

Herman BALTIA

(1863 – 1938)

C5-L12-T5+6

The son of a Belgian general from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and a German mother, Herman Baltia followed his father around his various postings and attended primary school in Arlon. He, in turn, became a senior Belgian army officer (Lieutenant General) and a politician. He received numerous military awards for his service in the Great War.

A passionate watercolourist, he organised a number of artistic events, notably on the Yser Front, where he exhibited some of his own works.

Following the Treaty of Versailles (1919), which ceded the cantons of Malmédy, Eupen and Saint-Vith to Belgium, he was appointed King's High Commissioner for the Cantons de l'Est. For five years (the transitional period between German law and the shift to Belgian administration), he helped the local people, who had been German for over a hundred years, to integrate with the Belgians. Brokering agreements that respected the rights and customs of both groups, he carried out his task with great skill. These agreements were known as the "Baltia Accords". In August 1920, he received the title of baron.

In 1923, he had a six-metre-high tower built at the Signal de Botrange, raising Belgium's highest point to 700 metres. The Baltia tower has been listed as an Immovable Cultural Heritage of Wallonia site since 1991.

Baltia is buried in the family plot, along with his parents.



Sources : Google Wikipédia / Google Ardenne Web / Els Herrebut : historienne (Inventaire des Archives des Gouvernements Eupen-Malmédy) / Google Aménagement linguistique du Territoire germanophone en Belgique

