

## ***Herbert Plumer Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta***

*Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer (1857-1932) was born in 1857 in Torquay. Educated at Eton, he entered the army in 1876 with a commission as a sub-lieutenant in the 65th Foot regiment.*

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*With his squat figure, ruddy countenance and white moustache, Plumer cut an apparently comical figure which belied the reality that he was one of the most effective and successful of First World War generals.*

*Popular among his own men (if not with Haig, who disliked Plumer and considered removing him on several occasions), Plumer was a meticulous planner, cautious and impossible to fluster. Given command of Second Army in May 1915, Plumer served in Ypres for two years, culminating with the launch of the Messines Ridge offensive on 7 June 1917.*

*The Messines attack was planned with great care and, unusually, achieved all its objectives quickly and at a fraction of the usual cost. The attack was a great success. It was begun with the explosion of 19 of 21 mines at dawn on 7 June that was said to form the loudest man-made sound up to that time; Lloyd-George is reported to have heard the explosions in Downing Street.*

*"Gentlemen, we may not make history tomorrow, but we shall certainly change the geography."*

*Remark to his staff before the Battle of Messines 1917, in which mines were extensively employed*

*Following the Messines success, Plumer was appointed to salvage the disastrously unsuccessful*

*Passchendaele campaign overseen by Gough. Despite difficult circumstances Plumer managed to salvage the operation; in spite of his reputation as a cautious, sparing commander his operations at*

*Passchendaele were more than usually expensive in terms of casualties.*

*After returning from the Italian Front in November 1917 (where he was sent to restore order to the front line following the Italian disaster at Caporetto), he and Second Army conducted the defence against the great German push of spring 1918.*

*Plumer was promoted Field Marshal following the armistice in 1919 and received a peerage. He commanded the Army of Occupation on the Rhine until April 1919. He was subsequently appointed*

*Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Malta until May 1924. He also served as High Commissioner in Palestine; became President of the MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club, at Lords), and became an active member of the House of Lords. Plumer unveiled the new Menin Gate in Ypres in 1927.*

*Herbert Plumer died on 16 July 1932 and is buried at Westminster Abbey*