



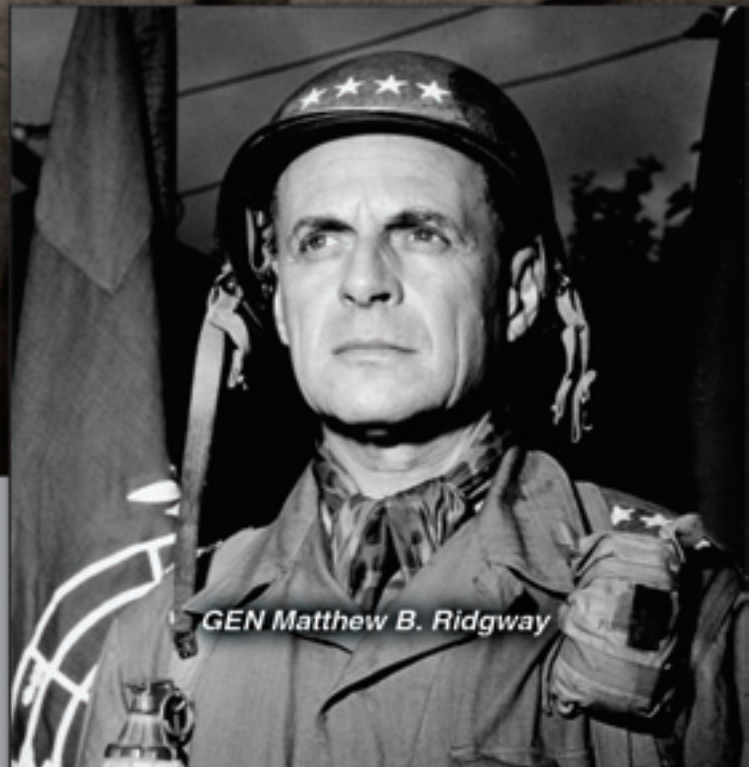
*GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower,
LTG Omar Bradley
and MG J. Lawton Collins*



General of the Army George C. Marshall



GEN Maxwell D. Taylor



GEN Matthew B. Ridgway



*GEN Douglas MacArthur
and LTG Walter Krueger*



LTG Hugh A. Drum



LTG Walter B. Smith

Marshall's MEN



*LTG Mark W. Clark and
LTG George S. Patton*

By COL Cole C. Kingseed
U.S. Army retired

Even before the guns fell silent in Europe on V-E Day, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill labeled U.S. Army Chief of Staff General of the Army George C. Marshall as the true “organizer of victory.” The Army that Marshall inherited in 1939 stood 17th in the world, ahead of Bulgaria and just behind Portugal.

Marshall's success in building the U.S. Army from a token force of fewer than 174,000 officers and enlisted men to more than 8.25 million soldiers by 1945 contributed mightily to Allied victory in the greatest war of the 20th century.

In the 50 years since his death, Marshall has been so glorified in the annals of history that it is difficult to objectively assess the general many consider the greatest American soldier since George Washington. Though Marshall's achievements as Chief of Staff remain legendary, perhaps his greatest triumph lay in his uncanny ability to identify and develop commanders who displayed "aggressive and determined leadership" in the conduct of their duties.

Marshall served two years as Deputy Chief of Staff before taking the oath of office as Army Chief of Staff on September 1, 1939, the day Hitler invaded Poland and World War II began. "My day of induction into office was momentous," he wrote a colleague, "with the starting of what appears to be a world war." At the time, the U.S. Army was top-heavy with an inordinate number of senior generals and colonels whom Marshall considered to have long outlived their usefulness.

In Marshall's eyes, the major impediment to creating a more modern military force was that the U.S. Army had no elimination process. When officers were passed over for promotion, they continued on at their current rank, creating a drag on the whole military system. The Army had an accumulation of colonels who were already in their sixties. Many of these officers either presided over promotion boards or had developed a cadre of younger officers whom they infected with their pessimism.

