

= Thomas Cubitt ( British Army officer ) =

General Sir Thomas Astley Cubitt , KCB , CMG , DSO ( 9 April 1871 ? 19 May 1939 ) was a British Army officer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries , who commanded a division in the First World War and in retirement served as Governor of Bermuda .

Cubitt was the youngest son of a family of rural gentry in Norfolk , who joined the Royal Artillery in 1891 . He requested colonial service , and spent five years in Africa , where he was involved in the creation of the West African Frontier Force and served in a number of campaigns in northern Nigeria . Shortly before the outbreak of the First World War , he was appointed as Deputy Commissioner in Somaliland , where he mounted a series of campaigns against the Dervish State .

He requested a transfer to the Western Front in 1916 , and commanded an infantry battalion and a brigade before being promoted to take command of 38th ( Welsh ) Division in early 1918 . He led the division until the Armistice , with marked success . Following the war , he held a series of peacetime commands in Germany , Egypt , and England , before being made Governor of Bermuda in 1931 . He held this position until 1936 , when he retired .

= = Family background = =

Born at Great Yarmouth on 9 April 1871 , Thomas was the third son of Major Frank Astley Cubitt and his wife Bertha , daughter of Captain Thomas Blakiston of the Royal Navy . The family resided at Thorpe Hall in Norwich , with an estate at Fritton , near Great Yarmouth . Major Cubitt came from a family of rural gentry , and had attended Rugby and Jesus College , Cambridge before entering the British Army in 1853 as an ensign in the 5th Regiment of Foot . He saw service in the Indian Mutiny before returning to England to act as adjutant to volunteer battalions of the Norfolk Regiment , and retired from the Army in 1889 . He later served as a Justice of the Peace and chair of the local district council .

Cubitt 's eldest brother , Bertram Blakiston ( b . 1862 ) , attended Balliol College , Oxford before entering the civil service ; he would later serve as the private secretary to the Conservative politicians Edward Stanhope , Secretary of State for War , in 1890 @-@ 91 , and St John Brodrick , Under @-@ Secretary of State for War , in 1896 @-@ 98 . He was knighted in 1920 . The middle brother , Julian Francis ( b . 1869 ) studied at Selwyn College , Cambridge , but does not appear to have had an active public career . Their one sister , Helen , married a German economist , Dr. Moritz Julius Bonn , in 1903 .

= = Early career = =

Thomas Cubitt attended Haileybury , as his brother Julian had done , but rather than attend university he studied at the Royal Military Academy , Woolwich , before being commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1891 . After service in India , and a course at the Staff College , Camberley , he requested a transfer to a colonial posting . He was sent to West Africa in 1898 , and appointed as commander of the artillery in the Northern Nigeria Protectorate on its formation in 1900 , alongside a promotion to Captain . Whilst in Nigeria , he was closely involved in the formation of the Nigeria Regiment in the West African Frontier Force . He saw active duty in a number of expeditions between 1900 and 1903 , including as Staff officer to Colonel George Kemball in the January 1901 expedition to defeat the Emir of Kontagora , and culminating in the command of a battalion of mounted infantry during the Kano @-@ Sokoto campaign of 1903 . For his service in Africa , he was mentioned in despatches several times ( including 31 August 1901 ) , promoted to the brevet rank of Major on 21 March 1901 , and awarded the Distinguished Service Order ( DSO ) .

He returned to regimental duties in the United Kingdom in 1905 , and from 1908 to 1911 he served as a Brigade Major in Ireland with 3rd Cavalry Brigade .

= = First World War = =

In July 1914 , Cubitt was appointed Deputy Commissioner and Officer Commanding for the Somaliland Protectorate ; after the disastrous Battle of Dul Madoba , the colonial administration was seeking to restore British control over the inland areas of the Protectorate . Cubitt planned and commanded a series of operations through the winter of 1914 @-@ 15 , destroying several Dervish forts . Shortly after he arrived in Somaliland , the First World War had broken out , and once the winter campaign was over he requested to be transferred to Europe ; the request was granted , but it took until early 1916 for him to be replaced and make his way home . For his services in Africa , he was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George and a Companion of the Bath , and promoted to brevet Colonel .

Cubitt turned down the opportunity of a staff posting on the Western Front to request a front @-@ line command , and briefly commanded the 8th ( Service ) Battalion of the Lincolnshire Regiment in early 1917 before assuming command of 57th Brigade in April . The brigade saw service at Messines and Ypres in 1917 , and in the Spring Offensive of early 1918 . He was then appointed to take command of 38th ( Welsh ) Division in late May or early June 1918 , after its previous commander , Charles Blackader , had fallen ill .

An officer in one of the 38th 's infantry battalions , who met Cubitt in early June , shortly after he took command , described him as " a very large and fierce @-@ looking major @-@ general , with two rows of ribbons , and a gleam in his eye " , who proceeded to interrogate a subaltern about the exact type and position of his unit 's trench latrines , apparently something of a pet topic . A " fire @-@ eater with a marvellous flow of language " , it was Cubitt 's manner of speech , more than anything else , which made an impact on his contemporaries ; a front @-@ line officer in 1918 described watching him , during the October offensive , clearing a traffic jam with merely " a magnificent gush of language " . A colleague from his early days in the Artillery described him as a " perpetual joy to the soldier 's world ... because of his picturesque language , which never gave offence because it was so absolutely natural and so aptly fitted the occasion " , but under some circumstances it proved less suitable . Following a failed raid in 1918 , he visited the offending battalion and harangued the officers collectively for some time , before demanding that they " damn well had to do the raid over again , and damn well see that [ they ] made a proper job of it , or , by God , damn well go on raiding until [ they ] damn well did . " To the officers on the receiving end , already tired and dissatisfied , this was seen as a " contemptible exhibition " for a senior officer to make .

Regardless of his personal style , Cubitt was credited by Douglas Haig with achieving the desired results . The 38th Division had mounted a successful but very costly attack in April 1918 ; under his command , it mounted two further major operations , at the Battle of Albert in August and Battle of Cambrai in October . Both were successful , with the division demonstrating flexibility , improvisation , and a highly effective tactical doctrine . The division 's performance at Cambrai was sufficiently good to rank it as one of the most effective British divisions during the Hundred Days Offensive .

= = Postwar career = =

Cubitt remained with the 38th Division until the end of the war , and in March 1919 was transferred to command 3rd Infantry Brigade in the British Army of the Rhine . Shortly afterwards , in August , he was posted to take over the demobilising 54th ( East Anglian ) Division in Egypt , remaining with them until October , when the final units sailed for England .

In 1920 , he was appointed to command the Presidency and Assam District in eastern India . The same year , he married Mary Grissell ( née Wood ) , the widow of an officer in the Norfolk Regiment . He returned to England in 1924 , remaining on half @-@ pay until he took command of the 53rd ( Welsh ) Division , a Territorial Army formation , in 1927 . In 1928 , he transferred to the command of the 2nd Division , a regular formation , and was promoted to Lieutenant @-@ General in 1930 . In 1931 , he was knighted and appointed Governor of Bermuda , holding the post for five years before retiring in 1936 . He was promoted to full General in 1935 , and from 1931 to his death held the ceremonial position of colonel commandant of the Royal Artillery .

Cubitt died on 19 May 1939 , leaving an estate of £ 19 @, @ 000 .

