

Interview III: Part 2

By Dr. Sidney T. Matthews, Dr. Howard M. Smyth,
Major Roy Lemson, and Major David Hamilton

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Part II (12:00-1:30 P.M.)

Interviewers:

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Major Roy Lemson, Major David Hamilton,
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Mr. Matthews asked about the attitude of General Eisenhower toward the Anzio expedition.

General Marshall — General Eisenhower was opposed to Anzio because the place was too far away to have adequate air cover. It was too far away for our planes to make round trip from Southern Italy. But, of course, Eisenhower was not there when the expedition was executed. When we came in at Anzio, the situation was wide open. We could have advanced on to the Alban Hills, but like the situation in the Philippines, for every mile of advance there were seven or more miles added to the perimeter. We did not have enough men in the expedition to advance on the Alban Hills, hold them, and also hold Anzio which was what was required. Churchill was outraged that we did not go forward and seize the Alban Hills.

Major Lemson mentioned the directive was carefully worded—to "advance on" the Colli Lesiali, but it did not specify their occupation.

General Marshall went on to state that what we did not anticipate was that Hitler would make the mistake of coming south with such a number of troops. It was a great mistake on his part, and like the Battle of the Bulge, it was successful at first but fatal in the end. Hitler should have withdrawn from Italy and placed troops in France to meet our impending attack there. Instead he moved troops southward into Italy. Meanwhile, we had a very hard time at Anzio.

General Marshall — We had a very difficult time at Anzio. For one reason, the British divisions there were so reduced that they lacked punch. They were so depleted that morale was low. They had been fighting continuously for years, and Britain was so low in manpower that she could not keep those divisions up to strength.

El Alamein meant a very great deal to the British: it gave a tremendous lift to their morale. Up to that time the Eighth Army had suffered many defeats and they lacked confidence. Like Sheridan's victory at Winchester during the Civil War, it gave a great boost to morale but was blown up out of proportion to its importance. But in Italy, the fighting spirit and aggressive quality of British divisions began again to decline, and for the reason of the sheer factor of exhaustion. The British simply could not keep their battalions up to strength and it was very depressing to their men. They had no replacements. The two British divisions at Anzio simply had no punch: it was a very serious situation.

Dr. Matthews — But Alexander expected the initial force to push right up to the Alban Hills.

General Marshall — What did General Clark say on this point?

Dr. Matthews — Clark was not enthused regarding Anzio but he went along with it.

General Marshall — I imagine General Clark at present is most cautious and careful not to appear to criticize the British.

At the time of Kasserine Pass, when the British had had a great lift in their morale as a result of El Alamein, Alexander could with some grace make some uncomplimentary remarks about the quality of American troops. But as a matter of fact, part of the difficulty was faulty dispositions of the British commander, Anderson. Anderson, by the way, appealed to me to save his command, saying he would do anything I told him. (Dr. Matthews interjected, Alexander admits faulty dispositions of Anderson.) But in Italy the situation was quite the other way. The American troops had learned, and the British divisions were exhausted; they had no fight left in them. The situation was now flowing the other way with American divisions improving and British deteriorating.

General Marshall — In North Africa, a bad situation was developing in the rear. When I went to North Africa (at the time of the Casablanca Conference?) I found that Ike was about in tears over the situation and that Beedle Smith had been unable to get away from Algiers to the front until four days before I arrived there. General Smith tried to get a look but his chauffeur was shot, he rolled into a ditch, and while he moved around the front some, he couldn't see much in the limited time he had. I wanted to use Bradley to straighten out this mess in the rear, but Ike sent Bradley up to the front, and then I sent General Bull but he too was sent up to the front. The mess was developing at the rear. I wanted to have the thing straightened out before a scandal developed. General Marshall spoke especially about the bad situation at the officers replacement depot at Oran and wanted to do something about it before a scandal developed there.

