Preface

FROM sad experience, General Marshall concluded that soldiers should not write memoirs. As aide and associate of General Pershing, he had seen the flames of controversy fanned by books of World War I commanders and resolved to avoid anything which would provoke similar discord after World War II. His remark, prompted by this resolution, that he could not write a book without telling everything and that such a volume would hurt too many people has been misinterpreted to mean that he was deliberately withholding damaging information pertaining to some of his former associates. Such was not the case. He believed that it was unfair to air military and political controversies without careful investigation of all the background. And he believed that the publication of such a book by one of the principals created bad feelings among former associates which could do great harm to the causes for which they had served. He was not opposed to a careful examination of the facts by a trained historian.

His refusal to write his memoirs threatened to leave a serious gap in our knowledge of one of the great leaders of World War II. Pressed repeatedly during the war by friends to keep some record, he declined, saying that a diarist ran the risk of doing only those things which would look good in the journal or of putting down only those actions which would make him look good. A journal which he kept in World War I was later destroyed on the grounds that he may have been unfair to some of the men discussed therein.

Despite pressure from publishers and friends to write his autobiography, he refused to listen to lavish offers of money and declined all inducements to write articles or sketches or to use the services of a ghost writer. Only when the George C. Marshall Research Foundation was organized did he finally agree to co-

operate with a trained historian in a series of interviews. Even here, he drew back from pronouncing harsh judgments on his contemporaries, constantly reminding his biographer that he didn't want readers turning through the book to see who had been insulted on page nine.

The dictated portions of the book were incomplete but they reflect the spirit of the great soldier-statesman and help flesh out the records of the archives. It is thus possible to gain a glimpse of his past and put together something of the story of how he rose to the top of his profession. Fortunately, the official record has made it possible to confirm many of the points at which he merely hinted. In addition, a number of his former associates are still living and their recollections and personal papers add greatly to the account. The coverage of his early years is thus far more extensive than is the case with many public figures.

I have used all the interviews with care, inasmuch as most of the former associates who recorded their recollections were reluctant to criticize, and some individuals who had disagreed with the General declined to talk to me. I have also been aware of the fact that when one works closely with an individual's own statements and papers, there is the likelihood of exaggerating his role in activities with which he was associated. For that reason, I have tried to strike a proper balance, but I know that in some cases it will seem that Marshall's activities are permitted to dominate situations in which he was a minor participant. Fortunately, the contemporary record makes clear that, from the time he was a first lieutenant, Marshall filled a role normally reserved for one much senior to him in rank.

From the beginning of my research on General Marshall seven years ago, I have been especially interested in his preparation for the Chief of Staff position. I was interested less in the schools he attended and the courses he took than in the experiences he had as a staff officer and troop leader, his service in different parts of the world, and the development of his views on military subjects. For the officers of his generation, who went into military service at the turn of the century, when the Spanish-American War was opening up a new era in American history, the story is also one of their growing up with a new Army. Confronted by the re-

sponsibilities of the new colonial possessions, by involvement in the First World War, and by the growth of antagonistic world forces in the 1930s, the American Army found itself caught between demands for more adequate defense and the traditional American opposition to maintaining large military forces in peacetime. Frustration was the lot of many officers, eroding their will to achieve and creating an unfortunate gulf between them and the civilian authority. General Marshall managed to survive, to grow, and to retain his confidence in the processes of democracy.

Born of Virginia and Kentucky stock in western Pennsylvania, he grew up with an understanding of both northern and southern viewpoints. Reared in a small city, he retained through all his life a love for the country. Conservative in habits and thoughts, he was able to adapt to the demands of a changing world. Born in an era which spoke often of responsibility, duty, character, integrity, he was marked by these so-called "Victorian" virtues. A natural reserve, simplicity of living, aloofness of manner were strengthened by the austerity of Army life. Taken together, these various elements helped prepare him for the leadership of the greatest army of the free world in the final phases of the war against the combined forces of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

To find the record of this man, and the family, the environment, and the forces which made him, has taken the efforts of several people besides myself. Outlining the nature of the project, interviewing General Marshall, interviewing more than three hundred of his former associates in the United States and abroad, corresponding with more than five hundred of his former associates, directing the main research project, and writing the original draft of the manuscript were my primary responsibilities. I visited Uniontown; Augusta, Kentucky; Lexington, Virginia; Fort Leavenworth; the Presidio of San Francisco; Fort Benning; Fort Screven; Fort Moultrie; Monterey; Vancouver Barracks; Gondrecourt; Chaumont; Neufchâteau; and the battle area near Metz, to study places and posts he had once known.

As the first customer of the Marshall Research Library, I have received invaluable aid at every turn from Miss Eugenia Lejeune, librarian and administrative assistant to the Foundation, and

from her staff. I had as research assistant for the year 1960-61 Dr. Edward M. Coffman, now of the University of Wisconsin, who searched the files of the National Archives for pertinent material for me. His special knowledge of the Army in the 1898-1920 period, drawn from his research on the career of General Peyton C. March, and a special study he did on the reorganization of the Army in 1920, were of tremendous help to me in writing this volume. The assistance of a number of others is acknowledged at p. 351.

General Marshall's dictated material on his career prior to 1939 was completed only to 1924 and had to be supplemented by letters, interviews, and official records. Inasmuch as his taped interviews ran to 125,000 words, the maximum limit set by contract between the publishers and the Foundation for the first volume, it was not surprising that the first draft of the manuscript more than doubled the agreed-on length. When this draft was completed, Dr. Gordon Harrison, an old friend and colleague in the Army's Office of the Chief of Military History, where he wrote *Cross-Channel Attack,* was brought in at my recommendation to review, condense, and rewrite. His assumption of this task brought a fresh perspective to bear on the book and, as a bonus, enabled me to push on with the research and writing of volumes II and III. In Dr. Harrison's revision the bulk of the original has been reduced roughly by half, while some new background and reflective passages have been added on the times and the Army. During the nearly year-long process of reweighing, readjusting, and rewriting, he and I worked closely together to assure a text as accurate and readable as we could jointly make it. We were fortunate in our association with Denver Lindley of The Viking Press, whose editorial judgment eased the collaborative task and improved the final product.

Among the people who granted me interviews or responded to my letters with information, and whose contribution I have acknowledged elsewhere, are included a number who went much farther in their assistance. Some checked or copied documents, answered numerous inquiries, trusted me with cherished albums and diaries, shared with me their research notes, sometimes ran a taxi service for me, entertained me during my visits

to various parts of the country or wrote narrative accounts of Marshall's activities. In most cases, I believe that their contributions will be apparent from the footnotes or from other references. Here, I have space only to express my profound thanks for their generous aid.

For patience, understanding, and sound counsel during many difficult hours of research and writing, a special word of appreciation to my wife, Christine.

FORREST C. POGUE

Arlington, Virginia
April, 1963

GEORGE C. MARSHALL

✳

EDUCATION OF A GENERAL

1880-1939