

Durrington War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War I



6769 PRIVATE

C. J. HILL

8TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

1ST MARCH, 1917 Age 19

Too Far Away

Thy Grave To See

But Never Too Far

To Think Of Thee

*Commonwealth War Graves Headstone for Pte C. J. Hill is located in Grave Plot # 215
of Durrington War Graves Cemetery*

Clifton John HILL

Clifton John Hill was born at Hillston, New South Wales in 1896 to parents Stephen and Rose M. Hill (nee Thompson). He was a 19 year old, single, Grocer from Hillston, NSW when he enlisted on 7th July, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Battalion, 22nd Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 6769 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mr S. Hill of Hillston, NSW.

Pte Clifton John Hill embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Port Napier* on 17th November, 1916 & disembarked at Devonport, England on 29th January, 1917.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Pte Clifton John Hill was admitted sick to Fargo Hospital from 2nd Training Battalion on 16th February, 1917.

Private Clifton John Hill died at 2.15 a.m. on 1st March, 1917 at Military Hospital Fargo, Wiltshire from Broncho Pneumonia.

A death for Clifton J. Hill, aged 20, was registered in the March quarter, 1917 in the district of Amesbury, Wiltshire.

Private Clifton John Hill was buried on 3rd March, 1917 at Durrington Cemetery, Wiltshire – Plot number 215 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

Pte Clifton John Hill was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte Hill's father – Mr S. Hill (December, 1921 & January, 1922).

Private C. J. Hill is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 53.



(Photos by Cathy Sedgwick)



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

C. J. Hill is also remembered on the Hillston War memorial at Hillston Memorial Park located at High Street, Hillston, NSW.



Hillston War Memorial (Photos by Mattinbgn)



The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Clifton John Hill – service number 6769 as being 19 years old & served with 8th Battalion Australian Infantry. He was the son of Stephen and Rose Mary Hill, of Hillston, New South Wales.

(40 pages of Pte Clifton John Hill's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H06326

Pte Clifton John Hill

Newspaper Reports

CASUALTIES – 279th LIST

NSW – DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte C. J. Hill, Hillston

(*The Land*, Sydney, NSW – Friday 23 March, 1917)

THE LATE PRIVATE CLIFF HILL

The following is portion of a letter written by George Blanchard (with the A.I.F.) to a friend, under date 3rd March, 1917 : — ' You will have heard of the death of Cliff Hill long before this reaches you, but this will supply the particulars, and as I know there are a good many who will be desirous of learning all about him, you will be in a position to furnish same.

About his illness, I don't know much, but I understand he died from pneumonia. He was game right through, and was on parade until he could no longer stand. The first I knew he was ill beyond having a cold, from which we all have suffered, was when on parade we were marching on very

heavy ground, and they had just halted us to allow of us recovering breath, I heard an officer say to someone, 'What is wrong with you?' I only just dared to glance along the rank, and saw Cliff staggering. The officer detailed Jim Hurst to lead him off — he could scarcely walk then. The doctor saw him that night, and next morning he was placed on sick parade and sent to Hospital, and remained there until his death on March 1st. The announcement of his death was a shock to the whole company. So soon as the sad news reached us, I made an application on behalf of myself and comrades to attend the funeral, and myself, Ham Gordon and Jim and Charlie Hurst were appointed as bearers. He had a very decent funeral. The coffin was of stained wood, the name plate on which bore the inscription: 'Private C. J. Hill, died March 1st, 1917.' The firing party consisted of all those from the Hillston district. We marched to the Hospital; there a gun carriage, drawn by six horses, met us. We placed the coffin on top and covered it with the Union Jack, the four bearers marched at each wheel, the firing party in front, an officer from our battalion directly behind the coffin, and the band, which is the best on Salisbury Plain, in the centre. We carried him shoulder high to the Church, and had part of the burial service there, then we placed him on the gun carriage, and took him to the cemetery, the band, playing the 'Dead March.' The caretaker's wife or daughter (I don't know which it was) made a wreath with his name on, with the inscription; 'With deepest sympathy,'. The remainder of the burial service was read, the firing party fired a volley, and we marched back to camp. I think I have told you all as far as the ceremony is concerned. His parents will have the one consolation of knowing that he died doing his duty right up to the last. He never was a shuffler, and whenever he was wanted he was there. His death was a terrible shock to all of us.

(The Hillston Spectator and Lachlan River Advertiser, NSW- Friday 15 June, 1917)

IN MEMORIAM.

HILL — In loving remembrance of our dear son, Private Clifton J. Hill, who died on active service, March 1st, 1917, aged 20 years.

Somewhere in England to-night he sleeps,

Paying the bitter price ;

Somewhere in England to-night he rests

With the sons of sacrifice.

— Inserted by his parents, Stephen and Rose Hill.

HILL— In loving remembrance of our dear brother, Clifton J. Hill, who died in England, March 1st, 1917.

He rose responsive to his country's call,

And gave for her his best, his life, his all.

—Inserted by his brothers, Ashleigh, Frank and Fred Hill.

HILL — In loving remembrance of our dear grandson, Clifton J. Hill, who died in England, March 1st, 1917, aged 20 years.

Far away from all who loved him,

In a hero's grave he lies

And though his body resteth,

His memory never dies.

—Inserted by Fred. H. and M. J. Thompson.

HILL. — In loving memory of my pal Cliff Hill, who died on 1st March, 1917, whilst serving his King and Country.

'He died as he lived.'

— Inserted by his schoolmate, Fred Parr.

HILL. — In fond memory of Clinton John Hill, who died in England, March 1st, 1917.

I pictured his safe returning,

I longed to clasp his hand;

But God has postponed the meeting,

'Twill be in a better land.

— Inserted by his friend, Blanche McCarthy

(The Hillston Spectator and Lachlan River Advertiser, NSW- Saturday 2 March, 1918)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Pte C. J. Hill does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Too Far Away Thy Grave To See But Never Too Far To Think Of Thee

Photo of Pte C. J. Hill's Headstone at Durrington War Graves Cemetery, Wiltshire.



(Photo © Ian King - with permission)