

Sub-Inspector Cecil Fulford Hill

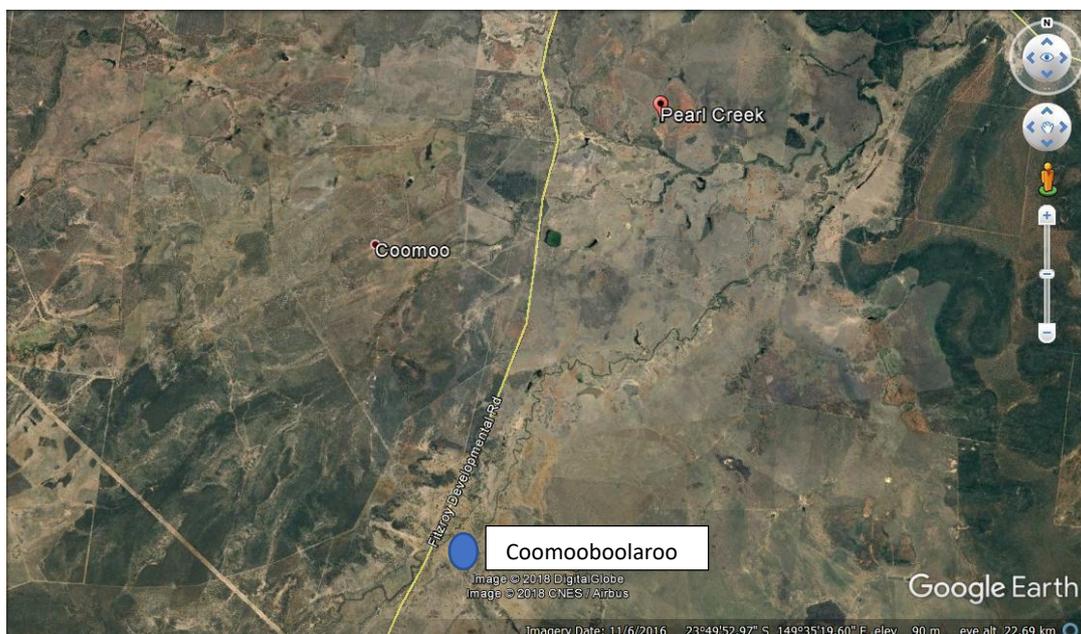
Sworn in 28th February 1865; Registered Number: Unknown

A research article by Gerry Stevens – Friends of the Queensland Police Museum

While conducting research in connection with the murder of other Native Mounted Police Officers, Dyas, Kaye and Beresford, I found an autobiography written by a former Native Mounted Police Officer, twice, **William Richard Onslow Hill**, of his unique experiences there, and others in North Queensland as a Police Magistrate and Gold Warden in many isolated towns. The book included a chapter on the murder of his brother, Cecil, a sworn member of the Queensland Police Force, in 1865. Thus, Cecil Hill has become the first known Queensland Police Officer killed on duty, and that demanded further research.

There is other information that a sergeant and three troopers of the Native Mounted Police were killed in the Upper Dawson on 26th May 1865, however, my research indicates that this report is synonymous with the murder of Cecil Hill and his aboriginal police troopers.

Twenty-one years old, Cecil Fulford Hill, was sworn in on 28th February 1865. His registered number is unknown. Soon after his induction he was made an Acting Sub-Inspector in charge of police troopers, aborigines recruited from distant tribes to assist in 'policing' troublesome local aboriginal tribes. Hill was killed on what was then Rannes Station, south-west of Wowan and north-west of Banana, in the Upper Dawson River Valley, 115km (80 miles) SW of Rockhampton, on 23rd May 1865, less than three months after his induction. He was buried on 'Coomooboolaroo' Station, now 'Shannonvale' Station, south of Duaringa.



Present day location of Coomooboolaroo homestead

At the outset it is important to understand that, unlike the present day, not all land was occupied. European settlers took up land that was most favourable to their needs.

Some took up huge tracts of land that has since been sub-divided into smaller holdings. Flocks of sheep and herds of cattle had to be shepherded to keep them safe from marauding aborigines who, rightfully, objected to being moved from their traditional land.

As can be expected, the details vary from report to report, there being little communication, limited to telegraph, if the person was near a depot, by word of mouth of travellers, or a written letter, all of which took considerable time to reach the authorities.

Hill and his aboriginal police troopers arrived at 'Pearl Creek' Station to investigate a rumour of a murder and the most reliable account is from the alleged statement made by the manager / occupier, of 'Pearl Creek', Mr. Rothery, to Stanley Hill, elder brother of the victim as reported in a letter to the below newspaper sourced from 'Trove' at [anl.gov.au/advanced search](http://anl.gov.au/advanced-search) and to others. [N.B. Comments in square brackets added by author.]

**Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay Burnett Advertiser (Qld) Sat 17 June 1865
Page 2 [extract from anl.gov.au]**

We have been kindly favoured with the following account of the murder of Lieutenant Hill, from the pen of his brother, [Stanley] now (relieving Clerk of Petty Sessions) in Maryborough. That gentleman also informs us the reported murder of Mr. Turner by the blacks on Mr. Thompson's station was not true, as he had himself seen him shortly before he left Rockhampton: —

'N. M. [Native Mounted] Police Barracks, Rockhampton, June 13, 1865.

