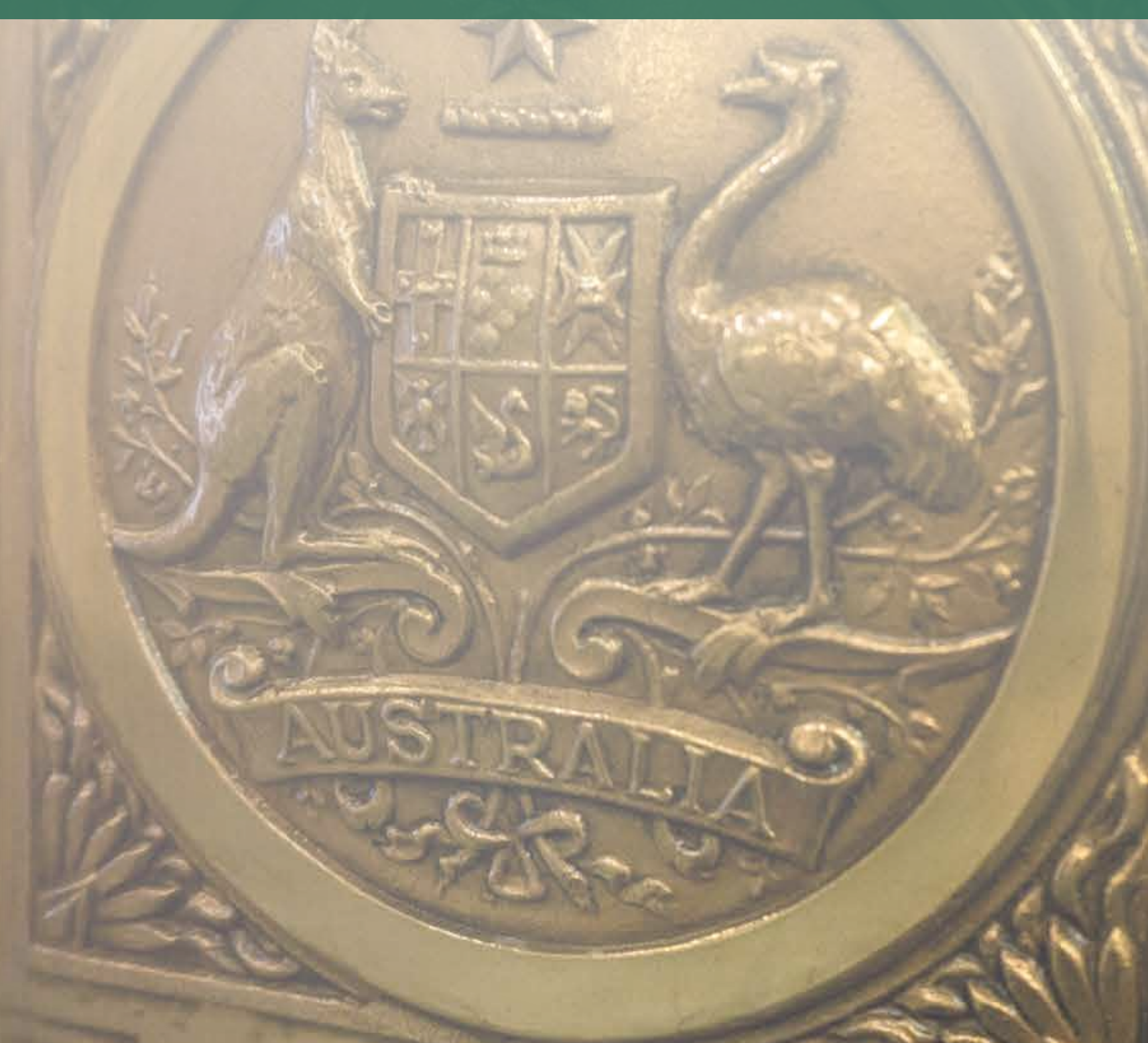


# WILLIAM MONTGOMERIE FLEMING

1874 - 1961



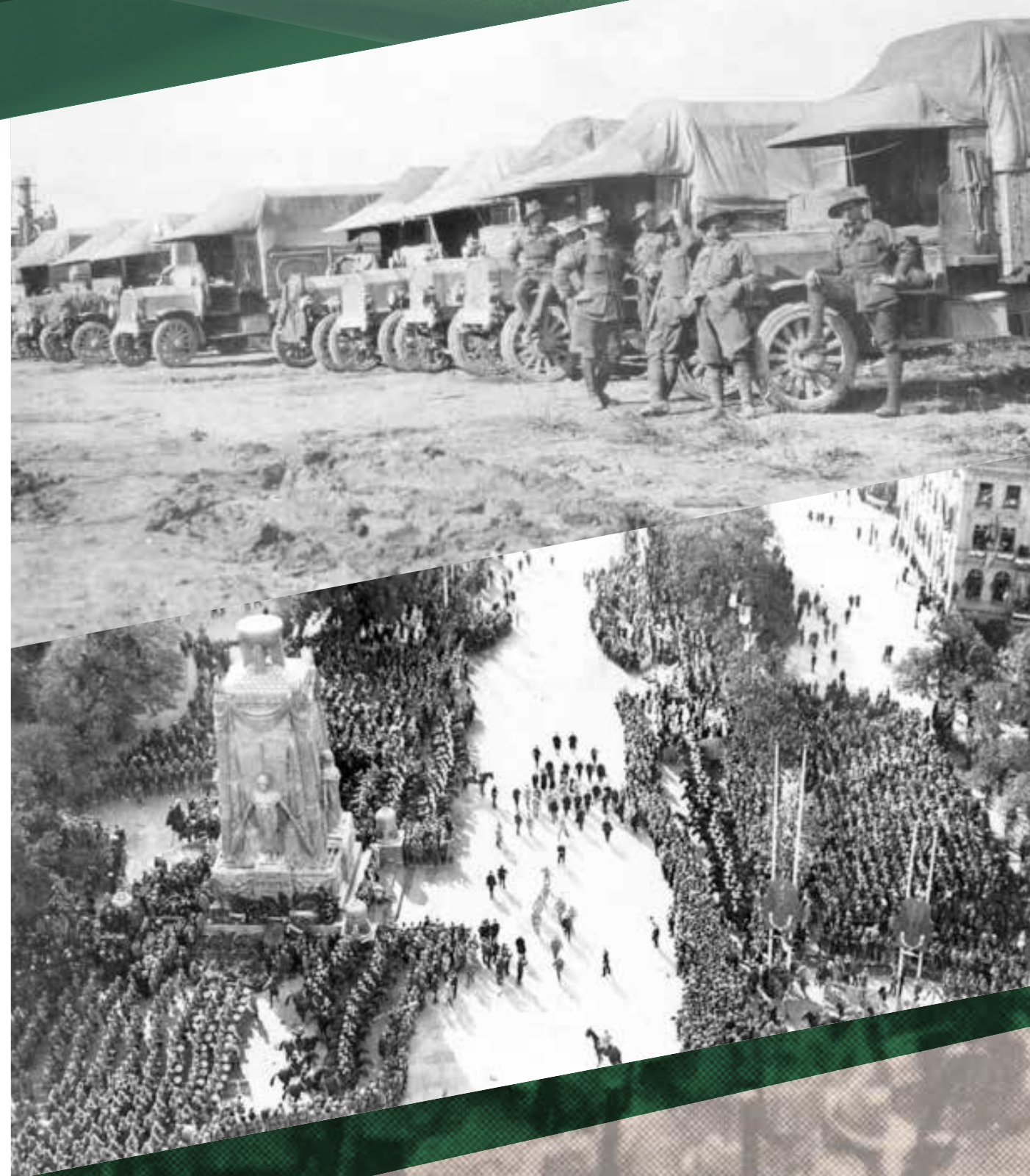
