

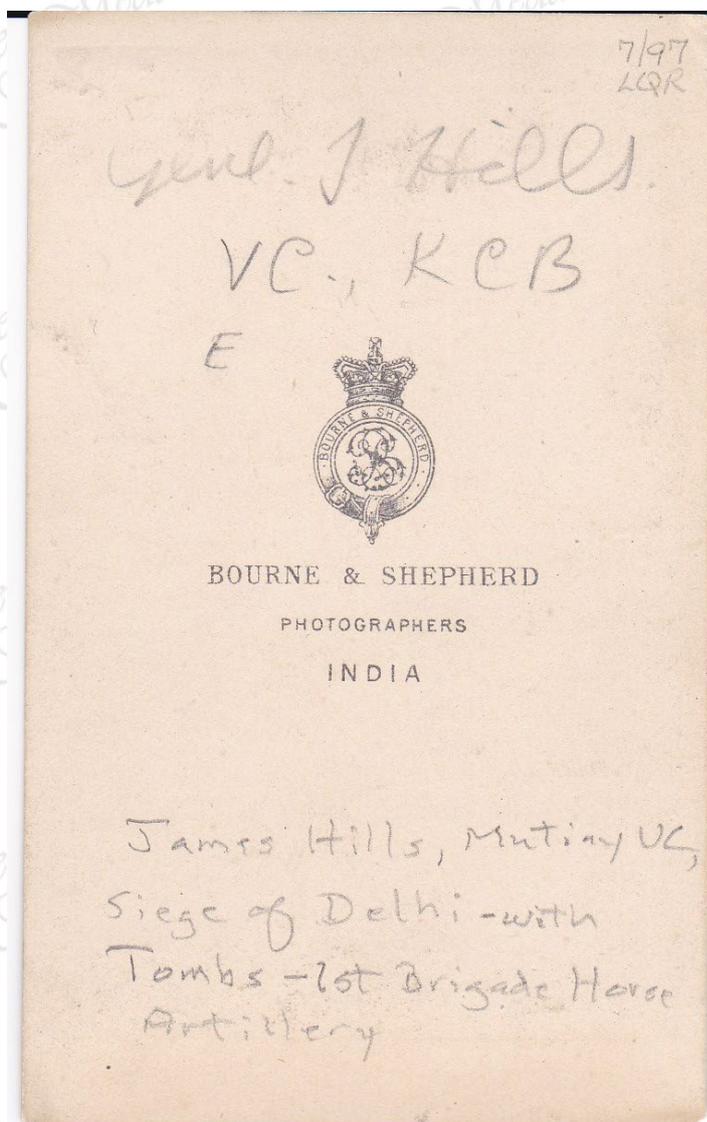
**A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS CARTES DE VISITE PORTRAYING LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES HILLS. AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR ACTIONS DURING THE INDIAN MUTINY**



Sir James Hills-Johnes (1833-1919) was born on 20th August 1833 in Neechindipore, India, where his father, James Hills was a well-known indigo planter. His mother was Charlottee, daughter of Signor Angelo Savi Moisingunge, and hailed from Bengal. He was educated in Britain, firstly at Edinburgh Academy, and then at Addiscombe, where he received his commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Bengal Artillery on 11th June 1853.

He served throughout the Indian Mutiny of 1857-58 as a Subaltern in the 2nd Troop, 1st Brigade of the Bengal Horse Artillery, being present at the actions of the Hindun River (30-31st May 1857), Battle of Badli-ke-Serai (8th June 1857) and the occupation of the Delhi Ridge. For some days following the occupation, the troop helped defend the post at Hindoo Rao's House, where there was almost daily fighting. After the heavy guns were placed in position, the troop was on picquet duty at "The Mound", in rear of the right flank of the camp. On the 9th July 1857, at this picquet, Lieutenant Hills would perform the actions that led to the award of the VC (London Gazette, 27th April 1858). Hills gallantly defended his position against the enemy, until on two separate occasions when he was in peril, his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Tombs came to his aid, killing the enemy who were threatening him.

The gallantry of Tombs and Hills was reported by Lieutenant McKenzie, who tore up Tombs' original report which only mentioned the actions of Lieutenant Hills and not his own. Following the incident on 9th July 1857, Hills served with Tombs' Troop at the Battle of Nujeefghar on 25th August 1857, and at the assault on Delhi and the fall of the city (20th September 1857) and the following year, served in the capture of Lucknow (2nd - 16th March 1858). He was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Indian Mutiny Medal with two clasps. Hills became life-long friends with Tombs and described him as the "best commander he served under". Following the end of the Mutiny, Hills became Aide de Camp to Lord Canning, the Governor General of India and was presented his VC by Lord Clyde in 1859. He was promoted to Captain in 1862, and was given the Brevet of Major in 1864.



He was appointed Brigade Major of the Royal Artillery, Northern Division, Bengal from 1864-1869, with a short break when he served in the Abyssinian Expedition from 1867-1868. He was mentioned in despatches and awarded the campaign medal, and was given the Brevet of Lieutenant Colonel in 1868. He was appointed Commandant of the Peshawar Mountain Battery in October 1869, and whilst at Kohat commanded the district and garrison from 1870 to 1871. He was in command of the Battery during the Lushai Campaign, and was mentioned in despatches. He was also created a CB.

In 1878, he was to join the Kandahar Field Force as Assistant Adjutant General and served in the first phase of the Afghan War of 1878-1880. He then joined Sir Frederick Sleight Roberts' Force in the Kurram Valley in September 1879. Following favourable reports from Roberts, he was appointed Military Governor of Kabul in October 1879, holding the post until its abolition in January 1880.

After a few months of inactivity, he was placed in command of the 3rd Division, Northern Afghanistan Field Force. He was mentioned in despatches again, was created a KCB, and thanked by both Houses of Parliament in May 1881. He received his Good Service Pension in December that year. He married Miss Elizabeth Johnes in Westminster Abbey on 16th September 1882, and added her name to his own. She was from an ancient Welsh family, and was the daughter of John Johnes from Dolaucothy, Carmarthenshire. He was promoted to Lieutenant General in 1886, and retired on special pension in 1888. He was then appointed Honorary Colonel of the Carmarthenshire Artillery in 1891, and was created a GCB in 1893. He then accompanied Lord Roberts VC in a private capacity from Kronstadt to Diamond Hill during the war in South Africa. He then became Honorary Colonel of the 4th Welsh Regiment and chairman of the Territorial Force Association in Carmarthenshire.

He was the brother in law of William Cubitt VC, and the great uncle of Lewis Pugh Evans VC. Legend has it that he was murdered by his own butler at his home, Dolaucothy, because as the local JP he had refused the butler a public house license, on the 3rd January 1919, aged 85. He was buried in the family vault of St Cynwyl Parish Church, Caio, Wales.

CDV approx 10.5 x 6.3cm. The above taken from the fine vconline website:

<http://www.vconline.org.uk/sir-james-hills-johnes-vc/4586999591.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC CDV