



## *The Power to Lead*

THE Selective Service Act of 1940 was written by the glare of burning English cities. Even as General Marshall labored to train and condition the forces now provided, Axis armies were on the move. They threatened British control of Egypt and the Suez Canal, toyed with possible advances into western Africa, menaced the Azores and Cape Verde Islands, conquered the Balkans in a few brutal thrusts, and swept into the Soviet Union with massive forces that seemed destined to destroy the Red armies in a matter of six to eight weeks. On the horizon, scarcely discernible at first, was the specter of Japanese aggression in the Pacific. Not knowing how soon or where he might have to put up a fight, the General could only pray for time to prepare his untried forces for battle.

The magnitude of his task in the first eighteen months as head of the Army was best summarized by Marshall himself near the end of 1940:

A year ago last summer our active Army consisted of about 170,000 soldiers, 56 squadrons of combat planes, and some 2500 pilots. There were two small regiments of mechanized troops.

From a purely organizational point of view, the Regular Army had only three half-organized infantry divisions. As for larger organizations, the basic battle unit is an Army Corps and there was not one in our Army.

Today there are 500,000 men in the field undergoing intensive training, and within a very few weeks this total will approach 800,000. Instead of three incomplete infantry divisions, there are today eighteen under training, with nine more soon to come. The two weak mechanized regiments have grown into an armored corps of two divisions, each of about 12,000 men. . . .

The Air Force of 56 squadrons has been increased to 109, and the number of pilots to 4000 a year.<sup>1</sup>

As Army Chief of Staff, Marshall dealt with the President and the Secretary of War, the General and Special Staffs, and the chiefs of arms and services. As commanding general of General Headquarters (GHQ), he directed a far-flung empire that included four armies, nine corps area commands, the tactical air forces, the Armored Force, harbor defense units, and GHQ reserves. Wearing his Chief of Staff hat, he also controlled troops and supplies of units abroad through four departments: Hawaii, the Philippines, the Panama Canal area, and Puerto Rico. Later the last two were incorporated into a Caribbean Defense Command, and an Alaskan Defense Command was added. Not surprisingly, the overlapping jurisdictions created confusion. His supply division in the War Department was often at odds with the field armies he commanded under GHQ.<sup>2</sup>

The air set-up was almost equally complicated. Early in 1939 the air headquarters assigned to control combat operations when GHQ went into action was assigned to the Air Corps. Near the end of 1940 Marshall shifted it to General Headquarters, giving it some supervision of air-ground support. That change in control was more apparent than real since the Chief of the Air Corps, as one of Marshall's three deputies, had responsibility for coordinating all Army air activities.

General Marshall's machinery for handling training in the new Army was a curious affair devised in 1920 to deal with a war fought along the lines of World War I. When the United States entered that conflict President Wilson had organized an American Expeditionary Force, selected a commander, and sent it overseas to show the flag while the troops were prepared for action. The early divisions were organized from independent regiments on shipboard, and the units were trained in France. To direct the training and fighting abroad, a general headquarters (GHQ) was established under General Pershing, which seemed to be independent of the War Department in all matters except promotions and supply.

At the close of the war Pershing, along with former members of his staff, including Colonel Marshall, proposed to a congressional committee considering a National Defense bill that a new GHQ be created in case of future war. Thinking solely of a one-theater con-

flict, soldiers and legislators alike assumed that on the outbreak of war the commanding general of the Army (perhaps the current Chief of Staff) would sail away with his headquarters for the theater of operations. The staff remaining in Washington would oversee the procurement and forwarding of supplies, leaving to the commander in the field the training of troops and the making of operational decisions.

The passage of the Selective Service Act in 1940 destroyed this meticulous pattern. The concept had to be scrapped as soon as the peacetime Army began to take shape and it appeared that fighting in two or more theaters of war would require a more effective command organization in Washington. For the foreseeable future, the commanding general of GHQ would have no overseas assignment.

Whether Marshall would or would not hold that post, it became apparent that as Chief of Staff he would have to function for many months in at least two capacities—first in his current position as military adviser to the President and second as chief of the field forces that were being raised and trained. In the first assignment he continued to direct the activities of the General and Special Staffs in the War Department. For the second, he activated General Headquarters, provided by law, in the summer of 1940, directing it through his GHQ chief of staff Major General Lesley J. McNair.

Even before he became Army Chief of Staff, General Marshall had discovered McNair's special gifts for organization and training. In 1939 he had concluded that the short, wiry Scot was the type of single-minded driver he needed to reform the stuffy halls of Fort Leavenworth. He had summoned him from his experiments with the new triangular division at Fort Sill and directed him to take over the Command and General Staff School. "I selected him very hurriedly . . . to give him control of Leavenworth, which I thought was following a very antiquated [policy] particularly in regard to the Air Corps," General Marshall said of this appointment. Before all the desired changes could be made, the Chief of Staff called McNair to GHQ to handle the even tougher assignment of creating divisions in one or two years from units consisting of a hard core of Regular Army officers and noncoms, partly trained National Guardsmen and Reservists, and completely untrained selectees. This part of the program was still being debated when McNair arrived in Washington, but before he and his tiny

staff could complete their plans Marshall dropped into their laps the federalized National Guard and the first batch of selectees.