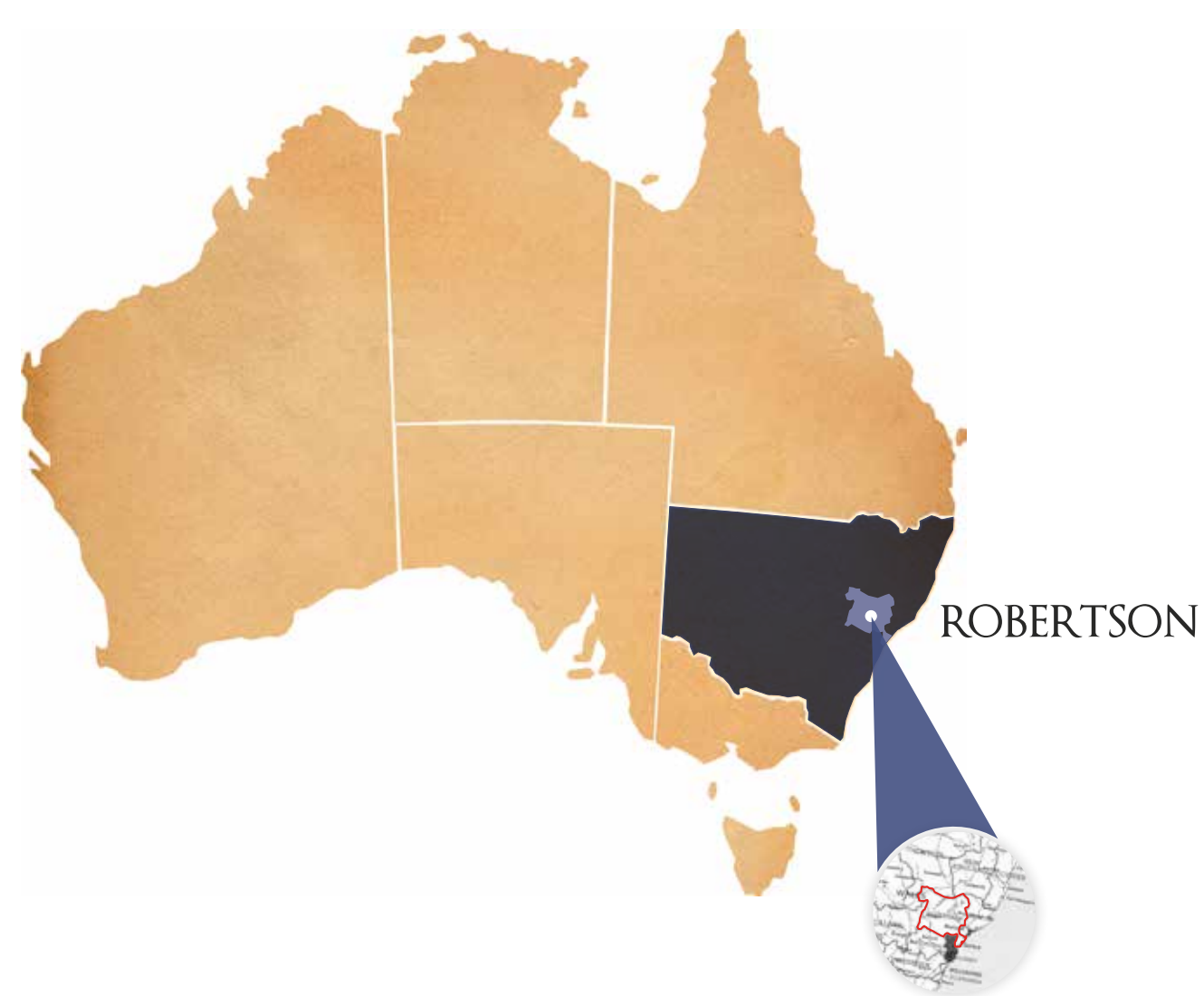
MP (Robertson, NSW) • LIB/NAT/NAT&FARMERS/CP, 1913–1922