I gained the following particulars of my brother's death personally from the superintendent of Pearl Creek Station (Mr. Rothery), who was with my brother and his troopers at the time of the occurrence — having ridden up there myself to see him upon the subject. As nearly as possible, I use Mr. Rothery's own words: —

"Lieut. Cecil Hill and three troopers rode up to my station (Pearl Creek) on the evening of Monday, 21st May. Lieut. Hill informed me that he had come down from the Mackenzie, [River] having heard a report that a shepherd on my run had been murdered by the blacks. I told him that an old shepherd had been murdered about eight weeks previously, and till now no police had been down. Mr. Hill and his troopers camped at my station that night.

The next morning (Monday, the 22nd), Mr. Hill asked me if I had much to do; I said, 'No'. He then asked me, as he did not know the run, to show him where the blacks were camped. I said I would, and we all left the station together — Lieut. Hill, myself, and three troopers. We called at Mr. Thompson's station (Coomooboolaroo) and stayed there to lunch. Mr. Thompson wished Mr. Hill to stop there, but he would not, wanting to push on. A little before sunset we came upon the camp, which Lieutenant Hill and his troopers charged and dispersed; one, I think, was shot. The gins were left in the camp; I counted them afterwards at Mr. Hill's request, and there were eighty-nine. We then camped for the night. I wished to camp at a hut a mile off, but Mr. Hill told me that I need not be afraid of the blacks returning, as they would not come near 'his boys'. The gins were camped some distance from us; the troopers went to sleep.

This I remarked to Mr. Hill, but he said that they were tired and wanted rest. Mr. Hill and myself did not sleep.

The night was pitch dark. About 3 o'clock the next morning (Tuesday, the 23rd), the blacks came upon us; they were on us before anyone in the camp was aware of it. Mr. Hill was the first to jump on his feet, with his revolver in his hand. He staggered a few paces, and then fell flat on his face. I was struck on the wrist and on the chest by nulla nullas. I fired my revolver and shot one black; the rest then rapidly dispersed. I then looked about for Lieut. Hill; I found him lying on his face; his head and face all covered with blood; there was also a spear wound in his back, under the left shoulder; I shook him by the shoulder and spoke to him; he did not answer, but moaned once or twice, and then ceased to breathe. I found one of the troopers (Fred) had been terribly cut about.

*Immediately it was light enough I dispatched one of the troopers (the only one that was but slightly wounded) into Mr. Thompson to communicate the news; we then covered the body as well as we could with blankets, and made for Mr. Thompson's station, with the horses and the two wounded troopers. Mr. Thompson at once sent on a spring cart, with assistance to bring in the body, and rode off himself to Rockhampton, which he reached that same evening, a distance of 80 miles. On returning to look for the body, it was found that the blacks had returned and stripped the body of every article of clothing and taken all away; the corpse was then brought in to the station, and buried the next day, Wednesday, the 24th May; the wounded trooper, Fred, I took to my own station.' — **Stanley Grantham Hill.***

Below is an extract from a book titled '45 Years' Experience in North Queensland' an autobiography by Cecil's other brother, William Richard Onslow Hill, former station hand, Native Mounted Police (twice), Gold Warden, Clerk of Petty Session, and Police Magistrate, printed 1907, supports the notion that members of the native Mounted Police were killed in action but not acknowledged. The fact that Hill's registered number is unknown indicates that records may have been lost or destroyed.

CHAPTER VI.

MY BROTHER CECIL'S FULFORD HILL MURDER, 1865. [At some variance with his brother]

"About this time, [June 1865] I received intimation of the sad end of my dear brother Cecil. It seems he had recently been appointed an Acting Sub-Inspector in the Native Mounted Police and was stationed on the Upper Dawson. Shortly after joining he was out on patrol with the overseer of a neighbouring station, to disperse a mob of blacks who had lately been committing depredations, and the party were camped at night near a scrub, with no suspicion that the blacks were anywhere near them. They even had a blazing fire.

They were standing around when, without warning of any kind, a shower of spears came into the midst of the camp and my poor brother was killed instantaneously by a spear that went through his heart. The overseer's wrist was broken, and several of the troopers were badly wounded.

Although my father was at this time in Brisbane, no official intimation of the sad event was ever sent to him by the Government, and were it not for my brother Stanley, then a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Police, who went up to the scene of the tragedy and erected a fence around the grave, so far as the Government cared, he would have been left forgotten, and his death and even the locality unrecorded. Poor Cecil, being only twenty-one, and promising to be a fine steady fellow, it was terribly sad to see him thus prematurely cut off in the morning of his life."

I searched through the Queensland Police Museum records of Queensland Police Officers' commemoration and found that Cecil Hill is not listed. I accessed the Queensland Police Force '**Book of Names**' which records all Police officers sworn in or appointed from 1st January 1864, (which is when Queensland Police Force became its own entity by separating from the Police Force of the Colony of New South Wales, although the Colony of Queensland separated from NSW on 9th December 1959), to 31 December 1974, and found that **Cecil Fulford Hill was sworn in on 28th February 1865**, but Reg. No. unknown.

I accessed 'Trove' digitised newspapers on [trove advanced search](#), the Australian National Libraries' records which truly are a 'treasure trove' of Queensland history, albeit not totally reliable because newspapers often put their own slant on the stories they printed. [It seems nothing has changed in that respect for over 150 years.]

From all the information I have been able to find, I believe, beyond reasonable doubt, that Hill and his native troopers were responding to information that there had been a murder in the Upper Dawson Valley in March 1865. They arrived on 21st May and met the manager / occupier (superintendent) of 'Pearl Creek' Station, Mr Rothery, who informed them that his elderly shepherd [Hood] had been murdered by aborigine(s) some eight weeks earlier.

