Field Marshal Earl Haig Was Genius of Defence

Cool, Kindly, His Qualities Are Recognized by J. C. Mortyn in the New York Times. His Leadership Reached Great Heights in World War

LOVED BY HIS MEN

It is gratifying to read an appreciation of our great men by writers of another country. The following article which appeared in the New York Times of recent date will be interesting to all our veterans and all Britishers as we all are, or should be at heart.

The death of Field Marshal Earl Haig of Bemersyde, more widely known as Sir Douglas Haig, removes the second of the allied Commanders-in-Chief. Field Marshal Lord French was the first. But Haig was the leader of a great army for a longer period than any other allied commander on the front, and his loss, therefore, is the loss not only of a great hero, a great man and a great soldier but of the greatest of the allied leaders, judged on the basis of the length of time he held command.

Before the outbreak of the World War Haig had been appointed to the Aldershot command in England, the greatest of the home commands. He had been schooled in the orthodox theories of warfare and, while his energies had led him far afield, his progress had been along conventional lines. He was, too, when all is said and done, a typical, dour Scot. It has been said that loyalty was a vice with him. He was extraordinarily simple in habit and thought, and self-effacement was one of his outstanding characteristics. He was by no means devoid of a sense of humor, but his unmistakable earnestness subordinated it to the process of getting things done. Innate kindness and consideration for others was, perhaps, his crowning attribute, and many are the men who were condemned to death by courts-martial in France who owe their lives to his unfailing mercy.

A Military Scientist

As a soldier, most of his advancement and reputation were due to the brilliance of his staff work. A career in the profession of arms was made possible to him only by rigid adherence to the fixed principles of the art of warfare. He had an unshakable belief in cavalry, despite the lessons of the South African and Russo-Japanese wars; for the rest, his training was wholly unsuited to the supreme test that the World War was to make of his knowledge and ability.

The difficulties were enormous to a man of Haig's mentality and training. After French's removal and his own promotion to Commander-in-Chief of the British forces we find him clinging desperately to the use of cavalry and so oblivious to the possibilities of the tanks that he criticized them harshly after their first forlorn appearance in battle. And, although he must have been well grounded in the necessity of surprise, even in a war of attrition, he was for long in search of some means to make his strategy conform to the changed conditions of the war. His inability to grasp the implications of trench warfare and to rise to the demands of an offensive are crushing indictments, but they fall to the ground as charges that made him a poor soldier. Haig was a poor offensive strategist, but a supreme and [illegible] defense, as the [illegible] eminently prove.

A Legendary Figure

[illegible] Haig's name [illegible] the side of the soldier, the [illegible] man. He was, to be sure, [illegible] of a myth to the British [illegible] in France to whom the [illegible] Ages. Few soldiers can [illegible] the world had gone [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]