



## Colonel J HILL MC, ED

[1888 – 1958]



### Colonel Hill was President of the Club in 1934 - 35

John Hill was born in Scotland in 1888 to William and Jane Hill. He was educated in Great Britain and achieved a Bachelor of Science degree. In 1911 he was engaged as a mathematics teacher at Allen Grove School, in Glasgow. During this period, he received a commission and served for 2 years in the Glasgow Officers Training Group and 2 years in the London University Contingent.

In 1913 John was appointed a mathematics and science teacher at Rockhampton Boys Grammar School and he moved to Australia. This was the commencement of a lengthy career in Queensland education and service as an Australian Army officer.

On 12 May 1916, Hill married Kathleen Frances (née Richmond) [3 March 1890 – 9 December 1989]. They had three daughters –

- Joan Frances (born 11 March 1917)

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- Margaret [18 May 1925 - 26 December 1999], and
- Patricia (details unknown).

They also had a son –

- William Maurice [22 December 1918 - 29 May 1920]

On 28 September 1914 John was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. On 12 April 1915 he was posted to Gallipoli with the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> AIF. He was promoted to Captain on 29 May 1915.

On 7 August 1915, while leading a charge against enemy held trenches, Captain Hill received a bullet wound to his head. Despite this, and other wounds, he continued in the action, until the next afternoon, when he was able to have his wounds treated. He subsequently was Mentioned in Dispatches and on 8 February 1916 was awarded the Military Cross for his leadership in the action.

An excerpt from an ABC program and a letter he wrote describes this action as-

“The order came down for John to take 100 of the men and clear the trenches with bayonets.

*..... inwardly, I said goodbye to life but outwardly I smiled and felt as calm as I would on a peacetime manoeuvre.”*

The young man quickly came up with a plan, deciding to take the men and work his way methodically through the trenches, one at a time.

*“I soon knew how far up I could go - something hit me on the top of the head. I enquired - is that a stone or what? Mr Little (now a 2nd Lieutenant, was my platoon Sgt) informed me a bullet had ploughed its way through the top of my head. It was bleeding rather badly but I had no time to think of that.”*

Captain Hill was evacuated to England where he qualified and then served as a machine gun instructor. He was promoted to Major on 20 January 1916, and he returned to Australia on 17 March 1916.

Major Hill was medically discharged on 17 March 1916. He had been awarded the Military Cross, was Mentioned in Dispatches and received the British War Medal, the 1914 - 1915 Star, and the Victory Medal (with oak leaf).

On 22 November 1917 he was appointed as a Provisional Lieutenant with the Citizen Forces. He also took a keen interest in returned soldiers' welfare and was a ministerial nominee to a veterans' welfare organisation in Rockhampton.

Lieutenant Hill continued his Army service and on 31 March 1921, was promoted to Major and was posted to 42nd Battalion and then to 15th Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Division. On 1 January 1925 He was promoted Lieutenant Colonel and was appointed as Commanding Officer of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Moreton Regiment, where he served until 31 December 1928.

In 1932 Lieutenant Colonel Hill was recorded in the *Brisbane Telegraph* as being the commanding Officer of the 9/15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, and in 1935 he was commanding the 9/49<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

On 1 August 1935 Lieutenant Colonel Hill was promoted Temporary Colonel and then Temporary Brigadier and was appointed Commander 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. On 15 April 1936 he was awarded the Efficiency Decoration.

In 21 June 1940 Brigadier Hill was appointed an Aide de Camp to The Governor General (Lord Gowrie). On the 1 August 1940 he relinquished command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, reverted to his permanent rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was transferred to the unallotted list.

On 9 April 1941 he was appointed to command a Garrison Brigade as a Temporary Colonel. There is no record of his further service.

In February 1917 John Hill was appointed the Principal of Rockhampton Technical College and, in that year, as the foundation Principal of Rockhampton High School.

On 28 May 1923 the Rockhampton Bulletin described him as being the Inspector of Technical Colleges in Queensland. On 3 December 1936 that newspaper described him as being the Inspector of Technical Colleges and the Chairman of the Board of Rockhampton Technical College.

In 1943 Colonel J Hill MC ED was recorded as being the Assistant Chief Inspector of Queensland Schools.

On 16 February 1950 the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin reported that- "*Colonel J Hill Director of State Education renewed many acquaintances and addressed a gathering of secondary school teachers.*"

Lieutenant Colonel John Hill MC joined the United Service Club in 1925

On 18 April 1932 an article in the *Brisbane Telegraph* described that Lieutenant Colonel Hill was farewelled by members of the United Service Club before departing, with Mrs Hill, for a 23-week tour of Scotland and England. Another article in that Newspaper stated that the 9/15 Battalion officers and warrant officers held a smoko social at the Water Street drill hall to farewell Lieutenant Colonel Hill.

On 2 October 1932 a further article stated that a reception at the united Service Club welcomed back Lieutenant Colonel Hill.

He joined the Committee as Vice President of the Club in 1933. He was elected President in 1934 and continued in that position in 1935. The Club History describes that "*altogether, Colonel Hill presided over a very social year including the first Club dinner for some years, which was held on 23 May 1935 to mark the occasion of the King's jubilee.*"

Colonel John Hill MC ED died on 2 January 1958. His widow, Kathleen, survived him and lived a long life before dying on the 9 December 1989.

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents
- National Library (Trove) including the Brisbane Telegraph
- Ancestry.com
- London and Australian Gazettes