"McNair was a very able officer, a conscientious officer, and he had a good staff headquarters at the War College," General Marshall said later. "And he is entitled to vast credit for what he did." Preaching that "time is short" and that sweat shed in training was preferable to blood shed on the battlefield, McNair drove the competent and harried the unfit. Demanding strict discipline and firm leadership, he compiled long lists of officers found wanting in action for Marshall to remove. More important, he kept the Chief of Staff informed of those promising officers to whose leadership divisions and corps could be entrusted in case of war.<sup>3</sup>

Helping McNair in his training tasks was another selection of the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wayne Clark, who came to GHQ as chief of operations in the summer of 1940 and within a year was deputy to McNair with the rank of brigadier general. While commanding at Vancouver Barracks, Marshall had met and liked Clark, then chief of operations of the 3rd Division at Fort Lewis. Impressed by his work as a planner in the Joint Army-Navy exercises at Monterey in 1940, Marshall ordered him to the Army Staff College as an instructor and then, when classes were suspended, directed Clark to report to the GHQ commander as a member of his staff.

Because of his deafness, McNair often sent Clark to represent him in meetings with the Chief of Staff. Intelligent and persuasive, the younger officer grew in Marshall's favor as he exercised his role in developing the Army's training program. "General Clark played a very determining part," said General Marshall. "As a matter of fact, the method of raising these divisions, building them up, was largely worked out by General Clark. He would sit across the desk from me up in the Chief of Staff's office and we would work out the details."<sup>4</sup>

To members of the Personnel and Plans divisions of the War Department, already upset because their functions were being shifted to GHQ, the Chief of Staff's tendency to listen to this newcomer was especially frustrating. They, as well as many generals in the field, blamed "the palace guard" for unpopular changes in ground-force organization and training methods and growled as Clark rose rapidly toward the top in the Washington hierarchy. Like many

men near the source of power, Clark grew both in self-confidence and in capacity to exasperate his contemporaries and former superiors, gaining many powerful enemies. But his position was safe. In a later fight over the nature and control of GHQ, he was pitted against Brigadier General Harry J. Malony, a witty, able officer, who believed GHQ should direct the forces it was deploying. Clark, who wanted to emphasize the training side of GHQ, was on the winning side.<sup>5</sup>

Except on training details, which McNair and Clark handled directly, Marshall kept in direct touch with the four Army commanders. As a result of their seniority—all of them had outranked Marshall before he became Chief of Staff—the four officers wielded broad powers over troops assigned to their control. Staff officers at GHQ approached them with the same deference they showed the Chief of Staff. Like Marshall, the four field commanders were non-West Pointers: Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum of First Army and Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt of Fourth Army had been commissioned from civilian life, and Lieutenant General Walter Krueger of Third Army and Lieutenant General Ben Lear of Second Army had entered the Army as privates. All had served in the Spanish-American War, and all save Lear had held important posts overseas in World War I.

Marshall's chief airman was an old friend he had first met in the Philippines in 1914. Pennsylvania-born "Hap" Arnold had begun his career in the infantry after being graduated from West Point in 1907. After four years as a foot soldier, he had replied eagerly to an invitation in 1911 to take flying instruction. He was promptly sent to Dayton, Ohio, where under the personal supervision of the Wright Brothers, he learned how to be a pilot.<sup>6</sup>

Arnold's service in World War I was confined to Washington, where he ended the war years as a temporary colonel and as executive officer of the Air Division. In the period between wars he backed General William Mitchell's arguments in favor of the development of the Air Force and found himself temporarily in hot water because of his activities. In 1935, after the creation of the GHQ Air Force at Langley Field, Virginia, he was given command of one of its three wings with headquarters at March Field, California. He was called from that post to Washington in 1936 to become Assistant Chief of the Air Corps under Major General Oscar West-

over, and on the death of that officer in an air crash in the fall of 1938 he became Chief of the Air Corps. Thus, he was the chief airman in Washington when Marshall became Deputy Chief of Staff.

Arnold and his air-minded friends lost no time in instructing General Marshall in the needs of the Air Corps. The airman's former boss at Langley Field, Frank M. Andrews, who had gone back to his permanent rank of colonel after completing a tour of duty in a major general's slot, accompanied Marshall while he was still Deputy Chief of Staff on a cross-country trip to airfields and airplane plants. Andrews also took the opportunity to explain the nature of the disagreement between air and ground officers of the Army.