Next day, Mr Rothery accompanied Hill and the troopers to Mr Thompson's 'Coomooboolaroo' Station and stayed for lunch. Rothery then took them to where the aborigines were camped, probably on [the western boundary is what was then Rannes Station] and Hill attempted to disperse them. The aborigines scattered into nearby scrub and one of them may have been shot. Against Rothery's better judgment, Hill, the troopers and Mr Rothery camped on the edge of the scrub. Hill was relying on the reputation of the Native Mounted Police to protect them.

Between 2am and 3am on 23rd May, a large group of aborigines attacked Hill and company. Hill was speared, staggered a few paces and fell on his face and died almost instantaneously. Several of the troopers were injured and may have died later but that is not confirmed. Rothery and an injured trooper repulsed the attack, covered Hill's body with blankets and reported the attack to Mr Thompson, who arranged for a spring cart to collect Hill's body. Thompson then rode eighty miles to Rockhampton to report the murder. Hill was buried on what was then 'Coomooboolaroo' Station, now 'Shannonvale' Station, next day.

Hill's brother, Stanley, who was employed by Queensland Police Force as a clerk in the commissioner's office, learnt of the death and travelled to 'Coomooboolaroo' Station and erected a fence around the grave. Stanley became Clerk of Petty

Sessions, Maryborough, in May 1870, before moving to Rockhampton as Clerk of Petty Sessions and Registrar of the District Court in March 1877, and then moved to Mount Morgan in the 1880's, as a shareholder in a successful gold mining venture.

The Hill family is a very ancient one, being descended from Hugh Hill, who lived in the time of Henry II, and was married in 1160 to Eleanor, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Hugh de Wlonkeslowe. The first known baronet of the family was Sir John Hill, of Houston, in the County of Somerset, who was several times High Sheriff of Somerset and Dorset, in the reign of Edward III., A.D. 1341.

The family residence is called ' Poundsford Park ' and was built by Sir William Hill in the latter part of Henry VII.'s reign. It is now in the hands of a Mr. Wiseman, but the family crest 'Dove and olive branch' still remains on the stained-glass windows of the great hall. Stanley Grantham Hill, born in 1843, is the oldest surviving son of Captain Frederick William Hill of the 1st Life Guards, who received for eminent Service in Egypt, gold and silver medals, and his wife.

William Hill's autobiography provides great detail of his family's early life. The three brothers, Stanley then 18, William 17, and Cecil 16, emigrated to Australia in 1861. Their father, Frederick William Hill, 1810-1884, held a commission [captain] in Her Majesty's 10th Foot Infantry Barracks at St. Helier's, Jersey, England, where the brothers were born.

Several years later [1846] Frederick William Hill was offered, and accepted, the governorship of a new model jail, called "The House of Detention" at Clerkenwell, London, where the girls, Georgina and Alice, were born, supported by the Coldstream Guards who were camped within the prison walls to strengthen prison security.

[The prison] was rebuilt in the mid-1840s to meet modern standards of prison design with separate cells for secluding prisoners. Male and female prisoners awaiting trial for petty offences were remanded here [*London Metropolitan Archives Prison Records*].

So, the next thirteen years of their lives was "spent in jail", where they witnessed floggings, hangings, suicides, restraint of maniacs and other gruesome events. Their father also held a baronetcy [which passed to the eldest son, Stanley in 1890, upon his father's death and Stanley's return to England.]

After their father, heard a glowing report on Queensland, from A.L. Bourcicault [apparently from Rockhampton where his family was well known and where he had the third carriage and 'pair' for hire, and the two Misses Bourcicault were the most stylish of the horsewomen. [*J. Grant Pattison, Battlers tales of Old Rockhampton. P. 24*] He encouraged the three brothers to emigrate there. At that time, Cecil Hill was studying to pass the entrance examination for the army.

The three brothers left their parents and two sisters, Georgina and Alice Emily, and took passage on the "**City of Brisbane**" and sailed from Gravesend in 1861 [when Stanley was 18]. The trip to Brisbane can best be described as a 'nightmare' with some of the crew and passengers taking over the ship from a drunken captain.

The boys disembarked in Brisbane and found accommodation in a boarding house and menial jobs that improved with time. At the time the Brisbane General Post Office was located on the current site of St Stephen's Cathedral, next to the current location of the GPO. The post office was then managed and operated by one elderly woman.

In May 1863, Hill's parents and two sisters arrived in Brisbane, on their way to their intended destination of Sydney, on the ship "***The Queen of the Colonies***" which anchored in Moreton Bay. Frederick William Hill left the ship on a row boat with the chief officer and others to perform the burial of a woman, Mrs. Barnfield, who had died in childbirth on board. On returning to the ship a squall blew up and blew them out to sea. A search failed to locate the missing boat and the occupants were given up as lost.

A personal plea by Mrs Hill to Governor Bowen, resulted in a police steamer "***Brisbane***", captained by Inspector McDonald, going north along the coast and the castaways, except Mr. Barnfield who had drowned, were found on a beach just north of Bribie Island, near what is now Caloundra. They had suffered serious privations. Mr Hill's eyesight suffered greatly, so the family remained in Brisbane. Mr. Hill eventually went blind.

Of the two sisters of William Hill, Georgina married Charles Henry Eden, and Alice Emily married Charles William Rich, in a double wedding in Brisbane, on 11 May 1863. Both were fellow passengers of the Hill family on the ship "***Queen of the Colonies***", and both became Police Magistrates in Queensland.

