

## **EULOGY**

### **MBE Colonel Henry Ernest Vialou Clark**

**Born 5 October 1939 in Nairobi, Kenya Colony.**

The parents married in September 1936 in North London and returned to Kenya by ship soon after marriage. Father (Harry Vialou Clark) was born in 1893 in Cape Town and died in 1944 in Kenya. Mother (Kathleen Jones) was born on 25 August 1903 in Cape Town and died in Sussex, England in 1973. Ashes scattered in Downs Crematorium, Near Brighton.

Harry was the second-born child. He had two siblings (Maureen Elizabeth Vialou Clark, who died in 1941) and lastly, Cherry Diana Vialou Clark, born 27 Dec 1943 in Kenya, and died in 1963 in South Africa.

Harry attended junior schools in Kenya, He went to Kilimani Primary School before transferring to St Mary's School where he completed his primary education. In 1953 he flew to England on his own (a three-day journey) leaving his mother in the hospital and in very poor health. He started at Ardingly College, a Woodard secondary school in Sussex on 1st May that year. He left with three useful engineering A Levels. He was a school prefect, Captain of Shooting, in the school's boxing team (heavyweight Champion for two years) and athletics team. While at school in 1957 he was a member of the British School's Exploring Society's expedition to northern Finland. Time at Ardingly was a happy and successful time in his life.

He applied for a commission in the British Army and in July 1958 started as an Officer Cadet at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. In 1960 he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers having qualified to study for a London University degree in Civil Engineering. 1960 to 1963 he was a student at the Royal Military College, Shrivenham. Young Officer training continued at Chatham, Kent and on successful completion, he flew to Malaya to take an appointment as Troop Commander in 68 Gurkha Independent Field Squadron. Studied Nepali and passed with Credits, in written and oral.

Three operational tours of six months followed. Much patrolling in a dense jungle, a strained groin muscle, and inadequate and inappropriate food resulted in a prolonged stay in the hospital in Headly Court, the Forces rehabilitation centre. In 1967 was posted to the British Army of the Rhine (BAOR) as Second in Command of the 30 Field Squadron in Hamlin.

1969: In Hamlin, this was his very successful tour – he met and married, Alison Travers on 22 March 1969.

1968-70: Studied engineering at Chatham and worked at Spaghetti Junction, Birmingham, and a consulting engineering company in London. This resulted in being elected as a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and Chartered Engineers.

1979-82: Promoted Lt Col in command of er Combat Zone engineering depot at Willich, His unit won the coveted Bavin Shield for the best sporting unit in RCZ. Much improved the unit's morale.

1986-89: Promoted Colonel. Commander Military Works Force. Based in Chilwell, Nottingham. UK and Commonwealth responsibilities for design and plans for home and overseas RE exercises and disaster relief. "Best job in the British Army"! Resigned from his commission early, at age 50.

He had been recommended for the position of brigadier but opted to resign from the military. It is after resigning that he came to Kenya and joined Pembroke Preparatory School as a Bursar. Col VC and his wife are quiet at home in Kenya. Col VC "The people I meet in Kenya are charming and I make them laugh, but I can't do this in England,"

1992-2019: Col VC, recalls the events that led him to leave the country he left back in 1953. "My heart was in Kenya, where I was born, and, looking at the (school's) hedge, I could see prettiness but, over its boundaries, there was nothing but poverty," he said. "Then I came to ask myself the question: should I continue to live in my own paradise?" This is when he decided to start a charity to help poor children access education. That year, many families arrived in Gilgil fleeing clashes in some parts of the Rift Valley. Misery, he recalls, was all over as parents sought schools for their children after escaping the politically instigated violence. "How else would I help these people? I decided that education would be the best way to get them out of poverty," VC, always had an emotional attachment to his country of birth. But it took years of fundraising from his friends in England for Col VC to establish two charitable organizations – Langalanga Scholarship Fund and Kariandusi School Trust – which have transformed the lives of poor families in Gilgil.

At first, Col VC started a football team to keep young men in Gilgil busy. Then he started collecting money from his relatives in England with which he built

Komothai Primary School between 1993 and 1995. Students from Col VC Alma mater, Ardingly College in Sussex, England, usually volunteer to teach pupils from schools built under Kariandusi School Trust after completing their Form Six.

The aim of forming these two charities (Langalanga Scholarship Fund and Kariandusi School Trust) was to improve the level of education of underprivileged children in rural Kenya. 284 scholarships awarded (approx. 216 degrees awarded). 16 new, or greatly enlarged, primary schools were built the latter helped construct classrooms, office blocks, staff houses, and water tanks. Five nursery schools and two exceptionally endowed secondary schools were built. About 9000 children learn each normal term day at all his schools.

2012: Awarded MBE in 2012 New Year's Honours List.

2018: Col VC retired from his role as the chairman of Langalanga Scholarship Fund and Kariandusi School Trust and left the role to Brig Geoffrey Nield. He went back to England where he has been until his demise.

2019-2023: Col VC has gone through surgery due to cancerous tumors and due to the surgery, recovery, and old age his health condition continued to affect him.

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023: The evening of that day Col VC breathed his last breath surrounded by his family members.

15<sup>th</sup> March 2023: Col VC was laid to rest at Tidworth Military Cemetery in UK.

He died at the age of 83 years.

#### 5 things that, apart from his CV, he wanted people to understand about "Him"

1. My good luck in finding Alison to share my adventures throughout our long and varied life together.
2. My love for my grandchildren, daughter, and son. May they leave the world a better place than they found it.
3. Ability to make and keep friends - and to know their value.
4. My enjoyment of playing sports, taking exercise, and in joining competitions.
5. Selflessness brings life's greatest rewards.