General Marshall found "that Air had almost no representation . . . on the General Staff and . . . that the General Staff officers had little interest in the Air, mostly antipathy, and it was quite marked. . . . I found everyone on the staff hostile to Air, and the young air officers were going to Congress and stirring up everything—and the [situation] was in a general muddle. They had something to complain about because they were not getting recognition, and the General Staff at that time had little understanding of the Air." <sup>7</sup>

Shortly after he was named Chief of Staff, General Marshall asked that Andrews be made a brigadier general and brought into the War Department as chief of the G-3 Division, which dealt with training. "For the first time that I remember, Woodring, Johnson, and General Craig all acted as a unit in opposing action." After a stormy session they finally gave in to Marshall's demands and approved Andrews for both appointments.<sup>8</sup>

Arnold later wrote of this period that Marshall needed "plenty of indoctrination" about airpower but learned rapidly. "The difference in George, who presently was to become one of the most potent forces behind the development of a real airpower," he declared, "was his ability to digest what he saw and make it part of as strong a body of military genius as I have ever known." <sup>9</sup>

Arnold's praise for General Marshall's contributions to the development of the Air Corps was later echoed by General Laurence S. Kuter, who was assigned to the War Department as a major on July 1, 1939, and rose in the next few years to high command in the

Air Force. Kuter was first impressed by General Marshall's instructions to the young officers reporting to the War Department in the summer of 1939 that they should consider their jobs "as war assignments" and approach their problems as if they were at war. He was to find other indications of the General's realistic approach to America's problems in the months to come.

In 1940 Kuter, as project officer for the G-3 Division, had the task of presenting a proposal for expanding the Army Air Corps to fifty-four groups. At that time it seemed extremely expensive and almost out of the question. When his study was complete he outlined it to Marshall, who sat quietly trying to weigh the arguments for and against the plan. At the end Marshall asked only one question: "Why is it only fifty-four?" Kuter was surprised. "Every other question [raised by others] had been focused on reducing the air effort, that it was beyond any reason, it was imaginative, beyond any common sense. . . . General Marshall approved the program there. There was no further discussion or debate . . . It became the War Department's directive that day. I therefore attribute to him in 1940 full credit for the vision and imagination that led [ultimately] to an increase to 286 groups from a force which at that time consisted of about three that were worth mentioning . . ." <sup>10</sup>

The Chief of Staff also made an effort to go part of the way toward meeting demands from airmen and some air-minded civilians for an independent Air Corps. Although convinced that the Air Corps had too few graduates of the Army schools to furnish an adequate staff for an independent force and believing that at this stage it was essential to have an air force that would support ground action rather than act independently, he embarked on a policy of granting increased autonomy to the Air Corps. In the fall of 1940 he created, in addition to the post of Deputy Chief of Staff, then held by Major General William Bryden, two new deputy slots: one for supply, which he gave to Major General Richard C. Moore, and one for air, which he handed to General Arnold in addition to his position as Chief of Air Corps. He also gave Arnold a voice in the meetings of the War Council, where Arnold sat as a deputy while meeting with the representatives of the Navy. Marshall's admiration for Arnold's abilities did not diminish; in later years he said of him, "He was always loyal"—one of the tributes he reserved for those he trusted most.

With McNair, Arnold, and the four Army commanders in charge of a reorganized program of training, Marshall in the fall of 1940 began a strong effort to prepare his ground and air forces for battle. As one of the Army's best-known troop instructors, he never lost sight of the training program. After the summer of 1940, when the time to train the Army's soldiers and fliers for future tests of arms became "tragically" short, he speeded up the efforts in this field.

General Marshall particularly wanted more time to prepare the ground force. He said later: "I never saw it properly trained except during the latter part of the war. Everything you do is under extraordinarily difficult circumstances, which is not the case with the other services. For example, in the Navy, I think it was the ship's custom that everyone should take a bath before going into action and put on clean underwear. The probability was that he had a night's sleep in his regular bunk. With the Army it was quite the other way round. The probability was that he had been in a series of marches—some of them forced marches. He had been pushed to the verge of exhaustion. He was wet—because it always seems to rain in such cases—and muddy and he had to sleep in those clothes. He had no chance to get a change of garments on the eve of action or a long time after that. And yet the moment when his high courage was necessary came as a rule at dawn, when he woke up half-frozen to deal with an enemy he couldn't see and [when his own] machine guns and artillery [could be seen only] through the eyes of a single observer. The artillery which had to furnish close support was out of sight. All of this required a very high state of training, higher than that of any other force I know of." <sup>11</sup>

In his early days as Chief of Staff, Marshall had flown to Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and Panama to inspect the training of those distant garrisons. Now, he stole away at every opportunity to observe the efforts of his commanders to iron out the shocking weaknesses of command and execution in the field. In one busy week he left Washington for Minnesota at six on Saturday morning, arrived in the afternoon, and left next morning for Fort Lewis, Washington, where he spent a quiet Sunday. On Monday he visited units in the field between Fort Lewis, near Seattle, and Vancouver, Washington. From nearby Portland he flew to Alexandria, Louisiana, where he arrived on Wednesday morning and spent the day watching maneuvers then in progress. Next morning he was in



Montgomery, Alabama, to inspect forces on an air base, and that afternoon, at Fort Benning, he inspected two new divisions being organized there. He left Fort Benning at 5 p.m. and was back in Washington by 9.<sup>12</sup>

His frequent whirlwind visits, essential to a commander of a far-flung Army, were possible only in an air age. Marshall flew whenever possible and insisted that all of his principal commanders and staff officers fly, relieving those officers who declined to do so. His airplane visits speedily changed established protocol for receiving the Chief of Staff at subordinate headquarters. Desiring to make full use of his time, the General bluntly directed that no honors, ceremonies, or parties be scheduled for him.<sup>13</sup> (An exception was made infrequently when he accompanied important visitors on special inspections.) He made many of the trips too rapidly to form careful judgments, and some of the commanders complained that he neglected the morale factor to be gained from showing himself to the men. In a sense he was conducting the type of sampling he received from reading representative letters each day from soldiers and their families. He was stimulated by hearing from different commanders firsthand accounts of their problems, and he gained an advantage over his assistants in Washington by seeing more of the Army than they.