**The Courier Brisbane, (QLD) Tue 21 Apr 1863, Page 2 LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
RECOVERY OF THE MISSING BOAT'S CREW AND PASSENGERS OF THE
QUEEN OF THE COLONIES: -**

In the early part of yesterday forenoon, a telegram was received from Lytton, to the effect that the steam-tug Brisbane was coming up the bay with the missing passengers of the '*Queen of the Colonies*'. The news spread rapidly through the city, and when the '*Brisbane*' came alongside the wharf near the custom-house, a small crowd had assembled to greet the wanderers and express their hearty sympathies for their misfortunes. Of all those who were brought up not one had escaped from some of the ill effects consequent upon long exposure to unfavorable weather and want of food.

We have collected the following particulars of the disastrous occurrence from the personal narrative of two of the passengers concerned in the affair:- On Monday, the 6th instant, the body of Mrs. Barnfield was placed in the ship's life-boat, to be conveyed to Moreton Island for interment, the boat's crew being composed of the following persons:- The chief officer (Mr. Eldridge), the fourth officer (Mr. Grant), the ship's joiner, Morey, Myles, Osborne, and Roach (seamen), Captain [not the ship's captain] Hill, Messrs. Arundel, Durrant, Ford, Langford, and [deceased's woman's husband] Mr. Barnfield (passengers).

The boat left the ship at about five o'clock; the corpse was buried near the lighthouse, and at six o'clock the boat returned towards the ship, the sea being smooth, and the wind moderate at the time of starting. Before many minutes had elapsed, however, a sudden squall came on, and the sea rose heavily, but the boat

succeeded in getting within a few feet of the ship's stern, when she was carried to leeward by the force of the wind and current, and all efforts to reach her by using the oars proved of no avail.

The crew strained at their oars during the night, occasionally obtaining a view of the ship's lights; in the morning the ship was plainly visible, but it was then blowing half-a-gale of wind, and after vainly labouring to make headway, the crew were so utterly exhausted that at noon they held a consultation and resolved upon running before the wind and landing at the first available spot. After driving along for a couple of hours, they made the mainland near Moolooloo, and selecting a spot where the surf did not break very heavily, the boat was run in and beached without any accident to the crew.

On landing they discovered portions of the wreck of the Everton, with which they constructed a rude tenement; there happened to be plenty of fresh water about the place, and a few empty bottles found on the beach served them for drinking vessels. Their food consisted of periwinkles, limpets, and other shell fish, picked off the rocks and beach. In this manner they existed for a week, making huge fires, and keeping a signal flag (with which they were provided) constantly flying. On the 14th instant it was agreed that they should launch the boat and make an effort to escape from their awkward position.

The boat was accordingly launched, but with great difficulty; she was successfully carried through two or three heavy rollers, but one enormous wave, striking her on the bow, fairly threw her end over end. Some of the crew scrambled on to the keel of the boat, but were washed off again, and then all hands made for the shore as best they could. On mustering together, they only numbered eleven out of thirteen. In the course of about twenty minutes, however, Mr. Langford was observed making his way through the surf, supported by an oar. He reached the shore in safety, but of the other missing man (Mr. Barnfield, husband of the deceased woman who had been buried on the island) nothing was ever seen, and it has been conjectured that he must have been instantly devoured by the sharks which abound near Moolooloo.

A day or two after this melancholy occurrence, Mr. Eldridge (chief officer) proposed that he and Messrs. Grant and Durrant should go across the country and endeavor to reach Brisbane. This proposal was agreed to and providing themselves with a small supply of shellfish and a bottle of water each, they started on their journey, leaving their companions in misfortune greatly cast down by their absence.

On the morning of Saturday, the 18th instant, Captain Hill read prayers, and all those remaining in the camp had laid themselves down in the tent, despairing of assistance, when Inspector McDonald presented himself with the welcome intelligence that his boat was a few miles away from them, and ready to take them to the steamer. They all proceeded towards the boat at once, but one of the passengers was so reduced that the kind-hearted officer assisted him the whole way.

On their arrival at the boat, a liberal supply of bread, cheese, and tea was served out to the famished crew. At half-past three o'clock that afternoon, the boat started for the steamer, which was reached at three o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Inspector

McDonald reports that he left the hulk Julia Percy, at 6 p.m. on Thursday, boarded the tug steamer “*Brisbane*” the same evening, and at once proceeded in her to Bribie Island, but finding the steamer could not approach nearer to the island than within six miles, he provisioned and manned his boat, and landed in a heavy surf at the imminent risk of life.

He experienced considerable difficulty in crossing the island in consequence of the flooded state of the lagoons; but having devoted the whole of Friday to a thorough search for the missing men, he left it on Saturday morning, and proceeded to the mainland. By the time the mainland was reached, his crew was completely knocked up, and accompanied by one man he started on foot, and after a toilsome march of five miles along the sands, discovered the people for whom he was searching.

Shortly after the arrival of the passengers in Brisbane, Inspector McDonald proceeded in the steam tug down the river to take charge of a party to be despatched by water in search of the three men (Eldridge, Grant, and Durrant), who have not been heard of since their departure from Moolooloo. Taking everything into consideration, we feel bound to state that Inspector McDonald has used all diligence and energy in the prosecution of his duty, and in these degenerate days that is saying a good deal in his favor; but in addition to this we have the testimony of the rescued passengers as to the extreme kindness and sympathy shown to them by the Inspector of Water Police.

