

Leslie Le Souëf

1900 - 1996



Leslie Le Souëf was born in Perth on 28 January 1900, the son of Ernest Albert Le Souëf, the designer and director of the Zoo in Perth, and great-grandson of William Le Souëf who had arrived in Melbourne in 1838, four years after its foundation. His mother was Ellen Hagenauer, daughter of a Moravian missionary. Both grandfathers, Le Souëf and Hagenauer, spent much effort on the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, trying to prevent their extermination by providing work on station properties. His father's cousin, General Sir Charles Ryan, became a surgeon in Melbourne after having spent some time with the Turkish Army in the Plevna campaign against the Russians. After education in Perth, he did the first year of medical studies there, and completed his medical training in Melbourne, winning honours and the A M White Scholarship of Trinity College as well as an athletic blue for shot putting and throwing the hammer.

After junior appointments in Melbourne he went to London and was house surgeon to the West London Hospital, clinical assistant at St Peter's and RSO at St Mark's at a time when Clifford Naunton Morgan FRCS (qv *Lives* 1983-90) was a promising registrar. Leslie had been a keen officer in the Militia, and was CO of the 13th Field Ambulance when he was commissioned at the outbreak of the second world war to raise the 2/7th Field Ambulance of the 6th Australian Division in 1940. He took them to Libya, Greece and Crete where he was appointed OBE (Mil) and twice mentioned in despatches. It was in Crete that he was captured, spending the next four years as a POW in Germany. On liberation he was appointed colonel and later DDMS Western Command, and became the first honorary colonel in the RAMC in 1957.

After the war he returned to become consultant surgeon to the Royal Perth Hospital where he set up a plastic and maxillofacial unit. He wrote a book of reminiscences, *To war without a gun*, published in 1980, of which a manuscript is preserved in the Imperial War Museum in London.

After retirement he continued his interests in veterinary anatomy and pathology, and was honorary prosecutor to the Western Australian Zoological Gardens. He was state examiner and member of the Nursing Registration Board, co-founder and chairman of the Anti-Cancer Campaign of Western Australia 1956-1959 and registrar of the Cancer Registry.

He married in 1947 Marjorie Edna Learmonth (née Chapple), widow of Wing Commander Charles Learmonth DFC and Bar, after whom the Learmonth Air Strip in Western Australia was named.

He died on 28 December 1996.

Credit: Plarr's Lives of the Fellows