As he moved about the country the Chief of Staff looked in on recruit training at division level, at flying instruction at distant fields, or watched while larger ground and air units engaged in maneuvers across the territory of entire states.

To the new recruit, training meant hours of hated drill in heat or cold, marches with full field pack down dusty or muddy roads, memorizing the names of hundreds of parts of unfamiliar weapons and reciting them in a sort of dreadful litany, interminable cleanings of rifles and bleachings of equipment, enforced by unpredictable inspections. The greatest problem of wartime instruction, General Marshall believed, was to continue long enough with basic training. "It is dull and it is long and it is very strenuous, and unless it is well done, thoroughly done, the troops are going to be lacking in discipline and performance from that time on. And yet it is very hard to have them see the reason for it. I remember I had some professional fact-gatherers go around for me. They saw the men in training in this country and asked them about what they thought

of it. . . . [Later] they found the same men on the front, after they had been engaged [in action], and [nearly everything] the men objected to in this country . . . they now said they had not had enough of.” <sup>14</sup>

It was Marshall's belief that one could best judge the preparation of men for battle by testing them in prearranged maneuvers. Most civilians failed to agree. They saw them as confused and expensive affairs in which troops and vehicles moved haphazardly along the highways, interfering with traffic and disturbing honest working people, or across fertile fields, knocking down fences, ruining cornfields and frightening cattle, as they played at war.

The General talked with one senator who objected to the money that was being spent on maneuvers. The senator was particularly upset because the troops had made numerous mistakes, and he asked why maneuvers were held with so many errors. The Chief of Staff replied, “My God, Senator, that's the reason I do it. I want the mistake down in Louisiana, not over in Europe, and the only way to do this thing is to try it out, and if it doesn't work, find out what we need to make it work.” <sup>15</sup>

Here for the first time, General Marshall explained later, it was possible to train the High Command. “Eisenhower, for example, was chief of staff of General Krueger's [Third] Army in the South. All of them learned a great deal. I remember in the 500,000-man maneuver down in Louisiana, I directed that they change their bases on each side. They told me it would take a month for something like that and be very, very expensive. Well, I said, they would have to do it anyway. They would have to do it in Europe and they would have to do it here. So they changed the bases. I remember in one case it took ten days and cost 40,000 dollars. That seems a large sum for a maneuver like that. But it was a very economical sum when it came to the efficiency it developed in the troops. That is the reason that Patton and Hodges and Bradley were able to move as rapidly as they did across the face of Europe.”

Before 1940 field exercises were usually staged by opposing divisions. In 1940 and 1941 the War Department used rival corps and finally large peacetime armies. When properly equipped and led, units in maneuvers improved their tactical effectiveness and developed their supply and communications systems. Even when many weapons were obsolete or completely unavailable and many rules

of ground warfare violated, life in the open, the conditioning of bodies, practice in shifting large numbers of troops across great distances, and the attainment of some degree of cohesion within competing units constituted a high return on the Army's initial investment.

Irrked by caustic criticisms of the 1939 maneuvers that had been ordered before he became Chief of Staff, General Marshall moved at once in the fall of that year to plan more effective training exercises for 1940 and 1941. To get additional officers to train his expanded Regular Army units, he suspended classes at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, in February 1940. As a means of providing training aids for the enlarged units he retained the faculty at the school to prepare or revise training manuals to meet his new requirements. In later years he liked to boast that whereas American officers in 1917 had had to borrow training guides from the British in order to start instruction in France, the Army in 1940 was able to start its expanded program with manuals that incorporated the newest military doctrines.<sup>16</sup>

Despite his initial efforts General Marshall was disappointed by the ragged performances of officers and troops and the lack of realism in the 1940 exercises. In the May maneuvers conducted by the Third Army, the commanding general, General Henry J. Brees, was so critical of his principal commanders in the presence of their subordinates that the Chief of Staff barred junior officers from similar critiques in the future.<sup>17</sup>

Of the maneuvers held by the four armies in 1940, General Drum's attracted the greatest publicity. Having called performances in the 1939 maneuvers "inexcusable," the First Army commander opened the 1940 exercises by listing his woeful shortages in manpower and weapons. He dramatically illustrated his lack of equipment by labeling iron pipes as "cannon," trucks as "tanks," and using light planes to simulate bombers. Possibly his publicity campaign was designed to alert the American public to the need of more equipment, but the Chief of Staff's friends thought he was trying to embarrass Marshall and McNair.