A land party, consisting of two mounted constables, was also despatched towards the bay yesterday afternoon; and our sincere wish is that the second expedition may prove even more successful and gratifying than the first.

William Hill’s autobiography is of great interest to those who wish to know more about the history of Queensland of the late nineteenth century.

A selection of further extracts from “Trove” www.anl.gov.au/advanced search:

Rockhampton Bulletin and Central Queensland Advertiser (Qld) Thu 25 May 1865 Page 2:

It is with great regret we have to announce the murder of Sub-Inspector Hill of the Native Police, by the blacks, at Rannes Station. It appears that Mr. Hill and four troopers were speared—the men were desperately wounded, and the officer was killed on the spot; only one man was able to come to the Native Police Barracks, to give information and to get a dray to bring in the dead body of Mr. Hill and the wounded troopers, and he had the head of a spear sticking in his arm on coming in. We expect to be able to furnish further particulars in our next issue

The Brisbane Courier (Qld) Sat 27 May 1865 Page 4

Among the items contained in our telegraphic intelligence, is one from Rockhampton, announcing the murder by the blacks of Mr. Sub-Inspector Hill, of the native police, at place some seventy miles from his head-quarters. Hill was well known in town, and was the son of Captain Hill, who arrived in the colony sometime since [his sons], by the “*Queen of the South*”. [*That name is incorrect. They arrived on the “Queen of the Colonies”*]

The Brisbane Courier (Qld) Fri 2 June 1865 Page 3
MURDER OF SUB-INSPECTOR HILL

Mr. WALSH wished to put a question, without previous notice, as it was one which must be of great interest to everybody in the colony. A great slaughter had been made by the blacks in the Northern part of the colony, and he wished to inquire if the Government had received any late information to the effect that Sub-Inspector Hill, his troopers, and an Englishman who was in the same neighbourhood, had been murdered by the blacks.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said a report stating that Sub-Inspector Hill had been murdered and four of his troopers speared, was received, but the certainty of it was not confirmed. At a later period of the evening, the hon. gentleman added that a detachment of native police had been ordered to proceed from Marlborough, and when the report was despatched, Sub-Inspectors Blakeney and Beevor, and their troopers, were on their way to the scene of the murder.

The Brisbane Courier (Qld) 3 June 1865 Page 7 News, May 29.

The blacks have, we understand, mustered en masse, and emboldened by the impunity which has attended their most recent murders, are manifesting every sign of contemplating new atrocities. They have, as already chronicled, murdered Inspector Hill, speared his troopers, killed the superintendent of Mr. Thomson's station, as a sort of commemoration of her Majesty's birthday and annual dole of blankets, and impressed the unprotected squatters with lively apprehensions of future outrage.

Now that the Native Police camp is removed from Rockhampton, there is no force available for an emergency, and we think it is not for consideration, but for action, to immediately despatch a few volunteer bushmen to the relief of the beleaguered stations. These incorrigible wretches are really becoming unbearable and require a regular dressing down. Ordinary morality can only be driven into their obtuse skulls by leaden lessons, and if we hereafter learn that the squatters have taken matters into their own hands, we shall, in face of the terrible atrocities remaining unavenged, not regard the precedent with disfavour.

Even at the present time we have a man in gaol, one Thompson, well known and respected by those who knew him, charged with the wilful murder of a native, whose death most probably resulted from his own vices, and who at any rate deserved shooting, if, as there is no reason to doubt, he snapped his revolver at the man who justifiably shot him for his bravado. A man with a pistol pointed at him, is not presumed to enter into a casuistical [rationalisation] process of reasoning, as to its contents, or the object of the party presenting it, but rather if he have any respect for his own safety, and the means of defence, to employ the same to the best advantage. The sooner we have Pompey and his brethren undergoing aboriginal sepulture [burial], the better for the progress of the colony. Ibid. [The News May 29]

Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser (Qld) Sat 3 June 1865
Page 3. No title

We are very sorry to hear that the sad news having been confirmed of the murder of Mr. Hill, Lieutenant of the Native Police, by the blacks at Rannes Station. Mr. Hill was a brother-in-law of Mr. [Charles William] Rich of this town, and a son of Captain Hill, who lately spent two or three months here on a visit, during which, he made many

friends. It appears (says the Rockhampton Bulletin) that Mr. Hill and four troopers were speared—the men were desperately wounded, and the officer was killed on the spot; only one man was able to come to the Native Police Barracks, to give information and to get a dray, to bring in the dead body of Mr. Hill and the wounded troopers, and he had the head of a spear sticking in his arm on coming in.

A later paper says: A rumour is current — though it wants confirmation — that Mr. Hood, the Superintendent of Mr. Thompson's Station, has been killed by the blacks, and that three out of the four troopers of the late Sub-Inspector Hill have died of their wounds.

The attack was made at night, 600 or 700 blacks having assembled in the vicinity to corroboree, without their gins, evidently bent upon mischief. Mr. Wood, Road Surveyor, assures us that although further outrages were apprehended, the road party under his direction, and other persons in the neighbourhood of the calamity, hesitated to take action in the matter, fearing the legal consequences should any lives be sacrificed.

Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser (Qld) Wed 14 June 1965 Page 2

The Poor Blacks. — From what can be gleaned relative to the facts of the murder of Inspector Hill, and dispersion of his troopers, it will appear that the deceased had camped near a dense scrub, which he had been informed was full of blacks whom he intended dispersing the day following. The blacks, we are informed watched his movements, and pounced upon Hill and his men as they slept, stealing on them about two in the morning, and awaking them by a shower of spears and a succession of yells, which made every man jump to his feet.