Patton at this time showed great restraint after he took command of II Corps in Tunisia. He wanted to dart in—thought that destiny had delivered Rommel to him. Ike sent Bradley up to II Corps as Deputy Commander to restrain Patton when Ike and I

thought might need restraint. Also, Bradley was expected to take over II Corps when Patton had to be pulled out for the Seventh Army which was to go into Sicily. I had deliberately passed over Bradley for promotion three times so that he could remain with the 28th (Penn.) Division in order to train it and get it into good combat condition. McNair had recommended Bradley three times for a higher command and each time I had said "no" for this reason.

General Marshall — In Clark's river crossings there was a great deal of difficulty caused by the change in the draft laws here at home which resulted in our being short about 300,000 men. This had effects all along the line. It cut down on replacements, it cut down the training period, and in the field it cut down the periods of leave for the men. Shortened and reduced leave, and lack of replacements affected morale of the divisions whose men later criticized Clark for the Rapido River crossings. (It was not clear exactly which crossings General Marshall had in mind: the Rapido crossings which provoked the later protests, or the Volturno crossings.) When you can rejuvenate and refresh your divisions and keep them up to full strength, battle morale is much better. But the river crossings were made just at a time when other factors affected morale. General Clark is greatly to be admired that he took it on the chin, and did not complain about the fact that we didn't send replacements. General Clark was an able aggressive fighter.

General Marshall — At Anzio feelings were greatly aroused over the question of artillery. The Germans had their big gun (Anzio Annie) and our troops did not have heavy artillery. As a matter of fact up to this time our field commanders had not wanted heavy artillery. I had to struggle to get some heavy artillery accepted. The theory was that this was a war of movement, and only light artillery which could quickly be moved was wanted. At the time of Anzio our commanders began yelling for heavy artillery. The squabble here in the U.S. when I was called on the carpet (I was under investigation myself) had its origin right there in Anzio. Much was fomenting at the time of the Anzio expedition. Marshall said that he had to pay heed to General Truscott, re heavy artillery because Truscott was a fighting commander.

American tanks were more maneuverable than Germans. We could not have made the pursuit across France without that type of tank. The German heavy tank needed special budging.

General Marshall — British spirit greatly deteriorated at Anzio and this for reason of sheer exhaustion. Those divisions of our, particularly the 45th Division from Oklahoma, the 30th Div. and around Cisterna and breaking out of the beachhead and Frederick's 1SSF Division fought wonderfully. Then came 11 May, which was a great psychological turning point. We put in two new divisions, the 85th and 88th. This was new in that these divisions had had the normal development and full training, the development which General Clark himself had worked out in detail over here. This was the first real test of our system. Furthermore, we had replacement depots close to the front and were able to keep our divisions up to full strength. Meanwhile over here I had had my fight with Senator Wheeler and had got hold of the 18-year-olds. The way those two new and inexperienced divisions behaved was a great surprise to the Germans. But it

happened so fast that they did not wholly appreciate the significance of the experience. Those beautifully trained divisions gave a splendid performance. On May 11th those new divisions rushed right up the side of the mountain, and they provoked a large German retreat. Had it been Italians instead of Germans, there would not have been any reorganization, and probably not if they had been French. The fact that despite the big retreat the Germans were able to reorganize is a high tribute to the discipline of their army. The Germans did not, however, fully appreciate what had happened; that it was these now fully trained divisions, 85th & 88th, which had carried the burden. Otherwise the Germans would have acted differently in France and anticipated the high quality of new American troops.

At this time in Italy General Alexander still believed that American troops lacked quality. The Germans at this time should have reduced their strength in Italy and increased their strength in France. The performance of the 85th & 88th Divisions was significant because it was a reassurance to me as showing what was to come in Normandy.