Marshall's old friend, Fox Conner, wrote a biting article on the conduct of the exercises in New York, saying that the Army must re-establish the fundamental conceptions of "what war is." He forwarded the clipping to the Chief of Staff, adding that he would

have been even more critical if he had been making an official report. Current conceptions, he thought, were "completely haywire and cockeyed." In extenuation of the situation, he remarked that Marshall and McNair had many more difficult training problems than Pershing and his staff had faced in 1917.

The Chief of Staff replied softly that his staff was carefully studying recent errors and making sweeping changes in organization and tactics for the 1941 exercises. He was hopeful, he said, of showing the nation something better in the future. "Our intensive training program, the additional equipment which will soon become available, and a realization by all concerned of the seriousness of the times and our weaknesses will contribute toward the end in view."<sup>18</sup>

When training and operations went badly Marshall examined first the quality of leadership. In 1940 he took another hard look at a problem that had concerned him during all the years he had been training troops. He was haunted by recollections of the droves of unfit commanders sent in World War I by General Pershing to "Blooney" (Blois)—as the French used to send theirs to Limoges—for reclassification, and of his chief's almost frantic efforts on eve of battle to find suitable officers for combat assignments. Having personally fought the dead hand of promotion by seniority in the period between wars, he concentrated now on finding the right man for the right job.

Even while he was still Deputy Chief of Staff, Marshall had campaigned to improve Army command by seeking to reform the promotion system. Since the peacetime Army had no permanent rank higher than that of major general, the seniority system dictated that the senior corps commander in each Army area automatically succeed to the vacant Army command. As a result the position was sometimes filled by generals with only months or even weeks to serve before retirement. Officers with fine records often reached their goal just in time to stage their final reviews, or mediocre officers moved upward to high command only because they had stepped on the escalator of rank a few months before an abler colleague.

Marshall determined to change the system. "I wanted to be able to put my finger on the man I wanted," he recalled, "so he would work like the devil and be interested in something besides the two

cars and the [extra] bathroom for his wife he wanted.”<sup>19</sup> With General Craig’s consent, he lobbied for temporary lieutenant-general ranks to be established for the commanders of the four armies. Thereafter the Chief of Staff could make his own selection without bowing to the rules of strict seniority.

His efforts to create four new lieutenant generals brought him into collision with Senator Tom Connally, powerful member of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. Silvery-maned, Texas tall, devastatingly sarcastic, formidable in debate, “Old Tawm” proceeded to tear “the Army to ribbons” when Marshall tried to present his case. Winded at last by his tirade, he stopped for breath long enough for Deputy Chief of Staff Marshall to inquire innocently what state he hailed from. Indignant, Connally replied, “Why, I’m from Texas.” “I thought so,” rejoined the General as he turned from current history to the experiences of an earlier war. Recalling that the South at the beginning of the Civil War had given the titles of general and lieutenant general to its top commanders, Marshall spoke of the mistake made by the Yankee government in restricting its commanders initially to major general rank. Stretching history slightly, he suggested that not until Lincoln had made Grant a lieutenant general did the North begin to defeat the armies of the South. Connally listened and agreed finally not to oppose the measure when it came to a vote. He kept his word, and the measure passed. In a committee hearing some months later, when Marshall referred to the earlier discussion, the Texan growled that he hadn’t changed his mind.<sup>20</sup>

The increase in the number of general officers, soon to be a continuing process, solved only a part of the command problem. As the Army expanded in 1940 and 1941, the Chief of Staff was shocked and saddened to find that many of his contemporaries, with fine records in peacetime or in World War I, could not meet the heavy demands of new command responsibilities. For some of the early appointments he had reached back in his memory and recommended for high place old friends from Fort Leavenworth or First Army. He was aghast when many of them broke under the pressure of their new duties.<sup>21</sup>

Many problems arose, as Marshall pointed out, because men had been held in relatively junior rank for so many years that on finally reaching colonel or brigadier general rank they were unprepared

for their responsibilities. Often a ludicrous incident suddenly revealed an officer's weakness. More than once, Marshall's younger advisers would say to him that an officer he had pushed for advancement "no longer had it." In one case it was an intimate friend, once "very able," who failed to measure up when, soon after the United States entered the war, Marshall selected him for an overseas post. Directed to proceed at once to his new assignment, he replied that he couldn't leave because the furniture wasn't packed and his wife was away for a month. Scarcely believing the answer when informed of it, Marshall took the telephone and asked the officer if he had been correctly quoted. When the old friend placidly replied in the affirmative the Chief of Staff blurted out, "My God, man, we are at war, and you are a general." To the reply, "Well, I'm sorry," Marshall could only say, "I'm sorry, too, but you will be retired tomorrow." <sup>22</sup>

The General was particularly affected when able officers, nearing retirement, had to be relieved so that he could replace them with much younger men. In several cases he had the unpleasant task of telling them that the star they had sought for several years would go to an officer better fitted for the rigorous demands of field duties. As often as possible he softened the blow by finding a place where the officer could still serve competently. Many of the men understood and were grateful; others were convinced that Marshall was paying off old grievances. They formed a small, bitter band within the ranks of the Army, eager to listen to personal attacks on Marshall and to offer their views later as ammunition for campaigns against him.

