

Matthew BAIRD

Matthew Baird was born in Learmonth in 1879. He was educated at the local state school before returning to assist his father on the farm. At the outbreak of the Boer War, Baird enlisted and served with distinction, gaining both the Rhodesian and Cape Colony clasps.

Upon his return to Australia, Baird continued his education and matriculated in 1904. He was articled to his brother, a practising solicitor in Ballarat, passed his final law exam in 1910 and joined his brother's firm. Baird was also very interested in politics and was elected to the Ballarat West seat in 1911. He held that seat until 1927. He was also widely involved in local Ballarat political, social and religious life.

Enlisting in April 1915, Baird was made a major of the 23rd Battalion and embarked for Egypt on HMAT *Euripides* in May 1915. By December 1915, Baird was admitted to hospital in Lemnos suffering from asthma and rheumatism, as well as fever and eventually diagnosed with nephritis. He was then invalided back to Australia in January 1916.

Baird then went on to contribute significantly to political life in Victoria, as Minister of Education, Chief Secretary, Minister for Health and Minister for Labour in the Lawson ministry. In 1928, he contested the Ballarat seat in the Federal election, as a Nationalist. Matthew Baird passed away after ongoing illness on 15 January 1930.



Group portrait of officers of the 23rd Battalion taken on board HMAT *Euripides* en route to Egypt:

2nd row; Lt Arthur Herbert Kennedy (later Captain, died of illness 28 June 1916); Captain (Capt) George Hodges Knox (later Lieutenant-Colonel, CMG); Lieutenant-Colonel George Frederick Morton (Commanding Officer); Lt Eric Thomas Brind (later Major, killed in action 28 July 1916); **Capt Matthew Baird (later Major);** Capt William Brazenor (later Lieutenant-Colonel, DSO and Bar); un-named.