Mr. Hill, the first up, was speared through the body — the spear reported to have entered his stomach and passed out at his back. As yet, we have only heard of one of the police having escaped, with one of his arms split by a 'liangle" [a heavy weapon of the Australian Aborigines with a sharp pointed end, about 20cm in length, projecting at right angle from the main part]. The death of Mr. Hood, Mr. Thompson's Superintendent, has been confirmed by a mailman, who reached town yesterday.

The blacks have, with their usual cunning, split into different mobs, and are making their way to inside stations, and some are pushing down to Rockhampton. Not a moment should be lost in hunting those murdering hounds into their lairs and exacting the severest reprisals. — Northern Argus.

The Brisbane Courier (Qld) Sat 17 June 1865 Page 3 [May be more accurate reporting]

THE MURDER BY THE BLACKS OF LIEUTENANT HILL & TROOPERS.

The following particulars have been furnished to us in reference to this unfortunate event: It appears that the late Mr. Hill and three troopers, accompanied by a Mr. Rothery, called at Mr. Thompson's station, on the 22nd May, and from information received they proceeded to **Sharper's Creek**, where they found a large mob of blacks; these blacks had a short time previously committed a murder on Pearl Creek. In attempting to disperse them the police it appears, had to fire on them; the blacks retreated into a large scrub, leaving their gins behind.

Mr. Hill, very unadvisedly, encamped his men for the night close to the scrub, evidently intending to follow up the blacks the next day, and see that they were properly dispersed, as he must have been aware that it was dangerous for the safety of the district to leave such a large mob together. About 2 o'clock in the morning the blacks came upon the police camp, and at the first onslaught Mr. Hill and two of the troopers retreated from the camp fire, leaving Mr. Rothery and trooper Fred, who succeeded in driving the blacks back, but not before the former was wounded slightly, and the latter very severely.

Mr. Rothery found Mr. Hill lying on his face twenty yards from the camp fire, with a spear wound in his back, and a severe wound on the back part of his head, apparently caused by a blow from a nulla-nulla. He was alive when Mr. Rothery first went up to him, but died ten minutes after. Mr. Hill, in retreating, evidently intended to get away from the glare of the fire. Mr. Thompson sent a cart for the body on the 23rd, and it was buried at [Coomooboolaroo] on the 24th ultimo.

A telegram was at once sent to Sub-inspector [Otto Oscar] Paschen, who reached the scene of the murder a few days after the occurrence, and started at once after the blacks, but they had fled to the stations of certain squatters on the Lower Dawson, who allow them to remain at their stations. None of the men who actually committed the murder can be identified, so they will be able to remain at those stations in perfect safety. Sub-Inspectors Beevor and Blakeney have both been directed to patrol that part of the district.

Although Mr. Hill was only a short time in the force, he showed an activity and zeal which promised in a short time to have made him a most efficient officer, and the late disaster can only be attributed to his inexperience of the habits of the blacks.

The Brisbane Courier Mon 26 June 1965 Page 1 THE NORTHERN BLACKS.

The following report from Acting Sub-Inspector O. Oscar Paschen, N.M.P., [Native Mounted Police] dated June 16, has been handed to us for publication by the Commissioner of Police [D.T. Seymour] It is addressed to G. P. M. Murray, Esq., I.N.P. [Inspector, Native Police] Rockhampton:

*"I have the honor to report that on receipt of instructions contained in a telegram bearing date the 26th May ultimo, which reached me on the 28th May, I proceeded at once to Coomooboolaro. **I found Acting Sub-Inspector Hill, having been killed by the blacks,** [emphasis added] and Trooper Fred being severely wounded and confined to bed at the Pearl Creek Station. On my way to Coomooboolaro, via Cooroorah, I met with numerous fresh tracks of blacks, and followed them up towards Springton, where on the evening of June 2nd instant a collision took place between my detachment of Native Mounted Police and a mob of blacks; they dispersed in the Forty-mile Scrub, Lower Dawson Road.*

I have the honor to report that I visited the stations named in the margin—Sanders, Mackenzie, Cooroorah, Springton, Tryphinia Vale, Pearl Creek, Coomooboolaro, Wooroona and that the following collisions took place between the Native Police under my command and the aboriginals (sic), viz:

June 4th—On the Sanders Run, near the Expedition Range. The blacks dispersed towards the Comet Range. [That is a long way west of Rannes]

June 5th—On the foot of the Comet Range; the blacks dispersed.

June 7th —In a scrub near the Tryphinia Vale Station; the blacks dispersed.

Sub-Inspector Blakeney and three (3) troopers arrived on the 7th June, and Sub-Inspector Bailey [Bayley] with nine (9) troopers on the 9th June instant. Early on the morning of the 10th June a collision took place in the Expedition Range between the four detachments Native Mounted Police and a party of aboriginals [sic], when the latter were dispersed.

I have the honor to state that I consider the blacks to have left the district for a time, but they will no doubt return to the Expedition Range; and in the Lower Dawson district they are very numerous, and of a hostile disposition towards the Europeans. I consider it my duty to submit to you the urgent necessity for immediate and permanent police protection against the natives of that district. Finally, I have the honor to state that the police will encounter great difficulties in the Lower Dawson district, while several squatters continue to admit the blacks into their stations, and harbour and protect them against the police."