To those who had survived the years of poor pay and slow promotion, the prospect of being removed from the list just as they had reached the door of promise seemed incredible, and to the wives who had waited impatiently for the golden moment it was monstrous. In the end it was the ladies who tore at him violently in letters, reminding him of long personal friendships, recalling their fondness for his first wife, pleading that he spare their husbands lest they lose their interest in life. Others coaxed and wheedled, adding that their husbands would kill them if they knew they were writing. Marshall developed special methods for dealing with this painful raking over of old memories and treasured friendships. To letters filled with unaccustomed praise or sweetness he was friendly

but cautious; to the begging letters he was distant; to heartbroken letters there were reminders of the superior claim of the Army's welfare or a suggestion that the husband could still render service in his present rank; to the letters with barbs and edges he gave no further answer. Folders of correspondence, running over fifteen or twenty years, contained pleasant memories of early service together, photographs of children now grown tall, invitations to weddings, congratulations, felicitations and good wishes, and then pleading for "George" to remember the friend of his youth.

Occasionally a dark, unforgiving letter, written after a loved one had died, stabbed at the General with its accusations of ingratitude. On these he would sometimes write the words, "This is an old matter; goes back some years. File." Some of the postscripts to friendship he did not hear or read, but the tragedy is contained in comments to a biographer—"I have no further interest in General Marshall" or "he was once our dear friend, but he ruined my husband." Marshall resolutely rose above the insinuating demands of friendship as colleagues shivered over his cold-blooded willingness to make former associates walk the plank along with others he did not know if they failed to measure up. But the knife turned in the wound. Only rarely did the feelings show through, but his chance remarks showed the hurt. There is conscious agony in a memorandum he penned for an aide during the war: "Please draft a letter for General — on the death of his second son. I had to relieve him, and I am afraid I broke his heart."

Possibly at times his scales of justice were a little askew. Just as he seldom permitted the doubt to be resolved in favor of a friend, he occasionally weighed too heavily against those who had come under his disfavor for a long-remembered defect in personal conduct or leadership. He was not deaf to appeals and, if the evidence warranted, sometimes changed his mind. But if a man pressed too hard he could destroy himself. One officer, convinced that he had lost a promotion by failure to accept an assignment that Marshall had proposed, wrote to beg the General's forgiveness, saying that he had already been made to pay heavily enough for his error. As if offended by this self-abasement, Marshall sent back a curt reminder that advancement was based on performance. When the officer persisted the Chief of Staff slashed across the paper, "He is a whiner. File." The man remained a colonel until

the war's end. In this instance Marshall's only feeling seems to have been one of irritation.

In another case, involving the removal of an officer who had once been a close personal friend, there was obviously personal regret. He had known the man since World War I and had been a close friend of his family. When Marshall became Chief of Staff he had singled out his old friend for an important post, had praised his initial efforts, and then had removed him when he found that serious difficulties were developing between his appointee and another officer in the same command. The officer returned to Washington, where he expected to get another assignment. Days passed and then weeks and there was no word from the War Department. At last he asked about his situation. There was no response. Finally, in anguish that permeated his letter, he appealed to his old friend to remove his hand. "You need only [say] that you want me usefully employed without humiliation." He could find slots in several War Department offices, he added, but "they are all afraid to touch me so long as I am manifestly under your displeasure." Marshall made no reply, and in a short time the former friend retired, bitter against the General who could have saved him but would not. It gave Marshall no joy to wield such power, and he said later, while agreeing to the harsh reproach that he was ruthless in removing officers from command, that no task he performed pained him more. But he was preparing an army for war and felt that the selection of those who could lead in battle was a duty he owed the state.

Feared throughout the Army was Marshall's little Black Book, which he kept in the drawer of his desk. Members of his staff watched with fascination as he took it out from time to time, crossed off a name and moved up or added that of another. The Black Book was a little-needed crutch to a well-charged memory that still contained the names of classmates from Fort Leavenworth, colleagues in France, instructors and students at Fort Benning, dozens of men whom he saw on every visit to maneuvers, the names advisers and old friends counseled him to remember, men of good report whose achievements were chronicled again and again in his mail.

Balanced against the cases of men suddenly advanced because of Marshall's recollection of a single fine performance were the names



of those held back because he recalled a black mark from the past. Widely repeated in the Army was the case of Colonel (later General) James A. Van Fleet, whose name was similar to that of another colonel listed among the rejected in the Black Book. Each time Van Fleet was recommended for a star, his name was crossed off. Only after he had proved himself in the Normandy fighting did the Chief of Staff concede that he had been holding back the wrong man.<sup>23</sup>

By 1941 certain names recurred regularly in his listings for important commands. In addition to those who had been generals when he became Chief of Staff he put down again and again the names of younger officers destined for the highest ranks the Army had to offer—Bradley, Patton, Eichelberger, Hodges, Collins, and Eisenhower.

