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978-1-107-00950-9 - *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence*

John Connor

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ANZAC AND EMPIRE
GEORGE FOSTER PEARCE AND THE
FOUNDATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE

Anzac and Empire is the remarkable story of George Foster Pearce – a carpenter who became one of Australia’s most influential politicians, and the man central to how Australia planned for, and fought in, the First World War.

The nation’s longest-serving defence minister – holding the portfolio before, during and after the Great War – Pearce saw no contradiction in being both a fierce Australian nationalist, and also a loyal subject of the British Empire.

Pearce was almost single-handedly responsible for creating the key institutions of Australia’s modern defence organisation: the Royal Australian Navy, the Royal Military College, Duntroon and the Royal Australian Air Force. Controversially, when he saw the rising military threat from Japan in the early 1930s, it was his belief in a White Australia and conscription that led to rearmament, preparing Australia to defend itself in its darkest hour.

Anzac and Empire is the first full-length biography of this extraordinary Australian. Written by one of Australia’s leading military historians, this book shows that to understand Australia in the Great War, you must understand the man behind it.

John Connor is Senior Lecturer in History, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra.

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To my mother Claire Connor (née Boyles)
and my father Bryne Connor

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