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PRESS RELEASE

Time for Release:  
Immediately.

15 September, 1972

PLAQUES TO COMMEMORATE NOTED ONTARIO HISTORIAN,  
BRIG.-GEN. ERNEST ALEXANDER CRUIKSHANK

On Wednesday, September 27, 1972, at 2:00 p.m., two historical plaques (one in French, the other in English) commemorating Brig.-Gen. Ernest Alexander Cruikshank will be unveiled on the grounds of the Canadian War Museum, 330 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario. This plaque is one of a series being erected throughout the province by the Archives of Ontario, acting on the advice of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario.

This ceremony is being arranged and sponsored by the Canadian War Museum, whose Deputy Chief Curator, Mr. Ralph Manning, will act as programme chairman. Others invited to take part include: the Hon. George Kerr, Ontario's Minister of Colleges and Universities; Mr. Michael Cassidy, M.P.P. (Ottawa Centre); Senator George McIlraith, former M.P. (Ottawa Centre); Prof. J. Keith Johnson, Department of History, Carleton University and President of the Ontario Historical Society, who will represent the province's Historic Sites Board. Prof. Sydney F. Wise, Director, Directorate of History, Canadian Forces Headquarters, will give the historical background. The plaques will be unveiled by Mrs. W.S. Yoroshuk, a niece of Brig.-Gen. Cruikshank, and by her son, Brian Yoroshuk.

The inscription on the plaque reads:

BRIG.-GEN. ERNEST ALEXANDER CRUIKSHANK 1853-1939

A noted authority on Ontario's history, Cruikshank was born in Bertie Township, Welland County, and educated at Upper Canada College. An ensign in the militia in 1877, he retired as a brigadier-general in 1921. Because of his interest in history he was seconded to the Public Archives of Canada in 1908, became Director of the Historical Section, General Staff, in 1918, and in 1919 was chosen first Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. He was a member of the Royal Society of Canada and a President of the Ontario Historical Society. Among his many writings were: "The Story of Butler's Rangers", "James Kirby, His Life in Letters", and the edited volumes of "The Simcoe Papers".

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ernest Alexander Cruikshank was born June 29, 1853, in Bertie Township, Welland County, Canada West. He was the son of Alexander Cruikshank, an immigrant from Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and Margaret Milne, also from Aberdeenshire. After attending the Grammar School in St. Thomas, Cruikshank went to Upper Canada College and graduated with honours from that institution. Ernest devoted himself to the study of languages and for a number of years worked for various magazines and newspapers in the United States and Canada.

In 1874 he became a gentleman farmer on his property near Fort Erie. He entered municipal politics and acted as Reeve of Fort Erie for some fifteen years.

Cruikshank's military career began in 1877 as an ensign in the 44th "Welland" Battalion of the Canadian Militia. He was steadily promoted: Lieutenant, 1882; Captain, 1884; 1890-91, attended the Royal School

of Infantry and was awarded a first-class certificate; Major (brevet), 1894; Major (confirmed), 1897.

He was married to Julia Kennedy of Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1879. Three years later he was appointed a Justice of the Peace in Fort Erie.

Of the various aspects of Cruikshank's career, he is probably best-remembered for his contribution to local history, especially that area of Ontario he knew best, the Niagara region. In 1886, the year he became Warden of Welland County, Cruikshank published his first historical work. It was entitled A Historical and Descriptive Sketch of the County of Welland. In succeeding years he produced many articles which were published by such groups as the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, the Niagara Historical Society, and the United Empire Loyalists' Association. He was elected an honorary member of the Ontario Historical Society in 1899 and throughout the years contributed some forty-four articles to that Society's Papers and Records.

In that same year, 1899, Cruikshank was made a Lieutenant-Colonel and was given command of the 5th Infantry Brigade in Military District 2. He volunteered for active duty in the South African War but was refused. From Fort Erie he was transferred to Niagara Falls in 1904 and was appointed a Police Magistrate of that town. The following year, 1905, Col. Cruikshank was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Three years later he resigned his Militia command (though not his rank) to take a position with the Dominion Archives, then housed in what is now the War Museum in Ottawa. During 1908-09, it was Cruikshank's responsibility to oversee the military documents in the Archival collection.

The year 1909 saw Cruikshank transferred to the Regular Army and appointed to command Military District 13, Calgary. Becoming a full Colonel

in August, 1913, he was further honoured with the Militia rank of Brigadier-General in 1915. The following year the University of Alberta bestowed an LL.D. upon Cruikshank.

In 1917 Cruikshank returned to full historical work when, in March, he was recalled to Ottawa for special duty with the Adjutant-General's Branch of the General Staff. In November, 1918, Cruikshank became the first director of the Historical Section, General Staff. The following year he was appointed to the newly created Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and, at that Board's first meeting, was elected Chairman. Between 1920 and 1922 he was President of the Ontario Historical Society, a post he probably would have held earlier but for the commitments of military life.

Cruikshank ended his military career when on December 1, 1921, he was retired on a colonel's pension, the highest rank he had achieved in the Regular Army. Following the death of his first wife, he married Matilda Murdie in 1923. In that year he was also elected a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, London.

Ernest Alexander Cruikshank continued his historical research, passing many of his days at the Public Archives in Ottawa where he continued to live. He remained Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board until his death and during the later part of his life edited for the Ontario Historical Society a number of volumes of the collected papers of people prominent in Canadian history. In recognition of his contribution to historical research, the Canadian Historical Association in 1935 awarded to Cruikshank the Tyrrell gold medal.

The Brigadier-General died in Ottawa on June 23, 1939, and was survived by his second wife.

Of Cruikshank's numerous historical publications, his most important include: The Story of Butler's Rangers, (Welland, 1893); A Memoir of Colonel the honourable James Kirby, (1931); The Life of Sir Henry Morgan, (1935); The Political Adventures of John Henry (1936). He also edited: The Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1812-14 (9 volumes), (Welland, 1896-1908); The Simcoe Papers (5 volumes), (1923-31); The Russell Papers (3 volumes), (1932-36).