As Marshall informed Forrest Pogue, his principal postwar biographer, military officers changed considerably at certain points during their careers. Around age 46 or 47, subtle changes in an officer's distinctive characteristics as a leader became evident. By their early fifties, changes were more frequent and by age 60, very frequent. When senior officers neared mandatory retirement in their mid-sixties, very few were usable. Simply put, as the older senior officers aged, "greater was the rarity of finding a man who had retained his previous characteristics of command, control, and organization and administration."

What the Army needed most, in Marshall's opinion, were more youthful commanders who could withstand the rigors of extended field combat. Drawing from his own experience in France in 1918, Marshall noted, "Leadership in the field depends to an important extent on one's legs and stomach and nervous system, and on one's ability to withstand hardships and lack of sleep, and still be disposed en-



ergetically and aggressively to command men, to dominate men on the battlefield." He continued: "Only a man of positive characteristics of leadership, with the physical stamina that goes with it, can function under those conditions."

Consequently, with the full support of Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, the Chief of Staff was instrumental in fostering congressional legislation that established a board of officers to remove the unfit and that authorized the Secretary of War to carry out its recommendations. Thus, Marshall was able to place on the retired list hundreds of officers whom he believed were already "retired on active duty." This was the same bill that allowed Marshall to recommend promotion of officers such as Dwight D. (Ike) Eisenhower, Mark W. Clark and George S. Patton over the heads of literally hundreds of officers far senior in grade.

Having solved the retention problem, Marshall next moved to find the best officers to command the division, corps and army units destined for war. In his desk, he maintained a list of colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors whom he knew or were recommended by others in whom he had great confidence. The names were scrawled in Marshall's famed "black book," along with the names of officers whom Marshall intended never to promote. On the

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GEN Joseph Stilwell with Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang.



MG Morrison C. Stayer

book's pages were the names of virtually every corps and army commander in the upcoming war.

As usual, Marshall drew heavily upon his own experience, particularly upon the five years he had spent at Fort Benning, Ga., as assistant commandant of the Infantry School. As assistant commandant, Marshall was head of the Academic Department. During his tenure at Fort Benning, some 200 future general officers of World War II (and after) were either students or teachers there.

Heading the Tactical Section at Fort Benning was an "old China hand," LTC Joseph (Vinegar Joe) Stilwell. Convinced that Stilwell was the right man for the job, Marshall had held the tactics section open for a year until Stilwell arrived at the Home of the Infantry. Stilwell totally revised tactical instruction; from then on, he could do little wrong in Marshall's eyes. A leader of enormous prejudices, Stilwell was brilliant, but difficult. Later Stilwell commanded American forces in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater, but his chief problem was his tactlessness. On station in China in World War II, Stilwell repeatedly referred to Chiang Kai-shek as "Peanut," though he claimed to Marshall that he was only indiscreet with his personal staff. Chastised by the Army Chief, Stilwell discovered that he couldn't control his staff from communicating his indiscretions to others. Ultimately, Stilwell was relieved of command in the CBI, more for political reasons than military failure. Because Stilwell was a fighter, however, Marshall subsequently appointed him commander of Tenth U.S. Army when its commander, LTG Simon Bolivar Buckner, was killed in action on Okinawa, Japan.

Marshall's choice to lead the Second Section (logistics, supply, training and signal communication) was LTC Morrison C. Stayer. For the Weapons Section, Marshall selected MAJ Omar N. Bradley. Later, Bradley would be the first



GEN Bradley and GEN Patton

member of his West Point class to wear the stars of a brigadier general in the Regular Army. To lead the Fourth Section, in charge of history and publications, Marshall found another friend from China days, MAJ E. Forrest Harding.

Marshall later confessed that he had also wanted Eisenhower as an instructor at Fort Benning. Marshall had initially met Ike outside GEN John J. Pershing's office, where Eisenhower had been detailed to assist Pershing on the Battle Monuments Commission. Harding and Stayer were destined to serve as major generals in World War II; Stilwell's, Bradley's and Eisenhower's careers need little amplification here.