The Brisbane Courier (Qld) Tue 11 December 1923

DEATH OF MR. W. R. O. HILL, VETERAN POLICE MAGISTRATE AND WARDEN.

A picturesque figure in the social life of Brisbane and a man known throughout the State, as an able and earnest administrator - Mr W. R. O. Hill better known as "Willie" Hill - has gone to his rest. He died on Sunday at the residence of his son Mr. Onslow Hill at Gregory-street Auchenflower, at the age of 79.

The late Mr. Hill was born in the barracks of H.M. 10th foot, at St Heliers, Jersey [Islands], in 1844. One of three brothers who came to Queensland in 1861. He had some experience of station work, but later secured a post in the Native Mounted Police and remained in the Government service [as a Police Magistrate and Gold Warden] until his retirement a few years ago [1905].

During his term of service Mr. Hill had some experience of the West but was mainly employed in North Queensland where his name was a household word. He was keen, brave and capable, and by all classes was regarded as an administrator who neither feared nor favoured. In the late seventies his arrest of a murderer [Mutter] at Ravenswood under sensational circumstances, showed how absolutely fearless he was.

His book, "**Forty-five years' Experience in North Queensland**," is of great interest and in it there are reminiscences of people and deeds which illustrate the strenuous life of the earlier days of the Public Service. The duties of a police magistrate and goldfields' warden were very responsible, and it was impossible to refer all difficult propositions to the heads of the departments in Brisbane. Thus, the successful officers in the Far North were necessarily men of vision and resource, and not afraid of responsibility.

Mr. Hill was twice married. A son of the first marriage is Mr. Onslow Hill of the Railway Department. He served in the South African war, twice, and remained in that country

for about 12 years after the declaration of peace. He married Miss Ivy Craig who died March 1914.

Mr "Willie" Hill's brothers were both in the Public Service of Queensland. Mr. Stanley Hill was lastly Registrar of the District Court at Rockhampton, then made a fortune from Mount Morgan's gold discoveries and succeeded to the family baronetcy. Cecil Hill was in the Native Mounted Police and was killed by the blacks on the Dawson.

From the book by Alan J. Hillier "The Native Police Under Scrutiny" Note 50, Page 293:

The Hill family were lucky, one son **Stanley Hill**, worked on the Police Commissioner's small staff in 1865, and notified his family, which included **William Richard Onslow Hill** and [his brother-in-law] **Charles Henry Eden**, two significant writers on early Queensland. Beresford like Kaye was a Cloncurry Native Police officer killed by Aborigines and was left in an unmarked grave until his family took action to erect a monument.

EDEN, CHARLES HENRY (1839–1900) BY DOROTHY JONES

This article was published in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 4, (MUP), 1972

Charles Henry Eden (1839-1900), public servant and writer, was born on 20 March 1839, the younger son of Robert Eden (1800-1879) and his wife Frances, daughter of Rev. Rowland Egerton Warburton; his great-grandfather was Sir Robert Eden, third baronet of West Auckland, and his uncle was Admiral Henry Eden (1797-1888). After sale of his naval commission Eden arrived at Moreton Bay in the "**Queen of the Colonies**" on 6 April 1863. On 11 May at St John's Cathedral, Brisbane, he married a fellow passenger, **Georgina**, daughter of Captain Frederick William Hill.

According to his "**My Wife and I in Queensland: An Eight Years' Experience in the Above Colony**" with Some Account of Polynesian Labour (London, 1872), Eden shepherded at Pilton [Darling Downs], obtained a post in the Registrar-General's Office through the influence of **George Elphinstone Dalrymple**, spent two years at Mount McConnell under **Ernest Henry** and searched for gold at Calliope and Gympie in 1867. In Brisbane in 1868 for the **Duke of Edinburgh's** visit he was appointed on 6 May Police Magistrate and Sub-collector of Customs at Cardwell at a salary of £300. After an inquiry he was dismissed in March 1870, [because there was insufficient work] and left on the '**Clarence**' in May to return to England.

In his book Eden did not mention his appointment at Cardwell; but his claim is evidently untrue that he left Brisbane in 1868 solely to join **John Davidson** in a sugar venture at Bellenden Plains until carried aboard the '**Black Prince**' unconscious from fever in early 1870. In England Eden turned to writing and by his death on 16 February 1900, had published in London some sixteen novels and many works of exploration and travel, including *Australia's Heroes* (c.1875) and *The Fifth Continent, With the Adjacent Islands* (c.1877).

Most controversial in the colonies for its disenchanting [but factual] account of colonial life was '**My Wife and I in Queensland**'. A reviewer in the *Illustrated London News*, 22

June 1872, found Eden's work to be 'both manly and gentlemanly' in spirit but thought it 'enough to warn honest men away from Queensland for some time to come'.

In reply the *Brisbane Courier* accused Eden of 'vilifying the colony that was foolish enough to provide him with an easy and honourable position in its service, a man whose sole recommendation was—that the Duke of Edinburgh was his friend'. One correspondent, 'A Bohemian', added two days later: 'Very few men have had a better opportunity of observing "low life" here and gauging its utmost depths of depravity, and nobody could take a greater pleasure in the task than Eden'.

Eden's elder son Guy Ernest Morton (d.1954) became a distinguished lawyer and also wrote for the London stage; he published two novels and a book of Australian verse, *Bush Ballads* (London, 1907)

**Extract from the book, "My Wife and I in Queensland" by Charles Henry Eden
CHAPTER V.**

BUSH INCIDENTS. (Eden's version of the murder of his brother-in-law, Cecil Fulford Hill. He refers to his wife, Georgina, as Lucy.)