By now our replacement system was working the way it was designed to work, the way it should work. What I wanted was to have every division up to 100% strength each night. The important thing was to have the trained men there. In addition to the first important fact, i.e., the excellent record of the two new GI divisions, the 85th and the 88th, General Marshall pointed out that the second noteworthy feature of the May drive in Italy was the working of the new replacement system in Italy. He explained that this was the replacement system which he had fought for in the States, which kept the depots immediately to the rear of combat and replaced losses daily. In the Civil War we could not do this, and we had battalions with company strength. Then they raised new battalions, this because the system gave new commissions for raising new units and the officers would profit in commissions. I had been having my battles at this time with the War Production Board (Nelson's office) and with McNutt, War Manpower Commission. Charles Wilson (G.E.) supported me. I wanted trained replacements, ready to take places. The British could not do this, because of their territorial system. Full strength of a unit is essential in order to keep up its morale.

We did make rather intelligent use of manpower. We used women, we used WACS, and accomplished a great deal to do some tasks with women in order to get men in front lines. But each time something new like WACS was proposed there was protest from traditionalists. I got tired of people in the army who were opposing change just because it was new. We were able to show the British a thing or two in the use of manpower. I showed Anthony Eden a woman trainer at an airplane factory, propeller assembly at Biloxi, Mississippi, giving instruction to newcomers. How long had she been at it? About 10 months. I asked her occupation earlier. She was a music teacher. Eden threw his hands up then.

The need of keeping units up to strength by the system of replacements was impressed on my mind when I was a young fellow at Command School at Leavenworth. General Morrison spoke of his observations at the battle of Lo Yang, seeing the

replacements in the rear. This is fundamental to keep units up to strength. In China I wished to train men south of the Yangtze. They were putting a Chinese boy—who had never been out of his village—directly into combat after 2 days. It is a great change for any man to come into the army. I wanted to reduce the number of Chinese divisions, and keep them up to strength by a system of trained replacements. The only real trained divisions the Chinese had were those that Stilwell trained in India.

Dr. Matthews — How far up the Italian Peninsula did you wish us to go? Did you wish to go as far as the Pisa-Rimini Line?

General Marshall in reply to the specific question by Dr. Matthews said he wished to go on in Italy at least until the fronts were joined up, that is Anzio Beachhead front (VI Corps) and the rest of the Army and to capture Rome. General Marshall wanted to go a little beyond Rome, but he said he had seen no compelling strategic reason for pushing the Germans back to the Pisa-Rimini Line. But General Marshall said "No one would stop a great pursuit unless it led to a great weakness".

At the Cairo Conference there were two main questions: (1) the Rhodes Operation and (2) the 26LST's. The P.M. wished to go into Rhodes. I was determined not to do this because it would divert strength from the main effort of OVERLORD. At Cairo the other major battle was over 26 LST's. If at that time we had had 50 more LST's we might have been able to shorten the war by 6 months. The Prime Minister had his political motives for wishing to go into the Balkans. As soon as Eisenhower left the Mediterranean and control in the Mediterranean passed into British hands, Churchill pressed and pressed for offensives there. General Alexander was Churchill's man.

Bevin later said to me "I agree with everything you did as Chief of Staff, but why did you not go into the Balkans?"

I replied, "Mr. Bevin, what do you know about shipping?" He replied, "Not much." I asked again, "How much do you really know about the shipping problem." He admitted he did not know it.

Even with the port of Antwerp in N.W. Europe we had a difficult time supplying our armies in France. Supplying of great armies in the Balkans would have been an insoluble problem.

There was also difficulty of terrain which in the Balkans was worse than in Italy.

In another connection General Marshall mentioned that his main opposition to a move in the Balkans was that it was a diversion from the main effort, N.W. Europe.

In dealing with the British, they always spoke, in conferences with us, on policy. With their parliamentary traditions and experience with the cabinet system, they are accustomed to speaking in accordance with a policy. Churchill quite largely controlled what the British said. They did not give you their own individual views. Once I had the

experience after a meeting where they all said the same thing that one came to me to explain what he really believed. But in conferences it was the leaders who spoke. Dill often did not say a word. Mountbatten often said nothing even about those things which he himself had investigated.

