

From bobby to brigadier

By Will Brown, volunteer and researcher at the Museum of Policing in Cheshire

Over the years a number of members of the Force have reached ACPO rank in the police service both in Cheshire and other forces but the story of Constable Reginald Davenport's rise to high rank is a little different.

Reginald joined the old Congleton Borough Force in 1935 aged 22 after four years' army service in the Leicestershire Regiment. At the time the strength of the Force was 13 which included the Chief Constable.

Reginald was born and brought up in Brereton near Congleton, his father William was head herdsman for Sir William Shakerley at Somerford Hall and his older brother, George, had joined Cheshire Constabulary in 1928.

When war was declared in 1939, being a Reservist, Reginald was recalled to the colours and, no doubt due to his civil police background, soon found himself in the Corps of Military Police now known as the Corps of Royal Military Police. His war service took him to the Far East where he saw service in India and Burma and by the end of the war he had made the rank of temporary major.

After the war, he chose not to return to the Congleton force instead deciding to make a career in the army. Over the next 20 years, he gained further promotions in the Military

Police eventually attaining the rank of Brigadier and Provost Marshal (Army) in 1965 and was in fact the

first RMP officer to be appointed Provost Marshal as previously the role had fallen to officers from other regiments and branches of the army.

Reginald retired in 1968 to live in Suffolk where he died in 2001, aged 88. He was a keen golfer all his life and, in his early days, had been a member of Astbury Golf Club.

On a visit he made to Congleton in 1974, he reminisced about his early police service in an article published in the Congleton Chronicle at the time and recalled some of his former colleagues in the Borough Force saying he had the honour of knowing all the 'old ones' who, almost to a man, were ex-servicemen who had fought for their country in the First World War adding 'old-fashioned by modern standards but all great characters and good men'.

