

LEY

Cyril Edwin Halse

Service No: 6851



Name: Cyril Edwin Halse Ley

Service Number: 6851

Date of Enlistment: 8/9/1916

Age at Enlistment: 35 years 1 month

Civil Occupation: Business Manager

Medals, Honors, Awards: British War Medal

Height: 5 feet 11 inches (180 cm)

Weight: 168 pounds (76 kg)

Chest Measurement: 36-38 inches

Complexion: Fresh

Eye Colour: Brown

Hair Colour: Brown

Father: Edwin Ley

Mother: Ellen Isabella Ley (nee Stone)

Siblings: Elma Louisa Grace born 1869, John Morgan born 1870, Mary born 1884

Married: Hilda Jean Ley

Children: Leuan Chaswin Morgan born 1908, Rona Nelma born 1910, Nelma Halse born 1914



Courtesy Geoffrey Ley

Family History

Edwin Ley, Cyril's father, was the son of Lieutenant Colonel John Morgan Ley of the East India Service. Edwin married Henrietta Mott at the Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire, in 1868, and they had two children together: Elma Louisa Grace, born 1869, and John Morgan, born 1870, before Henrietta died in 1874, aged 28.

After Henrietta's death, Edwin emigrated to Western Australia, arriving in 1877. He worked as a clerk in the Audit Department in 1879 and was later Registrar in the Colonial Secretary's Office.

He married Ellen Isabella Stone in 1880, two weeks before the children from his first marriage arrived in Australia aboard the *Charlotte Padbury*. Ellen was the daughter of George Frederick Stone, who arrived at the Swan River Colony in 1831 to become a partner to his older brother, Alfred Hawes Stone, a solicitor. Ellen was a well-to-do woman in Western Australian society, and Edwin's marriage to her meant that he became a well-connected man.

Edwin was appointed a notary public in 1833, acting sheriff in 1834, (confirmed in 1839), Registrar of Births, Deaths, Marriages in 1841 and Chairman of the Board of Works in 1842. His life of public service continued with his appointment to the Education Committee in 1846. Edwin took the first systematic census of the colony in 1848 and, in 1851, was appointed Inspector of Weights and Measures.

By 1853, he was the Crown Solicitor, a position held until he was appointed Advocate General in 1859. The title of this position changed to Attorney General in 1861, with Edwin maintaining the position until he retired due to chronic ill health in 1870.

Edwin died in August 1875.

Life Story

Cyril Edwin Halse Ley was born in 1881, the first child of Edwin and Ellen Ley. He was born into a prominent West Australian family and had a privileged education, learning to play violin and piano. After leaving school, Cyril began working for the Union Bank and was posted to York.

While working in York, Cyril met Hilda Edwards, daughter of Charles Edwards, a successful businessman and landowner in York. Cyril and Hilda were married in 1905 and had three children together; Leuan Chaswin Morgan, Rona Nelma and Nelma Halse.

Cyril, a keen musician, was responsible for a number of concerts in York. In 1910, he conducted the choir during the Easter services at the Anglican Church. Cyril also helped to organise a concert and entertainment on the evening of Coronation Day in 1911, and he was involved in the formation of the York Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Club.



Courtesy Geoffrey
Ley

Throughout the next few years, Cyril was involved in many productions and entertainments, with the profits being donated to various causes, such as the Ambulance Fund, the Anglican Church Building Fund, the York Brass Band, the Red Cross and The Belgian Relief Fund, which received 230 pounds from the proceeds of an entertainment held at the York Town Hall on the 26th May 1915. He also donated a spinning wheel to the York Spinning Guild where members busy producing garments such as chest protectors, gloves, socks and balaclavas for the men at the Front.

Cyril enlisted on the 8th September 1916 and left Australian soil for the final time at Fremantle on the 9th November 1916. He arrived in England on the 10th January 1917 and began training for overseas service.

Cyril became very ill during the freezing winter months and was admitted to Fargo Military Hospital with influenza on the 1st February 1917. He died of bronchitis, worsened by influenza, on the 11th February 1917 and was buried in Durrington Cemetery. He never saw active service.



Courtesy Geoffrey Ley

Cyril's youngest daughter, Nelma, was only three years of age when her father died. Hilda and the three children continued to live at York, firstly at "Hartleap" then "Fernleigh" – both farms owned by the Edwards family.

In the early 1940's, Hilda, Rona and Nelma moved to 538 Great Eastern Highway, Greenmount. Both Leuan and Nelma enlisted in World War Two – Leuan in the Civilian Military Forces and Nelma in the R.A.A.F.

By 1958, Hilda and Nelma were still listed on the electoral roll as living at Great Eastern Highway, Greenmount. Rona was enrolled under her married name at the same address as her mother and sister. Hilda died in 1960, but the girls continued to live at the home in Greenmount.

Acknowledgements

The following people and organisations helped with the research to compile this booklet.

Harvey, Heather
Ley, Geoff
Ley, John

Silhouette artwork photograph courtesy Geoff Ley

References

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