

## Attracted by Advertisements

By Don McCarry

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My schooldays were mainly spent as a boarder at Hanley Castle Grammar School near Malvern in Worcestershire. We were surrounded by countryside and were continually fascinated by the stream of training planes from nearby Pershore and Moreton-In-Marsh. They were rasping Harvards and quieter Oxfords.

We were also close to the airfield at Defford which housed a remarkable variety of aircraft used in connection with the Radar Research Establishment at Malvern. Gloster Aviation Works were close by and the peculiar whistle of the prototype Javelin was a common experience. From this you will deduce that I developed a strong love of aviation.

I enrolled in the 1017 squadron of the Air Training Corps at Malvern and this allowed us, in uniform, to visit Defford and go flying. We were never refused and my first flight was in a Handley Page (Miles) Marathon. A decided rarity. Many other flights followed, including a memorable trip in a Lincoln being flown as a target for a radar guided Meteor night fighter.



After some time I sat the proficiency exam and passed and this granted one access to many things including the aircrew assessment tests at RAF Hornchurch and Cranwell. In all it was a busy four days and I was later informed that I had been passed as suitable for pilot training after I left school with the requisite education.

By now I had been appointed as Head Boy at Hanley Castle and to my great disappointment I did not get the two A level subjects I needed but did get 6 O levels and two of them twice.

A great dilemma now faced me as I was teetering on the very brink of National Service but I obtained a housemaster post at Rydal Prep School in Colwyn Bay and had a very enjoyable year.



However, National Service now called and into the RAF I went. After basic training I went to Netheravon for RAF Police training and on completion was posted to Halton, a major apprentice training school. After a few months I was asked if I wanted a commission and duly applied. I heard nothing more until I had only two or three months left to serve and then enquired of the adjutant what was happening, as I was due to leave soon. He said he had been sitting on it until he knew me better and was taken aback when I told him his successor had suggested it and as I have said earlier I was due to leave soon.

Things happened fast after that as I saw the Group Captain a few days later and the Air Commodore a few days after that. Both said they would recommend me. And so so to RAF Rudloe Manor where I was interviewed by the Air Chief Marshall who told me he would recommend me but I was not to sign on as the RAF would be in touch in due course.

My shift work involved night shifts and I would always read the job adverts in the *Daily Telegraph* and was attracted by the Nyasaland Police advert. I had become a little disenchanted by the commissioning saga and much more so when I was demobbed to find my discharge certificate contained basic errors and no acknowledgement of my NCO status of 12 months. I then received a letter from the Air Ministry asking if I wish to go to Biggin Hill for air crew assessment, so I thought I was flogging a dead horse, getting nowhere, and applied to the Crown Agents for the Nyasaland Police. I was interviewed in London and shortly after was officially notified that I have been accepted. I never looked back after that and enjoying every minute of that service. I did have a GCE in Geography but apart from that I'd never heard of Nyasaland and the thought of the adventure and change from the RAF. I had confided in my parents, who were supportive. One January day in 1961 I sat on a Comet with Geoff Dean and our new life had began.

