

Noted Military Historian Has Passed Away

Brigadier-General E. A.
Cruikshank, of Canada,
Was Well Known
In Jamaica

WROTE LIFE OF SIR HENRY MORGAN

Jamaica's winter tourist season, such as it is or will be in time of war, is now due to commerce; but some, perhaps many, of our regular "stay-over" visitors of former seasons will not come. In at least one case death will have been the cause, and that is so of a distinguished Canadian soldier who until a few years ago had been accustomed to spend the winter in Jamaica, who was well known in the island and greatly esteemed by a wide circle of friends and acquaintances.

He was Brigadier General Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, who died in Ottawa some time ago at the ripe old age of eighty-seven years, after a three weeks' illness from pleurisy. The General, it may fairly be said, died in harness as a military historian, to which work he had for many years devoted himself. He had been Chairman of the Canadian Historic Sites and Monuments

Board since its inception, and attended an arduous annual meeting lasting four days. After this meeting, although tired out, he immediately went on a 200-mile motor trip to choose a site for a memorial cairn to some soldiers killed in the war with the United States in 1812-15. On that trip he caught the cold that proved fatal.

General Cruikshank was son of the late Alexander Cruikshank of Peterhead, Scotland, and Margaret Milne Cruikshank, of Aberdeen, Scotland. He was born in 1852 in the township of Bertie, near Fort Erie, Ontario, and was educated at the St. Thomas Grammar School and Upper Canada College. In 1916 he was made an honorary LL.D. of Alberta University. In his early career he was correspondent to several American newspapers and also entered public life, in which he held several posts for a good many years, notably Treasurer and afterwards Reeve of Fort Erie, member of the County Council of Welland, Ontario and Police Magistrate for the City of Niagara Falls and adjacent districts. During this period he was very active in the affairs of the Canadian militia, and became Colonel of the 44th Infantry Militia Regiment in 1899. He held other high military posts and was promoted to the rank of full Colonel in 1913 and Brigadier General in 1915.

SOLDIER-HISTORIAN.

During the early years of the Great War of 1914-18 General Cruikshank did much valuable work in recruiting and training units for overseas service, and was among the prominent figures of the Canadian Army. He came to Ottawa for special service in 1917, and early in 1918 was one of a group of Canadian officers who went on a special mission to England and France. While a member of this mission he visited that

sector of the Western Front held by the Canadian troops and was also guest of the British Fleet during manoeuvres and battle practice in the North Sea. Later in 1918 he was appointed Director of the Historical Section of the National Defence Headquarters, Ottawa, and whilst holding this position he compiled and published two volumes of a history of the Canadian Militia.

General Cruikshank was best known as a military historian, and was generally regarded as a most accurate and painstaking compiler of documents and author of treatises dealing with military events. He was a prolific writer, and his greatest work was a history of the campaigns on the Niagara Frontier during the war between Britain and the United States in 1812-15. This monumental work fills nine volumes. He also produced a number of other treatises on various celebrated battles. He was particularly interested in the tactics of the Southern Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson in the war between the American States in 1862-66, and about 20 years ago visited some of the famous battlefields of that war.

WROTE MORGAN'S LIFE.

Until a few years ago General Cruikshank was accustomed to spend each winter in Jamaica, and it is especially interesting to note that while residing here he continued his historical researches. Their fruit was an excellent biography of Sir Henry Morgan, Jamaica's colourful and celebrated Pirate-Governor, of which a copy no doubt is in the library of the Institute of Jamaica—or at least ought to be. Thus he was an important link between Canada and Jamaica, and his passing is much regretted by his many friends in this island.

As Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, General Cruikshank was instrumental in preserving for all time many sites on which the history of Canada was moulded. There is scope for similar activity in Ja-

maica, a matter that doubtless will receive the attention of the Institute's Board of Governors. The General was a member of the Royal Society of Canada and a regular contributor to many well known historical publications. He was keenly interested in politics, being a staunch supporter of the Liberal Party, now in power in the Dominion under the leadership of the Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, Prime Minister, who, as readers of the Gleaner will recall, paid an informal visit to Jamaica in October, 1938. The General's widow survives him.

