

## OBITUARY

### CYRIL MARLOW MBE, PPM ~ 1922 – 2001



Left, 1968 Cyril Marlow receives The Presidential Police Medal for Meritorious Service from the President, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda,

Cyril was born in Peterborough on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1922. He was educated at Fletton Park Grammar School, where he was a house captain and gained his cricket colours. He joined the Peterborough Police Force in 1941 but was called-up for war service in 1942 and joined the RAF in which he trained as a pilot in Canada. He was demobilised in 1945 with the rank of Sergeant Pilot and returned to duty with the Peterborough police.

In 1952, he transferred to H.M. Overseas Civil Service and was appointed to the Fiji Islands with the rank of Inspector. By 1960, he had been promoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent and in that year was transferred to Nyasaland with the rank of Acting

Superintendent. Cyril related how, on Dr. Banda's first day as Prime Minister, he summoned Cyril to his office. Upon being ushered in, he was left standing at attention for some little time whilst Dr. Banda continued to peruse some documents. Looking up sternly, Dr. Banda commenced to berate Cyril Marlow for some administrative problem entirely outside Cyril's sphere of responsibility. Summarily dismissed and somewhat chastened, Cyril saluted and left. Just as he was closing the door, he heard Dr. Banda call him back. Upon reopening the door, he was greeted by a now beaming Dr. Banda who called out cheerily "And by the way, Mr. Marlow, a very happy New Year to you!"

Cyril Marlow was initially the senior police officer present at Chileka after two Lebanese made an unsuccessful attempt to hi-jack a SAA Boeing 727. He authorised the clandestine bleeding of the aircraft's hydraulics so that it could not take off. Also, he authorised the collection from local banks of a chest containing a large sum of assorted foreign currencies as bait for the hi-jackers, after the latter realised their demand that the South African financier and industrialist Oppenheimer be delivered to them wasn't going to happen and subsequently changed their demands.

Before he could effect his plan to trap and arrest the hi-jackers, Cyril, and all other non-Malawian personnel, were ordered out of the airport and the operation was taken over by local officials. The plane was then subjected to a hail of gunfire, stormed and the hi-jackers successfully seized, one receiving a minor flesh wound to the heel. Unfortunately, the chest of foreign currency had mysteriously disappeared and was never recovered. The hi-jackers were later released after serving a short sentence.

In 1968, as an Acting Assistant Commissioner, Cyril Marlow was awarded the Presidential Police Medal for Meritorious Service by President Banda and in 1973, whilst an Assistant Commissioner, he was made an MBE. In 1971, he compiled *A History of the Malawi Police Force* to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official formation of the Malawi Police Force in 1921. Published by the Government Printer, this useful history contains a prefatory message from the Life President, Dr. Banda and a foreword by the Commissioner of Police. In July 1971, he became Deputy Chief Immigration Officer. Retiring from the police in 1975, Cyril took up a regional administrative post with The Bank of Malawi until finally retiring fully in 1983. Returning to England and his home town of Peterborough, he undertook an active part in local life, his church and regularly played a competitive game of tennis.



Cyril Marlow died on November 21<sup>st</sup> 2001 and is survived by his widow, Gladys, and a married daughter, Mrs. Karen Webb.

**David Stuart-Mogg (2002)**

**(Note: As edited to reflect Nypol interest - February 2020)**