

Gunner of Renown



Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

Major General Arthur Gillespie WILSON, CBE, DSO

(1900-1982)

Arthur Wilson was born on 29 August 1900 and his father was Charles Wilson 'formerly of Glasgow, Scotland' but nothing is known of his mother, place of birth, or siblings. He attended North Sydney Boys High School.

He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in December 1921. He was posted to the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery (RAGA) for two years followed by a posting in India. On return to Australia in 1926 he was appointed Officer Commanding RAGA Thursday Island for two years. After a staff posting, he was appointed Adjutant and Quartermaster of 13th Field Brigade 1930-33. In 1935-36, he attended the Staff College at Quetta in India, where two of his instructors were Colonel B.L. Montgomery and Major F. Messervy.

At the outbreak of WWII he was one of a small but elite group of professional officers whose training had fitted them for both command and staff appointments and it was in this capacity that he was to render outstanding service during this period. Firstly in the United Kingdom, then in the Middle East, New Guinea and Borneo and on the staffs on the 6th, 7th, and 9th Divisions and Forward Echelon, Land Headquarters in the Philippines. For these services he was awarded the DSO.

During the occupation of Japan he commanded the British Commonwealth Sub Base at Kure 1946-47 and on return to Australia held senior appointments at Army Headquarters and Eastern Command 1947-52 before becoming Australian Army Representative London for two years. On return from London in 1954 he was made a CBE and was promoted major general as GOC Central Command, until his retirement in 1957.

Wilson was interested in community affairs and was president and a trustee of the Naval, Military and Air Force Club of South Australia and an active member of Legacy. During his term as Colonel Commandant he was Chairman of the RAA Historical Committee and it was mainly through his drive and enthusiasm that the publication *South Australian Artillery 1840-1966* was published.

He married Edna Gibson in 1927 but she died in 1940 and he married Shirley Cruikshank in 1953. She was the widow of Major R.M. Cruikshank, killed in Syria in 1941. There were no children from either marriage.

On 12 February 1982, General Wilson, accompanied by the Colonel Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Kingwell, visited 16th Air Defence Regiment at Woodside to present his

sword to the Regiment. On his departure, the Quarter Guard 'Presented Arms' and General Wilson returned to his home at Stirling West where he had a heart attack the next morning and died the following Monday. He had a private funeral on 8 February 1982.

Source: D. N. Brook, *Roundshot to Rapier*. Who's Who 1958 UK Edition. The Army List of Officers of the AMF, Vol 1, The Active List 1 October 1950.