



Rolf Wideröe
about 1955



Rolf Wideröe
in Rostock,
September 26, 1968

The Autobiography of Rolf Wideröe

1902-1996

A Pioneer of Particle Accelerators
and Radiation Therapy

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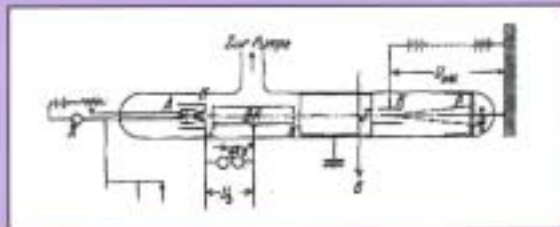
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Rolf Wideröe was an extraordinary scientist and inventor. Whilst still a student of engineering he put forward the principles for a 'betatron accelerator' and successfully operated the first 'linear accelerator' (linac). In 1943 he patented the principle of 'colliding storage rings' and in 1945 he submitted a patent which included a complete theory of the 'synchrotron'. After the War he began to build betatrons for technical and medical applications at BBC in Switzerland where he developed an interesting 'two components theory' on the effects of radiation on living cells. For 20 years he taught accelerator physics at the ETH Zurich. He was the subject of occasional reproaches for having worked for the German Luftwaffe during the War, when he built a betatron in Hamburg. This autobiography includes his reasons, and his statements should provide valuable historic insights.



The world's first linear accelerator

was built and successfully operated by Rolf Wideröe in 1928. The above drawing was part of his doctoral thesis at the Aachen Technical University. Every linear accelerator that was built subsequently was based on this thesis, which also inspired Ernest Orlando Lawrence (in California) to develop the first cyclotron.



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