Dr. Matthews — What was your attitude toward the expedition (ANVIL) into Southern France?

General Marshall — The operation in Southern France I had always considered necessary because I did not want Eisenhower's right flank to be in the air. But we particularly needed the ports of Southern France, Marseilles and Toulon. Although we captured ports such as Cherbourg, we had not correctly anticipated in our early planning for OVERLORD how effectively the Germans would lock up the ports and prevent our using them for a long period after we captured them. General Marshall said that the need for additional ports to bring additional divisions into France was not fully appreciated early in the OVERLORD planning but this became more apparent as the operation developed. The British rather opposed Southern France all along. In the files there is a memorandum—one prepared for me by my staff but which I never used, called "Castigation of Anvil". It gives statistics, what the British (particularly Churchill) had said earlier about ANVIL, point by point, how far they had been mistaken. This was intended for use against the British when I anticipated they would oppose advance to the Rhine (advance on a broad front). (Major Hamilton mentioned that he believed he had seen the memorandum in the files.)

Dr. Matthews — How important in the discussions with the British regarding ANVIL was the agreement with Stalin?

General Marshall — It was useful, but it was not the chief argument. The chief argument for ANVIL was the necessity to support OVERLORD. This was the dominant reason. Nevertheless the agreement with Stalin was a serious thing. The Russians were quite scrupulous about keeping their military agreements. Marshall said that he never knew them to fail to keep a military agreement.

Dr. Matthews — What was the attitude of Roosevelt and Stalin at Teheran?

General Marshall — The agreement with Stalin at Teheran was convenient for use against the British. Another very important consideration in Marshall's mind in favor of ANVIL was the need for additional ports through which to introduce new divisions, from U.S. with which to support OVERLORD. Another important argument was the fact that ANVIL offered the best strategic use of the resources of the Mediterranean. The Russians at this time were not particularly interested in the Balkans but were primarily concerned at getting as much as possible in OVERLORD.

Although I was aware of the British desire for support in the Eastern Mediterranean, I did not support ANVIL because of any desire to forestall a British request for support in the eastern Mediterranean.

Marshall said that ANVIL was the best means of getting the new French divisions into France, but said this was not a controlling factor as they might have been brought into OVERLORD anyway.

Stalin kept asking who was to be commander of OVERLORD. He kept asking this. Strictly speaking this was none of his business. He could have been given a guaranty about the operation and told that U. S. and Great Britain would name the commander. Stalin of course knew of the discussion about the commander. Stalin knew I had been proposed. There was nothing very secret about this. That towsel-headed British Minister of Propaganda [Brendan-Bracken] had congratulated me on my nomination—this in front of the elevator operator.

At the Teheran Conference Stalin tried to make sure that the Allies would carry out OVERLORD. He tried to do this by (1) getting the U. S. and Britain to set a definite date for the operation and (2) getting U.S. and Britain to name a commander for OVERLORD. At the time Stalin knew Marshall was a strong advocate of OVERLORD and that he had been selected for the command. Marshall said that Stalin knew that Churchill was opposed to the operation and that Stalin didn't understand why Roosevelt was holding back on the operation. Stalin felt therefore that if Marshall were officially named as the commander for the operation the chances of its being carried out would be greatly increased.

But Churchill opposed going into Southern France, opposed it almost to the very last, and then rode in with them, which was quite a stunt, giving those two fingers—"V" for victory. Up to one month before OVERLORD Churchill talked about 500,000 corpses in the Channel if we carried out OVERLORD, and then went all out for it and tried to go along on the D-Day assault convoy. With Churchill, it was a political thing, wanting to go into the Balkans. Churchill—this must be said to his credit—sized up the Russians correctly much earlier than did the others—the rest of us. Churchill wished to go into the Balkans for political reasons. For us it was simply a problem of winning the war as rapidly as possible. This because the American people would not stand for a long drawn out war with mounting casualties. We Americans looked at the war as a military problem: going into the Balkans would have meant six months or more of additional fighting. In addition there was this factor for the British, that Alexander would have commanded an expedition into the Balkans.

