

**AIR COMMODORE DENIS AYMARD WILSON (1900-1996). C.B.E., A.F.C., M.R.C.S.,
L.R.C.P., F.F.R., F.R.C.R., D.M.R.E. (Cantab.), D.M.R.**

Radiological Expert on the Nuclear Weapons Programme.

Denis Wilson (1900-1996) [Epsom College 1914-1920] was the son of Dr Daniel Wilson of Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire, and from Epsom College where he was a prefect, entered the Middlesex Hospital, qualifying M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (Eng.) in 1925. Denis Wilson spent most of his medical career in the Royal Air Force, having been commissioned in 1927. He proudly claimed to have served in nearly every station in East Africa and the Middle East. During the Second World War he was one of the last to be evacuated from Crete, and was several times mentioned in dispatches. After the war he specialised in radiology and was eventually promoted Air Commodore and Consultant Adviser to the R.A.F. He became deeply involved with the nuclear weapon programme and particularly with the radiological problems that might affect aircrew. In 1953, he volunteered to fly as the radiological observer in a Canberra jet bomber through the swirling mass of radio-active vapour six minutes after the atomic explosion of Britain's second atomic bomb at Emu Field, near Woomera, Australia. He was responsible for deciding, after obtaining radiation readings, when it was safe for the aircraft to enter the cloud. Following this flight, Denis Wilson received the immediate award of the Air Force Cross. "It was as a result of his calculations that this venture was planned, and he acted as the expert passenger in charge of the radiological instruments that were carried." After the Emu Field Test, he remained actively engaged with all the other kiloton trials and with the Operation Grapple megaton series at Christmas Island, in the Pacific. Denis Wilson served as the R.A.F. Principal Specialist in Radiology and was in command of the Military Hospital at Benghazi during the Second World War. When he retired from the R.A.F. in 1966, he was appointed Chief Inspector of nuclear installations at the Central Electricity Generating Board, before eventually returning to clinical radiology as a Consultant Radiologist at Farnham and Frimley Park hospitals. He was an Honorary Surgeon to H.M. the Queen.