Born in 1874 at Avon Plains in the Wimmera district of Victoria, William Fleming was a grazier and journalist before he began his political career as the Member for the NSW Legislative Assembly seat of Robertson (Upper Hunter) in 1901. At age 27, and nicknamed 'the Kid', he was then the youngest member of the Legislative Assembly.

Fleming resigned his state seat in 1910 to stand for federal Parliament. In 1913, he won the seat of Robertson from the sitting Labor Party member WJ Johnson. Feeling duty-bound to serve in the war after Johnson was killed fighting in France, Fleming enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 6 October 1916 while still a member of the House of Representatives. He served as a driver in the Australian Army Service Corps Training Depot in England, transporting reinforcements across to France. Fleming was promoted to sergeant but, having been gassed at Péronne in France, he was demobilised in December 1918.

Fleming returned to Australia and to the federal Parliament, serving as the Member for Robertson until his defeat at the 1922 election. Offered the treasury portfolio by Prime Minister Billy Hughes in 1921, he famously retorted 'I would not work under [him] if he would give me Sydney'. Fleming stood unsuccessfully as a candidate in three elections for the House of Representatives and once for the Senate.

Following his retirement Fleming returned to writing, authoring a number of children's story books and writing for a number of newspapers including the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Bulletin* and *Pastoral Review*. He also made radio broadcasts and his novel *Broad Acres* (1939) was serialised by the Australian Broadcasting Commission. Fleming died in 1961 at Terrigal, NSW.



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#### Sources:

- The Australian Dictionary of Biography
- 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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