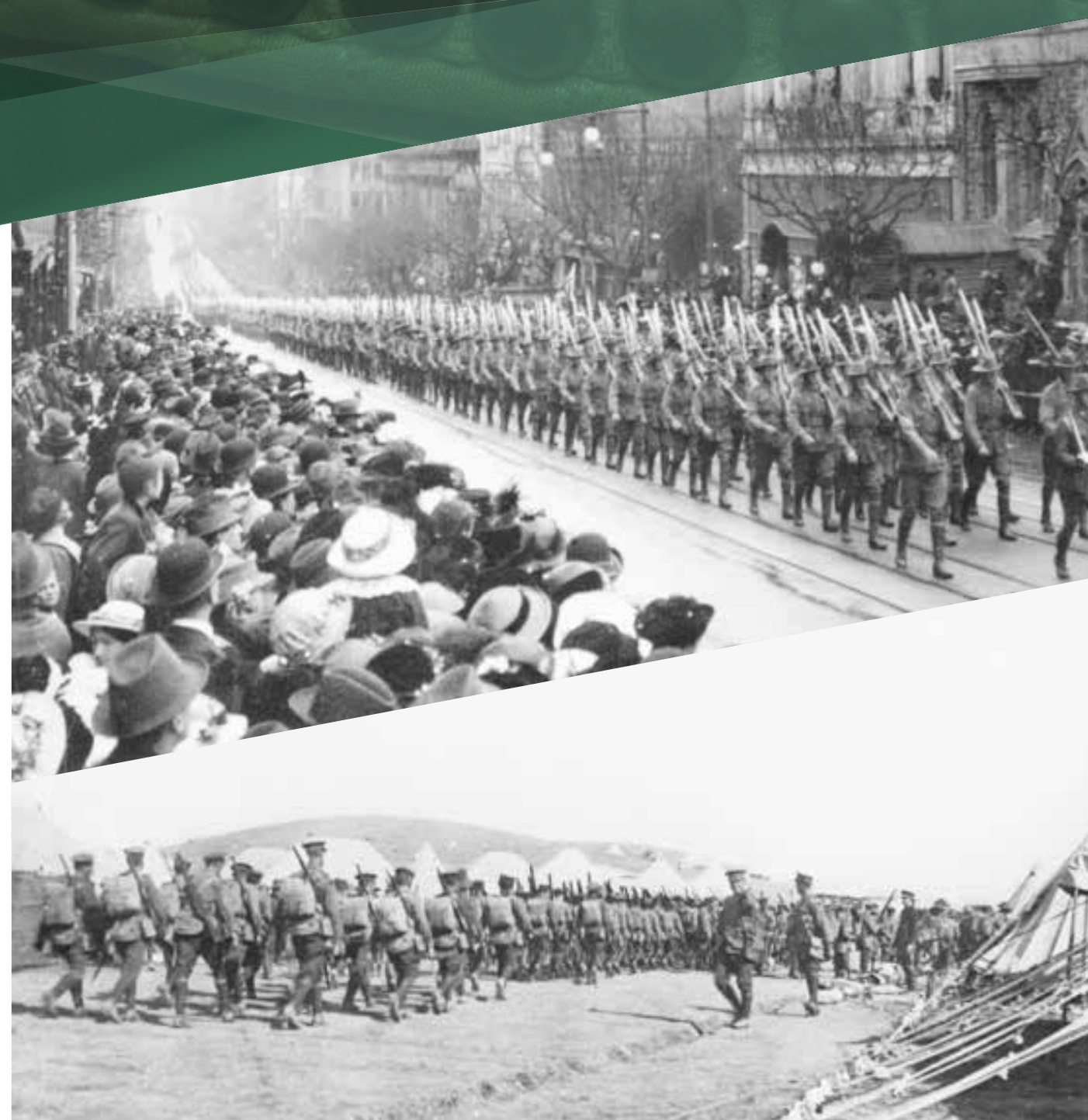
Born in 1878 in the Victorian town of Bendigo, Edward Heitmann began mining at an early age, qualifying as an engine driver and eventually moving to Western Australia to work on the Murchison goldfields. Active in the labour movement, Heitmann became the organising Secretary of the Australian Workers Union and, in 1913, the editor of the *Kalgoorlie Express*.

Heitmann served in the Western Australian Legislative Assembly for the seats of Geraldton (1904 to 1913) and Cue (1914 to 1917) as a member of the Labor Party. He resigned from the Legislative Assembly to successfully contest the federal seat of Kalgoorlie in May 1917 as a Nationalist, and was subsequently expelled from the Western Australian Labor Party for his pro-conscription views.

Following his election to federal Parliament, Edward Heitmann enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in April 1918 as a private in the 10th General (Victorian) Reinforcements at the age of 39 years. The South Australian *Daily Herald* greeted his enlistment with the ungracious headline: 'AT LAST: "NATIONAL" CONSCRIPTIONIST REALISES HIS DUTY'. However, according to the *Graphic of Australia* (a Melbourne newspaper) this was his fourth attempt to be found fit for service and, 'as a married man with a family of five children, has set a fine example in his determined effort to get into khaki ... His example might well shame some of the slackers who are at present disgracing good British names, into visiting the recruiting office.' The West Australian Minister for Industries lamented that although 'Mr. Heitmann has heard the call of the Empire, the State can ill-afford to lose the services of one who has been so vigorous in his advocacy of this State's claims and so persistent in watching Western Australian interests in the East'.

Heitmann was appointed Controller of Transport during the demobilization of the AIF. He embarked for overseas service on HMAT *Barambah* on 31 August 1918, writing in a letter to the Goldfields National Labour Party: 'I glory in the honour of being the representative of a people who have given an expression of their love of Australia and loyalty to the British Empire, as have the majority of the people of the Kalgoorlie Division'. However, hostilities ended before Heitmann could see active service, and he returned to Australia five months later.

Defeated at the 1919 federal election, Heitmann worked in advertising, farmed and ran an unsuccessful campaign for the Victorian state election for the seat of Eaglehawk. He died in 1934.



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