But the message of the centenary commemoration, pointed so distinctly and so cogently by Dr. Harding in his memorial lecture, is that Hygiene, Army Health, Community Medicine—call it what you will—cannot remain dormant. Methods have changed since Parkes’ day but what has not changed is the need for an enquiring approach, for a research-based programme of advance towards the newer frontiers of military preventive medicine. Parkes did just this before his untimely death at the height of his career. The principal purpose of his centenary commemoration is to ensure that the same sage counsels prevail in the contemporary scene.

INTRODUCTION BY DGAMS
TO PARKES MEMORIAL CENTENARY LECTURE

We are tonight commemorating the life and work of Dr. Edmund Alexander Parkes who died a century ago. He was the first Professor of Hygiene, appointed to the newly created Army Medical School at Fort Pitt, Chatham in 1860. His work during the 16 years of his tenure as Professor, was done at a time of rapid change in both military and civilian public health, and Dr. Parkes was able to exercise his influence on this evolution, through his experimental work, his writing of papers and reports, and his ability to combine theory and practice. This was the era of the great sanitarians and among them Parkes was pre-eminent, possibly the greatest of the century.

Dr. Parkes received many honours during his lifetime, and after his death at the early age of 57 years, there was an overwhelming public response to commemorate his name. The Parkes Museum of the Royal Society of Health, to which Queen Victoria herself gave £50, has been dispersed. Within the Services his name lives on in the Parkes Memorial Prize, awarded annually to the officer who has done most by professional work of outstanding merit to promote the study of naval or military hygiene. But his place as a pioneer of public health and military hygiene has tended to be forgotten. It is our purpose to revive his memory and to pay tribute to a man who could be said to have done more than any other to improve and safeguard the soldier’s health.

It is perhaps appropriate that this centenary falls at a time when further changes are taking place in what was the discipline of hygiene but is now part of community medicine. The changes in Parkes’s time were fundamental and basically scientific in origin; today they are mainly organisational in nature, although the aim of a better health service remains true. We are very fortunate tonight, to have with us Dr. Wilfrid Harding President of the Faculty of Community Medicine, as our centenary lecturer. His lecture is entitled “Service, Community and Health”—a combination which I am sure would commend itself to Dr. Parkes.

Dr. Harding is the Area Medical Officer of Camden and Islington Area Health Authority, and is responsible for the health care of the half-million population in this concentrated urban area. Like Dr. Parkes, Dr. Harding is a graduate of University College Hospital, where he qualified in 1941. He spent the war years, 1943 to 1946 in the R.A.M.C., being wounded during the campaign in Europe when serving with 53 Welsh Division. Later he returned to Germany, where his fluent knowledge of the
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language took him into Civil Affairs, and where he completed his military career as a Lieutenant Colonel, Specialist in Hygiene. Since that time he has maintained his interest in, and connection with, the Services, having been a member of the Edwards Committee, recently disbanded, and now serving on the new Armed Forces Medical Advisory Board.

Subsequent to his war service, Dr. Harding has been one of the most active and enterprising public health doctors. He played a large part in the creation of the Faculty of Community Medicine. I am sure you will agree that we could not have made a better choice to perpetuate the Parkes tradition in this centenary lecture.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome such a representative and distinguished audience, particularly the past Directors and Professors of Army Health. Also Dr. John Reid, our Honorary Consultant in Community Medicine and Professor Holland, of the Department of Community Medicine, St. Thomas’s Hospital, which has strong associations with Dr. Parkes. The Directors of Health of the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force Medical Services are also most welcome.

I will now ask Colonel Crowdy, formerly Professor of Army Health, and the 26th since Dr. Parkes, to give us a biographical presentation.