A Learned Soldier

By Harold Moore.

THERE were soldiers who had to remain in Canada during the Great War who gave fine service to their country, and one, Brigadier-General E. A. Cruikshank, died at Ottawa recently. The West should be reminded of this soldierly man, whose influence was impressed on thousands commissioned or enlisted from Alberta.

General Cruikshank was a remote, a diffident, personality in a lanky frame imbued with an instinct for modern soldiering that was not to be belied by the slack rolling of the puttees on his long legs. No one worked more incessantly in camps where few could be older than himself, and officers held accountable when troops were at fault accepted the justness of a martinet whose decisions were severe. He might prowl the lines when the troops slept but was alert when reveille sounded. The drenchings he got at field manoeuvres could not make him flinch from completing the observations on which he lectured afterwards. He took a parade with martial dignity but was a glutton for the true business of warfare. He placed the utmost reliance in training that might be expected to be placed by a disciple of Sir John Moore, and his instructional talks to officers were vivid with the lucidity acquired as a school teacher in early days. His inclination to efface himself curiously created a pervasive influence among the troops encamped under his command.

General Cruikshank gained renown as a military historian long before being promoted to command of the newly organized military district with headquarters at Calgary, but as an administrator with scrupulous regard for the public purse, he gave the Alberta military district a reputation for economy and efficiency when extravagance and waste were palliated in other military districts.

IN the East, but far beyond Canada, Brigadier-General Cruikshank, as he became soon after the outbreak of the Great War, was recognized as a military historian. He was authoritative on Lundy's Lane and Queenston Heights, and on other engagements whose momentous consequences in their own days were overshadowed only by war's modern events. This historic intimacy displayed in some 40 volumes qualified him to be put for a time in charge of the Historical section of the Defence Department after the War ended, and suitably equipped him to be chairman of the Historical Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. A marvellous gift of languages allowed Cruikshank to pass from the study of military history in Canada to the study of the major campaigns in the last century in Europe.

The scholar who was soldier drew from the past to sharpen his military awareness. To think of Cruikshank as immersed in military history would be as blinding to his soldierly qualities as to suggest that Marshal Foch's professorate in France's military staff college divested him of strategical genius. Any comparison of the Canadian military district commander with the commander-in-chief of the Allied forces would wound the shades of the modesty of the former, but the comparison may illustrate how their studies made both men better soldiers.

This lonely, this studious, commander of the unfashionable military district by the foothills of the Rockies wandered afoot in Europe. Leaves he took long before the War were used to explore the terrain later occupied by the Germans in the first stages of the Great War. On historic knowledge and personal observation he deduced anticipations said to be comparable with those deduced by Lieut.-General Sir James Grierson, the most brilliant soldier in England who unfortunately survived to command the Second Army Corps for only one day in France. One other British staff officer traversed the same routes as enlighteningly as did the Canadian district commander, and that other officer was the erratic

genius Henry Wilson. But long afterwards credit was given to Grierson and Cruikshank for being the two most soundly versed and far-seeing on the German intentions.

THE saddening regret of Cruikshank's life was that he had not been given a command at the Front. A yellowed file in the library of this paper contains a press report sent from Ottawa in the very early days of the War, saying that, "Colonel E. A. Cruikshank is to be appointed to command of a Canadian infantry brigade at the Front with the rank of Brigadier-General." The political fates denied him the command. He was 61. The fates may have been kind, though they deprived Canada at the Front of a soldier with a singularly gifted mind.

It could be written of Cruikshank as it was written of Grierson: "Though strict as regards training, he spared his troops unnecessary duties by thinking out his problems in advance." Brigadier-General Cruikshank's unusual military abilities were not recognized as many believed they should have been, but his memory as the general officer commanding Military District No. 13 during the Great War will be saluted by many who rose to important commands, largely because they were trained by him in the essential habit of "thinking out their problems in advance."