

Illegal Marijuana Cultivation Under Police Supervision

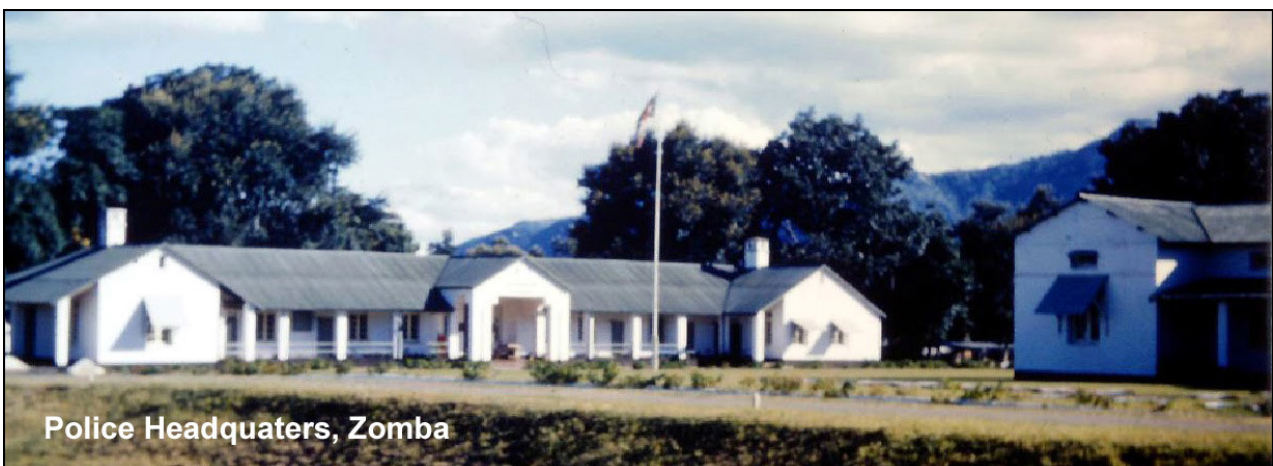
By Barry Thorne

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Whilst stationed with the Police Mobile Force (PMF) in Zomba one of my daily tasks was to take a platoon to Zomba prison to collect some sixty prisoners, who were employed in grass cutting, road cleaning and general maintenance work at Police Headquarters. This included using about a dozen prisoners in the clearing of bush and maintenance of the fire break which surrounded the barbed wire perimeter, a task which was unending as it took many weeks to complete the circumnavigation of the area, whereupon they would start on another tour of the perimeter. One day, on the way back to the prison, I noticed some prisoners weaving about unsteadily on their feet, with the appearance of being drunk. On arrival at the prison, I had the half dozen or so men affected examined at the prison medical centre, where it was confirmed that they were 'under the influence', but from what we could not tell. Further investigation and questioning however revealed all.



Over time, and going back some years, a group of prisoners had used the opportunity of bush clearing to plant marijuana ('ganja') which over the course of each year was tended, harvested, dried and then eventually smoked, all without being observed by the two guards. A combination of the lack of police manpower, and good behaviour by the prisoners had resulted in some of them finding ample opportunity for their activities, and subsequent 'enjoyment' of their endeavours remaining unobserved for so long!



Police Headquarters, Zomba