

Plaque next to sculpture

Brigadier Sir Murray W. J. Bouchier CMG, DSO, VD

Murray Bouchier was born of 4th April 1881 at Potilla near Ballarat before moving to a property near Strathmerton called "Woodland Park" where he spent his early years.

- He served in the Militia from 1901 and was promoted to Lieutenant with the 15th Light Horse in WWI and enlisted in the 4th Light Horse on 25th August 1914.
- His service in WWI with the 4th Light Horse Regiment would span across the Egypt, Sinai, Gallipoli, Palestine and Syrian campaigns where the 4th fought with distinction from 1914 to 1919.
- In 1917 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in command of the 4th Light Horse Regiment.
- On the 31st October 1917, during the historic Battle of Beersheba, he led the 4th Regiment, many of them from his own district, alongside his comrades of the 12th Light Horse, at full gallop over two miles (3.2 km) whilst being fired upon by Turkish gunners. They rode into the Turkish trenches through machine guns and on for a further two miles into Beersheba to capture the town and vital water wells before the Turks could destroy them. They were responsible for saving 15 of the 17 wells intact, securing the town and capturing over 700 men. This action established the Australian Imperial Forces (A. I. F.) vital foothold within the region and their success marked the beginning of the end of the war in the Middle East.
- He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. As the Commanding Officer he led his Regiment into action on the most gallant and capable manner. By his skilful handling of the Regiment and by his magnificent example of courage and determination he was very largely instrumental in the success of the attack and capture of the objective. Through this action he also earned the name "Bouchier of Beersheba".
- On the 30th September 1918 in the final advance on Damascus, he commanded "Bouchier's Force", comprised of the 4th and 12th Light Horse Regiments and supported by the Notts Battery, Royal Horse Artillery (RHA) and "A" Battery, Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) and captured the city held by 2500 Turks armed with machine guns.
- He was Mentioned in Despatches three times and in June 1919 was appointed Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG). His A.I.F. appointment ended in October 1919.
- When the war ended, he returned to the family farm at Strathmerton, later purchasing farming land at Katandra which he called "Kuneitra" and continued his interest in the Light Horse, commanding the 5th Cavalry Brigade, a Melbourne Headquarters unit.
- In 1920 he was elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly (MLA) as the member for Goulburn Valley. Later becoming Minister for agriculture and Markets (1924 – 27), Leader of the Country Party (now National Party) and Deputy premier (1933 – 35).
- During his parliamentary career he was a fierce supporter of returned soldiers and the plight of farmers and people in country areas. He was instrumental in establishing the Soldier Settlement Scheme that contributed to the development of regional Victoria and its agricultural production as well as supporting returned soldiers.
- He was awarded the Voluntary Decoration (VD) for his long and meritorious service as a part time Commissioned Officer.
- On 1st November 1931, he was awarded the rank of Brigadier.
- In 1936 he resigned from Parliament and was appointed Agent General for Victoria in London, England. He died in London on 16 December 1937 at age 56 years, leaving behind his wife Minona, two sons and a daughter.

- For his immense contribution to military service, parliamentary service and community service he was awarded a knighthood posthumously (1938).
- Brigadier Sir Murray Bouchier was laid to rest at the Shepparton Public Cemetery with his grave located on "Bouchier Court", alongside his wife.