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Eulope (c. 1800–c. 1840)

by Ray Kerkhove

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Eulope (c. 1800–c. 1840), headman of the Quandamooka (Jandai) people, came from Stradbroke Island, Queensland. In stature and facial appearance he was said to have resembled Napoleon Bonaparte. Perhaps for this reason, but more likely because of 'his daring courage and opposition to the military when they ... took possession of Amity Point' (*Colonial Times* 1850, 4), the first colonial settlement on Stradbroke Island, British soldiers knew him as 'Napoleon,' 'Bonaparte,' or 'Boney.'

In 1827 Eulope apparently threw a spear at a prison guard and stole a steel axe from Dunwich, a second military post on Stradbroke Island. As punishment, and because the Dunwich soldiery had noted his rebellious tendencies, Captain Patrick Logan exiled him to Noogoon, an uninhabited island in Moreton Bay. In various letters, Logan began referring to Noogoon as 'St Helena' in mocking reference to the place of Emperor Napoleon's imprisonment. By the mid-nineteenth century, this name was in regular use for the island.

Unbeknown to Logan, Eulope's imprisonment on Noogoon only lasted three days. Eulope knew the island very well, as it was a regular resort for his people for turtle and flying fox hunting, and for harvesting tulipwood (used for spears). He 'simply stripped a sheet of bark, sewed both ends, and paddled back to Stradbroke' (Meston 1903, 8) where he was able to keep his identity hidden for a time. Various resistance activities were subsequently organised, probably by Eulope, culminating in the Battle of 'Narawai (near Moongalba) in around 1830 in which a dozen or so British soldiers and convicts were lured into swamps to fight Eulope's warriors. Eventually, the British conceded defeat and called a truce.

Eulope was 'cunning, elusive and of superb physique' (*Telegraph* 1931, 12). He was so quick, wiry, muscular, and skilled that he regularly beat Aboriginal warriors from other groups who were much bigger than himself, including the famous Lockyer-region resistance leader Old Moppy. Around 1835, accompanied by one hundred warriors, Eulope was part of a traditional battle-tournament near Zillmere (Brisbane) in which he soundly defeated Old Moppy, temporarily breaking a long-standing alliance between the Quandamooka and Lockyer peoples.

In August 2019, Eulope was honoured with a Melbourne print exhibition, *The Black Napoleon*, by Quandamooka artist Megan Cope and associates.

References

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- [Old Moppy](#) (rival) 

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