Brigadier Barrington Wilson, CBE, DSO

Brigadier Barrington Wilson - affectionately known as “Barrie” - died in 2010. He was for many years a member of the Paris Branch and Chairman from 1968 to 1976.

Barrie was born in in Pakistan (then British India), where his father, a Colonel in the Royal Artillery, was serving at the time. He was educated at Wellington College and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich and commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1932.

Barrie had a very distinguished military career serving in India, Egypt, and the U.K. pre-war. He saw active war service in 1944-45 as Brigade Major RA in 11th Armoured Division and in command of the Field Artillery Regiment in the Guards Division taking part in the Normandy invasion. He fought in the battles around Caen, Vire, and Falaise before crossing the Seine at Vernon. Then, still with the same division, he took part in the liberation of Brussels in September 1944. He was engaged in the battle of Arnhem, crossing the Rhine at Rees and ended the war at Kiel/Cuxhaven in Germany.

For his war service he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, Chevalier de l’Ordre de Leopold II , Belgium, and Chevalier de la Croix de Guerre, Belgium.

After the war he held many successive appointments: Instructor, Staff College Camberley, then Chief of Defence Staff, British Joint Services Mission in Washington, before attending the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre, Paris. He was second in command Royal Horse Artillery Regiment in Germany: Commander, Anti-Aircraft Regiment in Malta; Instructor, NATO Defence College in Paris; then back to the War Office as Head of Military Operations Branch (NATO Section) in London. He will still be remembered by some as the Military Attaché at the British Emassy in Paris as Brigadier from 1961 to 1964, after which he was Chief of Public Information, SHAPE until retirement in 1967.

He remained in France and was instrumental in setting up “riding for the disabled” in France as a member of the Comité d’étude et d’action of the Fédération Nationale Handi-Cheval.

He was always interested in international relations and for his great services to Franco-British relations he was made Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur in 1972, a Commander of the British Empire in 1977, and promoted Officier de la Légion d’Honneur in 1988 - latter being presented to him by Président François Mitterand.

Barrie was a gifted horse-rider, playing polo against HRH The Duke of Edinburgh and Lord Louis Mountbatten in Malta, show-jumping and

steeple-chasing with talent, but was also keen on fencing, rugby, swimming and travel, amateur dramatics, painting, photography.

To all those privileged to know him Barrie was always helpful, enthusiastic and a fine gentleman.

He married Aileen Mary Hornung in 1941. He died aged 98, three months after his beloved wife, and is survived by his two daughters Tania and Zandra, four grandchildren and five great-grand-children to whom we extend our sincere condolences.