He reminded us that in the European War he was always concerned with four factors: (1) Casualties, (2) Duration, (3) Expense, and (4) the Pacific. The Pacific could not be left waiting indefinitely. "We had to go ahead brutally fast" in Europe. We could not indulge in a Seven Years' War. A king can perhaps do that, but you cannot have such a protracted struggle in a democracy in the face of mounting casualties. I thought that the only place to achieve a positive and rapid military decision was in the lowlands of Northwestern Europe. Speed was an essential.

In estimating the strategy of the war in Europe and Italy we must take into account Hitler's faulty moves and weigh them against the disadvantages attached to our strategy. He made the same mistake in Italy as in Northern France. His staff wished him to draw back. Had he drawn back rapidly to the Rhine, this would have created extraordinarily difficult problems for us. In Italy it was the same mistake of not drawing back the way his staff wanted him to. Hitler made a terrible mistake in forcing his generals to fight south of the Po. Hitler might have created great difficulties by withdrawing in France. I myself dreaded the crossing of the Roer and the advance to the Rhine more than any other operation during the war. The terrain there was very difficult. In fact I dreaded crossing of the Roer more than the cross-Channel attack. I was certain that we would get across the Channel. Marshall dreaded most the advance to the Rhine, the attrition of a slow, plugging advance. The Rhine might have been a great obstacle if the Germans had withdrawn to it promptly. We were lucky to get the Remagen Bridge, but to seize a bridgehead, you have to get up to it. The British did not want Eisenhower to cross in the center. They favored making a single heavy drive in the North in the British zone of advance. Patton and Bradley wished to strike through the center.

It was at this period that I was forced to speak quite frankly in CCS to the British. They had begun to criticize a pernicious personal influence exerted on Eisenhower by Bradley and Patton. I said that the real influence which was constantly being brought to bear on Eisenhower, the Combined Commander, was the direct influence of Churchill and Alan Brooke. They were seeing him every week, and not going through the Combined Chiefs of Staff. We here in Washington were playing according to the rules. This protest on my part stopped that criticism by the British. At this point, General Marshall remarked that he was getting away from the Italian campaign and so he would return to it.

General Marshall — The next important thing regarding Fifth Army was the speech by Claire Luce referring to the "forgotten men" of the Fifth Army. Fifth Army morale was almost ruined from home—thousands of letters came in—by the press campaign here, calling it the "forgotten army." When a soldier begins feeling sorry for himself he is done for as a fighting man.

In Italy, and this was important, we had three experimental divisions and also the 10th Mountain Division. Among our officers there was great opposition to anything that was not standard. They wanted all divisions uniform, so that all would be mathematically alike. But you do not win a war with arithmetic, though you need a little arithmetic. At this point General Marshall outlined several changes that had been made in the light division and stated that the 10th Mt. Div. was the only mountain division to emerge. In the fall of 1944 General Marshall offered the 10th Mt. Div. To General Eisenhower but he refused it unless it were reorganized as a standard infantry division. When Marshall got this message he concluded that if Eisenhower didn't want the division unless it was reorganized he didn't need it. Marshall then sent a message to Clark offering it to him. As C/S to McNair Clark had a lot to do with training of the 10th Mt. Div. And he replied within 30 minutes that he would be glad to get the 10th Mt. Div. Although our men wanted uniformity of type for ease in mathematical figuring, the Germans were doing