"ABOUT a year after our arrival at Mount McDonnell, whilst at tea one evening, the superintendent of an adjacent station, who had just come up from Bowen, mentioned that a rumour was prevalent when he left, to the effect that an officer of the native mounted police had been murdered by the blacks amongst the Dawson scrubs, and his detachment cut to pieces. Of Lucy's three brothers two were in the police, but I hardly think we, any of us, took much notice of it, false reports were so rife, and wherever news is bad, it gains in strength as it rolls. However, before going to bed I questioned Willie St. G., who told me that my brother-in-law Cecil was the supposed victim, but beyond that knew nothing. I was in great distress, for it would be more than a fortnight before any authentic account could reach us, and I feared some passer-by would unwittingly talk about it, so I determined to take poor Lucy to the cattle station, where, being off the main road, there would be less likelihood of the rumour reaching her. It was hard work keeping up a smiling exterior with such a load on my breast, but she never suspected anything, and at the end of the fortnight the mail arrived fully confirming the sad intelligence.

It appeared that the blacks had been doing a great deal of mischief on the Dawson runs, spearing cattle, driving away sheep, and mustering in such numbers as even to threaten the stations. In this they were much assisted by the nature of the country, which consisted of dense and almost impenetrable scrubs, through which no horse could be pushed, into which the blacks could retreat when pursued, and almost bid defiance to an inimical force. They usually assemble in great numbers once a year to fight and dance - corroborry as it is called - at which time also take place the rites of initiating the young warriors who have attained the age of manhood, and sundry other mystic ceremonies which, to the best of my belief, have never been witnessed by a European. In nearly every case these gatherings end in murder, the principal inciters being the old gins, who inflame the newly-recognised young men.

Poor Cis was sent on this, his first and last expedition, with a detachment of four troopers, and on arriving at the station which had requested protection, the superintendent, Mr. J., offered to show him where the blacks were. Accompanied by

him, Cis rode into the scrub, and finding an open place, and it being then dusk, he camped there, letting the troopers go to sleep, he and Mr. J. agreeing to take watch and watch throughout the night.

About midnight it commenced to rain and became very dark; shortly afterwards came a shower of spears from every direction, accompanied by hideous yells, a rush of dark bodies, the sickening sound of bone smashing under the blows of the nullah-nullahs, and then all was silent as before. J. recovered himself after, he supposes, about half an hour; his right arm hung useless by his side, and his scalp hanging over his eyes nearly blinded him. Poor Cis must have died without any pain, three spears were completely through him, and to make sure of their bloody work, the blacks had beaten in his head like an eggshell. One trooper dead; another so dreadfully speared and cut about that it seemed to be almost a mercy to put him out of his misery; the other two not to be seen.

In another moment J. heard the crack of a carbine in the darkness, mingled with the yells of the blacks, and followed quickly by three more barrels, then all still again. He described his feelings to me as being so dreadful that he feared that the brain-cords would burst, and that he would become insane. The weather was fine now, even fitful glimpses of the moon shining down on the bodies, and on the mutilated trooper writhing in his great agony; but, though the dying light of the fire showed his form in bold relief, a mark for further spears, the pain of his own wounds, and the giddiness from loss of blood, prevented his moving and caused him to drop again, when, like a sail to the ship-wrecked mariner, came the reports of the carbines. He managed to crawl to poor Cis's body, and taking his whistle, recalled the troopers, who, in a short time, made their appearance, one badly wounded; but, brave fellows as they were, having followed the blacks into the scrub, and made a good account of several of them.

J. told me that, despite his own grief and pain, he was dearly touched at these poor savages wailing over the body of their officer. 'Baal we see fellow like it this again, mine Marmy [Master] bong [dead], oh warra wurra yurra hurra,' &c., &c. At daylight Peter, the only sound man amongst them, caught a horse, and J. rode into the station for assistance. A cart was sent out for the bodies, the graves being dug in the interim; the wounded men were looked to, strange to say, the poor fellow who was almost cut to pieces recovered; and before sundown poor Cis and his trooper were buried side by side, and the sweet wattle-scented air blows gently over as good a gentleman and Christian as ever fell in the execution of his duty, and of as faithful a black boy as ever sat in pigskin.

The next few weeks passed gloomily enough, for poor Cis was a favourite brother, but I will not trouble the reader with our sorrows. Willie, Lucy's other brother, who had been in the police, had been offered the superintendence of a large sheep station only one hundred and thirty miles from us, which he had accepted, quitting the force, and I thought if I could induce him to come over and visit us, it might cheer my poor little wife up, so I determined to ride to him, and bring him back with me."

I made contact with Sergeant Paul James, the Officer in Charge of Duaringa Police Station. Paul has also been researching the murder of Sub-Inspector Cecil Hill. He

informed me that Hill was buried on what is now Shannonvale Station, formerly part of Coomooboolaroo Station, south-east of Daringa.

He said he had spoken to people who are aware that Hill was buried there, and the corner posts of the fence erected around the grave site were still visible forty years ago but have since become obliterated.

The QLD Police Honours and Awards Committee have considered the circumstances surrounding the death of Sub-Inspector Cecil Fulford Hill, as they believed it to be, at that time the committee are of the view that there is insufficient evidence to include him on the honours list. I believe I have ample additional information to change their minds.