

# HATTIL (HARRY) SPENCER FOLL

1890 - 1977



Senator (QLD) • NAT/UAP, 1917–1947

Born in 1890 in London, England Hattil (Harry) Foll emigrated to Queensland in 1909, where he worked as a station-hand, bookkeeper, journalist and clerk with the Queensland Commissioner for Railways.

Harry Foll enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in August 1914, sailing to Egypt with the 3rd Brigade, Australian Field Artillery. He landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and was wounded in the head and leg in May 1915 at Shrapnel Gully. Rejoining his unit in July, Foll was invalided from Gallipoli in August. He returned to Australia and was discharged as medically unfit in February 1916.

Foll found employment as private secretary to John Adamson (Queensland MP and secretary for railways) and held office in the Returned Soldiers' and Patriots' National Political League. In May 1917 he was elected as a Senator for Queensland for the Nationalists at the age of 26, holding the record for the youngest senator until Bill O'Chee in 1990.

Foll remained in the Senate until 1947. During his time in Parliament he represented the interests of returned servicemen and rural and remote communities alongside many other issues. He served as a member of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee and on the committees of Public Works and Public Accounts. In 1937 he joined the Lyons ministry as Minister for Repatriation and Minister in Charge of War Service Homes, and subsequently held several other portfolios including health, information and the interior. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Foll delivered in November 1939 a ministerial statement on the war setting out arrangements for control of the defence forces and announcing the creation of a War Cabinet and an Economic Cabinet.

In 1942, while on the backbench after John Curtin replaced Robert Menzies as Prime Minister, Foll served as a captain in the Volunteer Defence Corps.

Foll lost endorsement from the Queensland People's (Liberal) Party to Annabelle Rankin prior to the 1946 election and left the Senate at the end of his term in June 1947. Upon his retirement from politics, Foll bought a sheep grazing property near Armidale, NSW where he lived until his retirement to Port Macquarie in 1957. After his death in 1977, the *Port Macquarie News* described Foll as the 'last surviving member of the 1917 Federal Parliament and a highly respected resident of Port Macquarie for the past 20 years'.



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#### Sources:

- The Australian Dictionary of Biography
- The Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate (online edition)
- 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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