Marshall stirred up bitter controversy with his early efforts to hack at the "hump" caused by the number of men of approximately the same age and rank who became Regular Army officers at the close of World War I. Marshall had suffered from the stagnation in promotions caused by a similar "hump" created at the end of the Spanish-American War and his testimony in behalf of his proposed bill was strongly shaped by his personal history.

Out of the depths of his former frustrations he demanded that officers be saved from the spirit-destroying effect of being held for years in the same grade without hope of reaching one of the higher posts in time to be of service to the Army. More effective was his argument that men retained in lower grades were being deprived of needed experience in handling large numbers of men. In emergencies they would suddenly succeed to command of large units without knowing how to perform their duties.

From the need for experience he turned to the need for youth: "It took a great deal of imagination; it took a great deal of vigor in order to lead the vast Army we were starting to build up. . . . The whole point was not that everyone of that age was lacking; but it was the average of that age that was lacking. For example, General Patton was up in years and, incidentally, would always talk to me about the age question all the time for fear we would apply it to him. Well, he was the epitome of vigor and leadership and that sort of thing. He was the exception, and there were not many like him. . . ." <sup>24</sup> Marshall reminded his hearers that the

maneuvers had demonstrated that only leaders of great physical stamina could command the maximum exertions from their men. "In my experience in the war—and I saw about twenty-seven of twenty-nine divisions in battle," General Marshall told members of the House Military Affairs Committee in 1940, "there were more failures, more crushed careers of officers of considerable rank that grew out of physical exhaustion than [from] any other one cause."<sup>25</sup> One acquired judgment with the years but lost "the resiliency of tendons and muscles." "Leadership in the field," he repeated, "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 energetically and aggressively to command men, to dominate men on the battlefield." In World War I many men had had to be relieved because "their spirit—their tenacity of purpose, their power of leadership over tired men—was broken through physical fatigue. They became pessimistic. They became nervous impossibilities in positions of leadership. . . ." <sup>26</sup>

"You have to lead men in war by requiring more from the individual than he thinks he can do," he argued. "You have to lead men in war by bringing them along to endure and to display qualities of fortitude that are beyond the average man's thought of what he should be expected to do. You have to inspire them when they are hungry and exhausted and desperately uncomfortable and in great danger; and only a man of positive characteristics of leadership, with the physical stamina that goes with it, can function under those conditions." <sup>27</sup>

Marshall emphasized advancement of younger men, but the point that caught the eye of the armed services journals and the general press was the provision to retire colonels who failed to measure up to the new exacting demands. "I was accused," Marshall recalled, "of getting rid of all the brains of the Army. I couldn't reply that I was eliminating considerable arteriosclerosis." <sup>28</sup>

To insure fairness in the elimination Marshall selected for the task a committee of six retired officers—a "plucking board" as it was called—headed by his immediate predecessor, General Craig. The officers, after examining records and recommendations as to performance, were empowered to remove from line promotion any

officer for reasons deemed good and sufficient. He would then be subject to removal one year after the action was taken. As a guide Marshall passed on to the board, with his approval, G-1's statement that cases were to be decided not on an officer's past record but on his value to the Army. "Critical times are upon us," he warned, and the standard had to be "today's performance."<sup>29</sup>

It was not enough to weed out the incompetent; it was even more important to see that younger officers of exceptional ability were advanced quickly to higher rank. On this problem the Chief of Staff found himself blocked by Chairman Andrew May of the House Military Affairs Committee because of pressure brought by officers Marshall did not plan to promote. Frustrated by the pigeonholing of his bill, the Chief of Staff went to Senator Byrnes of South Carolina to see what could be done in the upper house. Byrnes, an old hand at parliamentary maneuver, suggested that Marshall have his staff draft an amendment that could be added to the appropriations bill on the floor of the Senate. An innocuous statement—"In time of war or national emergency determined by the President, any officer of the Regular Army may be appointed to higher temporary grade without vacating his permanent appointment"—was quickly prepared and handed by the Chief of Staff to the Senator. When the appropriations bill was reported from the Senate Committee to the floor, Byrnes offered the Army's amendment. No questions were asked, and it was quickly adopted. The bill was sent to a joint conference with members of the House Appropriations Committee. There the South Carolinian got the cooperation of friends, who also accepted his amendment. The amended measure sailed through both houses without May's learning until later that he had voted for a bill containing the provision he thought he had blocked. Byrnes in his memoirs proudly recalled Marshall's statement that the legislation had permitted him to jump Eisenhower over more than 350 senior officers and that others moved up rapidly as a result were Clark, Patton, Kenney, and Spaatz. "In Congress nothing just happens," remarked Byrnes, "somebody must make it happen." By helping to "make it happen," Marshall had taken one more step toward strengthening the leadership of the Army.<sup>30</sup>

His task of weeding out senior officers not only embarrassed him but at last led him to wonder, since "no man would agree to him-

self that he was not quite up to the punch," if perhaps he himself were too old for his position. In the face of growing attacks from congressional and military circles he took a surprising action. Before the plucking board started its work, the General called on the President to explain that the process of eliminating older officers could be done faster if the Chief of Staff were a younger man. He proposed that he resign. Roosevelt heard him through without comment. Two weeks later, when Marshall mentioned it to Harry Hopkins, the latter replied, "The President just laughs at you. He says no politician ever resigns a job and that's just talk." Marshall returned a second time, proposing that he select a younger man for his successor, carefully groom him for the position for two or three months, and then step aside. Roosevelt again heard him through and said nothing. Little more than a year younger than Marshall, he may have thought it was dangerous to start a wave of self-denying ordinances in the government. A call to Hopkins brought the same jesting response that the President had never known a man in high position to resign.<sup>31</sup> Marshall's gesture had done nothing more than reveal the depth of his feeling on the necessity for thorough reorganization of the officer corps.