pretty well with 8 different types of divisions. A little later, toward the end of the battle of the Bulge General Marshall met General Eisenhower in Southern France. At that time General Eisenhower sounded Marshall out about the 10th Mt. Div. But didn't want to ask for it if he were going to be refused. When Marshall heard that Ike now wanted the 10th Mt. Div he said to Ike, "Why, you're inconsistent, Eisenhower. I offered you the 10th Mt. Div and you said you didn't want it and now you say you do want it." Marshall then pointed out to Ike that he had then offered it to Clark and he had accepted it right away. Marshall told Ike, "You can't have it now". Ike had said to Marshall at the time of the meeting in Southern France that he didn't know anything about turning down Marshall's offer of the 10th Mt. Div. Ike called in General Bull, his G-3, then and Bull, very red-faced, said that the decision to turn down the offer of the 10th Mt. Div had been taken in his section. Apparently, Marshall said, Eisenhower had not known of Bull's action. That's how the 10th Mt. Div. got to Italy.

The 10th Mt. Div proved very useful in Italy. It practically converted a secondary attack into a main attack in the spring 1945 drive. The commander of this Division was one whom I selected. I greatly admired him — General Hayes. During World War I, in the course of terrific artillery bombardment he three times rode on a horse through a barrage in order to get the targets for his artillery. He won the Congressional Medal for this. Marshall had always admired his courage for this act. Marshall had found General Hayes in ETO with his artillery (2nd Div. Arty. Co). He was a very quiet fellow. Marshall had pulled him out and sent him to command the 10th Mt. Div. when it went overseas. Hayes was hard on his brigadiers—had about three of them killed or wounded, Marshall said. (1 KIA & 1 wounded actually).

General Marshall mentioned that General Clark was a very able commander—a good organizer, a man who took unfair criticism with dignified silence (on the chin). Also, he was an aggressive fighter, and kept pushing. This is the only thing to do—not in a bull-headed way—but with intelligent vigor. But I don't go along with his publicity.

I was there (Serchio Velley) with General Clark at the time of the fiasco of the 92nd Division, the Negro troops which simply refused to fight. Officers completely lost control over the men. The will to fight was completely lacking. At this time I made a dicker—a wager with Clark: that he could take those 3 regiments of the 92nd Division and form one regiment out of them, take the one regiment made up of AAA troops who had already been converted to infantry and I would bring back the Japanese regiment, the 442nd from Southern France. He was to put the Negroes in front and the Japs in reserve behind them. The Germans would think the Negro regiment was a weak spot, and then would hit the Japs. The Japanese regiment was spectacular. It was very important for the future of Japanese population in California that these troops be given active service. I fought for this. Also, there was great opposition to decorations being given these men because of jealousy from other outfits. I fought for this also, and forced this on General Clark. "If you don't decorate them, I will", but it was better for Clark to do it.

Marshall mentioned the 2nd Cavalry Division (Negro). Its leadership was not good, but there was a Lt. Col. In the outfit whom Marshall knew was one man who could

do something with it and was qualified to be its commander. So this Lt. Col. was made a Col., then a Brigadier two months later and took over the outfit. He took the division to North Africa, as a result of circumstances over which this commander had no control (i.e. the need for service troops for ANVIL). Marshall decided the 2nd Cavalry would have to be broken up. The commander was very much upset by this. So Marshall made him commander of the Rome garrison which was quite a thing, Marshall said, for an Oklahoma boy. Soon after he took over command of Rome, a need developed for a good man to go to the 93rd Division to help straighten it out, which was then on Bougainville. The men of the 93rd wouldn't fight—couldn't get them out of the caves to fight. This officer went over and did as much as anyone could do in that situation but couldn't at that stage make that outfit a first-class combat division. Marshall then told what happened to this officer in private life later, etc.

Dr. Matthews — Why did the British give such a high priority to Italy?

General Marshall — It was partly political, but partly because of their sincere belief in that strategy. But once you start on attrition you are lost, you are ruined. General Clark kept pushing the fighting, and rightly so. If you keep the initiative, total losses are less than with the accumulation of losses in a campaign of attrition. At Anzio, one difficulty was that the British divisions had lost their punch, due to sheer exhaustion. The British had no replacements. General Clark never complained to me about the British but other officers did mention this British slowness to me.