Two other officers who caught Marshall's eye prior to the war were George S. Patton and Terry de la Mesa Allen. Marshall had known both men well from World War I. Neither met Marshall's normal criteria for senior command, but the Chief of Staff made exceptions in their cases. Marshall felt strongly, according to Pogue, that "Patton's love of violence, his needless profanity and obscenity, and his gaudy showmanship were all serious defects in a commander." Yet he saw behind Patton's "adolescent caperings the skill of a professional, who added to years of training a natural talent for fighting and the ability to make men go beyond the limits of what they believed themselves capable of doing in battle." More than once during World War II, Marshall and his protégé, Eisenhower, saved the eccentric Patton from himself.

Like Patton, Marshall displayed a fondness for Allen, future commanding general of Marshall's World War I division, the 1st Infantry Division. A member of Marshall's instructional staff at Fort Benning, Allen was a fighter by nature, a trait that made him indispensable in battle but won him few friends in peacetime. Unfortunately, Allen displayed "a weakness as a disciplinarian and as a team player." After Patton relieved Allen of his command in Sicily, at the request of Bradley, Allen returned to the United States and was given another divisional command.

Working in the staff secretariat of the Secretary General staff at the beginning of World War II were several additional Marshall protégés, including Bradley, Clark, Matthew



MG Terry Allen



*GEN Eisenhower
and GEN Marshall*

B. Ridgway, Maxwell D. Taylor, J. Lawton Collins and Walter Bedell Smith. All were destined to hold senior command and staff positions in the war. Indeed, Marshall held up Bradley's promotion to corps command four times until Bradley straightened out the 28th Division. Once Bradley accomplished that task, Marshall sent him to join his classmate Eisenhower in North Africa. Shortly after he arrived in theater, Eisenhower assigned Bradley to command II Corps while Patton planned the invasion of Sicily.

More than any other officer whose name entered Marshall's black book, Eisenhower constituted the preeminent "Marshall man." Marshall had been gathering information on Ike for years. MG Fox Conner, who headed Pershing's operations division in World War I, thought well of him. So did Pershing. As Pogue notes, another of Marshall's close acquaintances from the Great War, MAJ Ben F. Caffey, stationed in Manila, had written the Deputy Chief of Staff in 1939 from the Philippines: "LTC D.D. Eisenhower, Infantry, familiarly known as Ike, has been an especially brilliant member of the [Douglas MacArthur] mission. He is 'going places,' or I miss my guess." Small wonder that Marshall summoned Eisenhower to Washington in the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor.

Working for Marshall in the War Department was not always easy, as Eisenhower discovered when he reported for duty in the War Plans Division in December 1941. Ike quickly learned not to expect lavish praise. The best you could hope for, Ike recorded in his journal, was, "You are not doing so badly so far." But because Eisenhower performed so well, Marshall rewarded him with a more important job.

Even if an officer made it into Marshall's black book, there was no guarantee he would remain. "I'm going to put these men to the severest tests which I can devise in time of peace," Marshall confessed. "I'm going to start shifting them into jobs of greater responsibility than those they hold now. Then I'm going to change them, suddenly, without warning, to jobs even more burdensome and difficult. ... Those who stand up under the punishment will be pushed ahead. Those who fail are out at the first sign of faltering."

The Marshall Foundation: George C. Marshall Remembered

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates received the George C. Marshall Foundation Award “for a lifetime of distinguished service to his country” on October 16, the 50th anniversary of the death of General of the Army George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army from 1939–1945. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and U.S. Army Chief of Staff GEN George W. Casey Jr. delivered remarks at the ceremony. In his acceptance speech, Secretary Gates noted that during his long career Marshall held each of the posts the three now occupy.

“George Marshall is one of my personal heroes,” said Secretary Gates.

“I invoke him as an example of the kind of leader everyone should aspire to be: the apotheosis of unshakeable loyalty combined with the courage and integrity to tell superiors things they didn’t always want to hear—from General (Black Jack) Pershing to President Franklin D. Roosevelt.”