In connection with casualties General Marshall said that frequently one has to take heavy casualties initially in order to save heavier casualties later. He explained that attrition was the most deadly factor in modern war, that it was best to take one's losses early and then speed forward as the Germans tried to do during this war. He cited the case of the leading battalion of the 16th Infantry (1st Div) which landed in Normandy. The battalion suffered heavy casualties in the initial fighting but the casualties of the Division were very light as a whole. Of course, he said, you could never tell a member of that battalion that the Division's losses were light in that battle but the fact was that the heavy losses suffered in the first day's fighting by that battalion saved much heavier casualties in the whole Division. General Marshall expected greater losses in the Normandy landings than we sustained but felt that we could keep sending in more forces until the German defenses were broken.

Major Hamilton asked about the nomination of General Patch as commander of Seventh Army.

General Marshall did not remember much and said the choice was probably made in the theater. Marshall said that he had known Patch as a lieutenant in World War I, that he had a good record but Marshall said he had never understood Patch. Marshall said he was disturbed by the low efficiency report which General Patch turned in on General Joe Collins on Guadalcanal. Marshall said that he had personally known Collins a long time and had a high opinion of him and had in fact marked him for a high command in the ETO and that he (Marshall) had sent Collins to Eisenhower. (The

implication of what Marshall said about Patch was that Patch's low efficiency report on Collins had had the effect on Marshall of making him wonder about Patch, not about Collins.)

Dr. Matthews asked General Marshall regarding General Alexander.

General Marshall mentioned that General Alexander was held in high regard by a great many American officers who were closely associated with him. At the time of the Kasserine Pass, General Alexander spoke rather patronizingly of American troops. He continued to have this attitude long after the situation had radically changed, and when American troops in Italy had to bear the brunt of the fighting because of exhaustion of the British divisions. At Yalta (?) Alexander remarked to me: "Of course your American troops are basically trained." I said, "Yes, American troops start out and make every possible mistake, But after the first time they do not repeat these mistakes. The British troops start out in the same way and continue making the same mistakes over and over, for a year". The Prime Minister was with us and quickly changed the subject. This patronizing attitude toward American troops was rather widespread in English circles. On one occasion the King started telling me how fine it was to have Eisenhower in nominal supreme command with Montgomery at his side, etc. I replied, "That's very interesting, Your Majesty", and went on.

Dr. Matthews asked about the attitude of President Roosevelt toward Italy and the Balkans.

General Marshall replied that President Roosevelt was opposed to our going into the Balkans. But then he would meet with the British and begin talking about the Balkans. Marshall said he was always worried about whether President Roosevelt might at such times commit us to operations in the Balkans by loose talk (though Marshall did not use the words "loose talk," it was obvious that was what he meant). "When President Roosevelt began waving his cigarette holder you never knew where you were going."

General Marshall said that he was open to criticism by the British on the question of intervention in Greece. As Chief of Staff he had opposed U. S. taking any part in the intervention which the British made in Greece during the war (1944). Churchill had gone in under fire into Athens at the time. Then, after he became Secretary of State, Marshall had supported U. S. intervention in Greece.

Dr. Matthews — What attitude did Admiral King, Admiral Leahy and General Arnold take regarding Allied strategy in the Mediterranean?

General Marshall stated that as far as the other American members of the Chiefs of Staff—Leahy, King and Arnold—they were generally in support of the strategical position which Marshall took re the Mediterranean. The only differences occurred when the Navy would want some support for the Pacific. Marshall admitted that he had fashioned the strategy of the U. S. chiefs as it related to Europe and the Mediterranean

and that in effect the other members of the U. S. Chiefs had supported—and strongly supported his views.