The George C. Marshall Foundation and Virginia Military Institute (VMI), Marshall’s alma mater, cohosted a seminar October 23–24 at the Center for Leadership and Ethics at VMI in Lexington, Va. Historian Mark Stoler, editor of the Marshall Papers, and former VMI superin-



DoD/Cherie Cullen

Retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, left, a member of the George C. Marshall Foundation Council of Advisors, and Chairman of the Board John B. Adams Jr., right, present the George C. Marshall Foundation Award to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

tendent Josiah Bunting, author of an upcoming book about Marshall, spoke at the symposium. Panelists discussed Marshall as a “Servant of the American Nation,” weighing his roles as soldier, leader, peacemaker and diplomat.

The Marshall Foundation celebrates Marshall’s legacy, offering educational programs, a museum, and a research library and archives to inspire new leaders.

For every officer who met Marshall’s stringent standards, many more fell by the wayside. To understand why, one only needs to review Secretary of War Stimson’s personal assessment of Marshall. On January 31, 1942, Stimson told Marshall that he had found that public figures fit

into two classes: “first, those who are thinking primarily of what they can do for the job which they hold, and second, those who are thinking primarily of what the job can do for them.” Marshall was “at the very top of my list of those I would place in the first category. ... You are one of the most selfless public officials that I have ever known.”

Not surprisingly, those officers who vigorously advocated their personal advancement had no place in Marshall’s Army. Take the case of LTG Hugh Drum, who had been one of Marshall’s principal rivals for the position of Chief of Staff. Initially advanced by Stimson to head the “China Mission,” Drum made it known that he preferred not to languish in the backwater of the war in a far-off theater. Tempers flared when Drum made his preferences known to Marshall, who told Drum in no uncertain

GEN Marshall with Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson.



Near right, GEN Marshall and LTG Patton; far right, General of the Army MacArthur



terms that in the present crisis every officer was expected to serve without regard to personal ambition.

As soon as Drum departed the office, Marshall conferred with the Secretary of War and recommended that Drum not be favorably considered for the China Mission. Consequently, Marshall nominated his personal choice, Stilwell, for the command, and Stilwell received the assignment. (Drum never saw active field service in World War II.) Not particularly happy with the decision, Stilwell replied, "I'll go where I'm sent." This was precisely the selflessness that the Army Chief expected.

Even Patton, one of Marshall's oldest friends, discovered that his close relationship with the Army Chief of Staff only went so far. As Marshall recollected to Pogue, one of Patton's colonels had written some "sharp criticisms of the War Department, wholly unjustifiable." Marshall knew Patton had encouraged the colonel to do so. Later, when Marshall toured the battlefield, Patton asked Marshall to promote the colonel. Marshall refused the request.

When Patton pressed the matter over dinner, Marshall told him, "This is not the time to bring this up. This is a social gathering, not a business meeting. I am speaking now as the Chief of Staff to GEN Patton and not to my friend, GEN Patton. You have encouraged the colonel in his attacks, and you have destroyed him. I will not promote him. Never mention it to me again." Patton prudently dropped the issue.

Nor was Patton the only senior commander with whom Marshall had occasional trouble. MacArthur was a special case. Having already served five years as Chief of Staff from 1930–35, MacArthur remained convinced that Marshall and his deputy, Eisenhower, had scuttled his Philip-

pine command in early 1942 by not rushing supplies and reinforcements to his beleaguered soldiers on Bataan. Marshall did all within his power to relieve the starving force, but considering the logistical constraints placed on the Army during the first months of the war, it was an impossible task. Yet it was Marshall who wrote the recommendation for MacArthur's Medal of Honor.

While some members of the War Department's staff seemed reluctant to get tough with senior officers in the field, a referral of the matter to the Chief of Staff usually settled the issue. Marshall wrote to some, stating exactly what he thought, and indicated that this was the last time he intended to get personally involved in the matter.