Miscellaneous Points

In connection with Anzio and General Lucas, Dr. Matthews mentioned the Americans on the spot did not take the same view that General Alexander did about the Beachhead objective—that this appeared clearly in General Lucas's diary. General Marshall expressed great surprise that Lucas had kept a diary and indicated that a field commander should not keep a diary. Dr. Matthews pointed out that such a contemporary record was invaluable to the historian. General Marshall exploded at the point and said that the primary job of the commander was the successful conduct of those operations, not keeping a record of them. He should have this in mind in the future (on operations—present and future), and not on the past".

General Marshall said that the commanders of the various British services (i.e. air, ground, navy) were jealous of the power of each other and for that reason it was always easier to get them all to accept Eisenhower as the supreme commander over them all.

General Marshall pointed out that in a democracy in wartime the conduct of the war cannot be carried on independent of political considerations. In other words, he said attention has to be given to both military and political considerations. Both are necessary to win the war in a democracy.

Dr. Matthews asked "Do you think the British attempted to use the proposed Southern France operation as a means of securing additional resources for the Mediterranean Theater, although they never seriously considered actually invading Southern France?"

General Marshall replied that he felt that this was the case. He said that's what the British always were doing.

General Marshall did not have much to say about his visit to 6th Army Group on the operations there (in the fall or winter 1944). He considered the German "demonstrations" there at the time of the Bulge battle as a "superb example" of the use of demonstrations to draw attention and opposition from the main attack.

General Marshall admitted that he was always fearful that the operations in the Mediterranean would suck troops in there away from Northern France where we should make the main effort. He admitted that once we were committed there, including Italy, it was very difficult to pull out.

Dr. Matthews asked about General Marshall's feeling that the Germans would withdraw some divisions in Italy to Northern France and would then fight a delaying action to the Pisa-Rimini line.

General Marshall replied that he had felt that way before the spring (May 1944) offensive had gotten underway. General Marshall had based this feeling apparently on what the Germans were capable of doing and what Marshall thought logically was the best course of action for the Germans. He did not indicate that he had any special intelligence information which led him to this opinion. (This is a point to be checked again with General Marshall.)

In his comments on the May 1944 drive in Italy General Marshall did not mention the French performance and seemed unaware of the FEC's major breakthrough effort.

As we talked with General Marshall we all received a fine impression of the man. He spoke directly, quickly, effectively and easily and with an air of dignity. Never at any time during the interview was there anything but complete frankness about the questions on which he talked. The very remarks he made left us all keenly aware of the great task he had during the war and the superlative manner in which he had carried on the war. The interviews were rambling, but only because one point would remind General Marshall of something else and he would flash on to that. It was obvious that he could see the big picture and could see the smaller pictures on the local scenes as well. Instead of sticking to the questions which we had prepared, it was found much more useful to start him off and let him carry the ball. His discursive remarks were most useful because he brought so much into what he said which we never would have gotten by sticking religiously to specific questions. From the nearly three-hours' discussion the impression emerged of a great general with a remarkable memory and for ability to get to the heart of the question. Specific questions brought out important points which had not been included. It was found, however, that it was unwise to interrupt General Marshall until he had finished with one train of thought. He seemed in good physical shape and looked well, contrary to pictures taken after his illness.

The interview was interrupted by General Marshall when his old M/Sgt. came in to announce that the car was ready to go to the White House. General Marshall asked his man how long it would take to get to the White House. He was told how many minutes it would take and said, "Gentlemen, I can give you three more minutes." He then continued to talk for three minutes about the Anzio operation and then said, "Gentlemen, excuse me. I have to go now". He thereupon walked out of the room followed by the three historians. Thirty minutes later we received another call to see General Marshall and the interview was resumed.

General Marshall has a sense of humor and flashes of it were apparent at different states of the interview. His language was rich with the expressions of the soldier.

As we entered his office at 1000 General Marshall was seated at his desk writing a letter. He told us just to have a seat. He said that during the war he had found that if you let the letter wait it usually didn't get finished, and that it was better to keep people waiting until you finished the letter.