Such was the case with LTG Walter Krueger, the commander of Sixth Army. Of all the senior generals "of the line" at the time Marshall became Chief of Staff, only Krueger received army-level command during World War II. Krueger often proved "difficult unless he got his way," Marshall reminisced. Krueger didn't want any National Guard troops assigned to his command. Marshall told him he would have to take his share, and that was final. Marshall then directed that all copies of this type of correspondence be destroyed.

In contrast to his dealings with MacArthur, Marshall appeared almost paternal in his response to Eisenhower's requests for the European Theater. "You list your final desires, and so far as I can see now, they will be approved," Marshall informed the newly appointed Supreme Commander in early 1944. Here again, Marshall's support had its limits. For the upcoming invasion of France, Ike requested all the proven commanders who had distinguished themselves in North Africa and Sicily. Eisenhower particularly desired MG Lucian K. Truscott Jr., who had commanded the 3rd Infantry Division in Sicily. Marshall



GEN Krueger, left, and, above, GEN Eisenhower and GEN Marshall.

drew the line, informing Ike that the Mediterranean Theater required seasoned commanders as well. He gave Eisenhower most, but not all, of the officers he had requested.

Given the manner in which he weeded out many high-ranking officers, Marshall enjoyed his share of detractors. Those officers placed on the retired list were especially critical. Equally bitter, notes historian Eric Larrabee, were the wives of those officers, often long-acquainted with Marshall, whom he refused to promote or place in positions of command. “[Marshall] was once our dear friend,” one wife wrote to Pogue, “but he ruined my husband.” Other observers criticized the Chief for creating an old-boy network, where only those who had incurred Marshall’s favor during the Fort Benning years were destined to command troops in combat. Some accused Marshall of forcibly retiring “the brains of the Army,” referring to his reliance on youth.

Others, writes Pogue, claimed that Marshall “didn’t always pick good men, that he formed quick impressions, made snap judgments and sometimes serious mistakes.” COL James A. Van Fleet, Ike and Bradley’s classmate from West Point, is a case in point. Van Fleet was an excellent officer whose promotion Marshall delayed, confusing him with another officer whose name sounded similar and who wasn’t as good. When the mix-up was straightened out, Van Fleet moved up fast. He was an exception to the rule, however. By any standard of excellence, Marshall was right far more times than he was wrong in his assessment of commanders.

By his own admission, Marshall’s most serious mistake lay in the mobilization of African-American units. In retrospect, Marshall felt that he should have kept the mobi-

lization camps in the northern sections of the country. Instead, he moved these men and their units into the South, where they encountered prejudices “utterly beyond our control.” Such prejudices “violently excited the blacks from the North who were unaccustomed to such matters of segregation as they found in the South, particularly in the very small towns.” It was one of Marshall’s few misjudgments.

Ever attuned to history’s judgment, Marshall remained reluctant to comment on the efficiency of officers whom he had personally selected for senior wartime command. “I am not going to do this,” he told Pogue. “I think if anything like this got into the book [Pogue’s four-volume biography of Marshall] in any way ... all the attention would go to that and all the acrimonious debate would go to that, and nothing to the really important part of the text. I don’t think it would be quite fair because the officer would have no chance to answer it at all.”

In the final analysis, Marshall’s control over the promotion and retirement of Regular Army officers created a body of commanders and staff officers who led the U.S. Army to victory in the most devastating conflict in history. Collectively, this cadre of officers constituted the most formidable array of warriors in our nation’s history. More than any other officer, Marshall modernized the American Army.

Eisenhower, who proved to be Marshall’s most able subordinate, gets the final word. Writing to Marshall on the eve of the termination of the European war, Eisenhower cabled, “I think you should make a visit here at the earliest possible moment while we are conducting a general offensive. You would be proud of the Army you have produced. ... You would be struck by the ‘veteran’ quality of the whole organization. ... You could see, in visible form, the fruits of much of your work over the past five years.” ★