Inasmuch as no congressional authorization was necessary for forced retirements or reshuffling of the command organizations of the National Guard and the Reserve Officer Corps, General McNair began to shift officers in these groups before the Regular Army board started its work. Consequently many non-Regulars charged discrimination. A check of the statistics refuted the charge. The percentage of field-grade officers retired in the National Guard was somewhat less than in the Regular Army. The highly publicized shifts in the National Guard took place at division and regimental levels, where command and staff positions had often gone to men with political backgrounds or to able World War I officers who had gained little experience in command since that time. General McNair found little difficulty in showing evidence of poor administration or ineffective troop handling to justify his requests for the transfer of many officers.

In dealing with the National Guard removals, Marshall found that he had to tread warily. Many of the higher-ranking officers had powerful political connections in their states, and members of Congress were quick to intervene in their behalf. In the case of one

such officer, General Marshall received a protest from the entire congressional delegation from the general's home state. He discussed the heavy demands of divisional command, the lack of opportunity of many officers to get proper training, the necessity of having the best-trained men possible for field leadership. When these arguments failed to move his listeners, he declared firmly: "I'll put it this way, gentlemen. I don't understand your position because I should think that your constituents should be your principal interest—and here it seems to me that you are only considering one constituent and ignoring all [your] other constituents who are members of the division. I am concerned with them. . . ." While they considered the political implications of that blast he added with some heat, "I am not going to leave him in command of that division. So I will put it to you this way—if he stays, I go, and if I stay, he goes." That, recalled the General, "broke up the meeting."

The incident had a poignant ending. One of the senators went home, perhaps a little angry at the rebuff he and his colleagues had received. He returned to the War Department next day in a better frame of mind. "I told my wife about the meeting yesterday," he said. She had reminded her husband of their special interest in one of the many constituents the Chief of Staff had claimed as his own. Their son was in the service. She for one was very happy, she told the senator, that the boy was in the Army and that General Marshall was at its head.<sup>32</sup>

One of the hottest controversies to arise over National Guard leadership came in the summer of 1941 in the case of General Lear's disciplinary measures against the 35th Division, a National Guard unit commanded by Major General Ralph Truman, a veteran of the Spanish-American and First World Wars and an insurance executive of Missouri. For some months General McNair had been criticizing Truman's handling of the division, and Lear, commanding general of Second Army, had been cracking down on deficiencies in that unit. During the maneuvers in Tennessee that summer, criticisms reached Washington from local citizens complaining of depredations by various units in their areas. Lear was quickly peppered with directives to tighten up on the discipline of units going to and from the maneuver area in his Army. Shortly afterward men of the 35th Division, while passing a golf course in

Memphis, proceeded to utter wolf whistles—described as “yoo-hoos”—at several young ladies on the course. Unrecognized, one of the older golfers in civilian clothes happened to be General Lear, who promptly ordered them to stop their whistling. They told him to shut up. Boiling mad, he returned to his headquarters and ordered that the men be brought back from their home station at Fort Robinson, Arkansas, and required to walk back part of the forty-five miles to their post. Judged against later drill requirements for infantry, his penalty of fifteen miles’ hiking, followed by fifteen miles’ riding, was less than criminal. At the time it was widely condemned as a Prussian act of brutal callousness, and letters were addressed to the hapless general as “Hitler” and “Von Lear.”

The incident coincided with the fight then going on over extension of selective service legislation and retention of the National Guard in federal service. A public and press inflamed over the congressional fight magnified the case out of all proper proportion. When McNair and Lear proposed in the wake of the furore that the 35th Division commander be transferred to another assignment Truman applied for retirement. A mild storm arose some months later. Lear’s name came up for temporary promotion to lieutenant general, and the senior senator from Missouri, Bennett Clark, objected on the ground that Lear had treated Truman improperly. However, the junior senator, a cousin of the former division commander, declined to join in the protest, and Lear’s nomination was confirmed.

Throughout the extended controversy over Regular Army versus National Guard, Marshall retained the respect of the National Guard. During his long association with state militias and Guard units he had developed an understanding and sympathy for their problems that made it possible for him to keep the friendship of their commanders. As Chief of Staff he insisted that their officers be given full opportunity to prove that they were as efficient as Regular officers. He held that their weaknesses were due to lack of experience and insufficient time for training and not to any lack of capacity for leadership. To avoid charges of favoritism he directed that no vacancy in a Guard unit be filled by a Regular officer if a qualified National Guard officer could be found.

Marshall’s effort to put into effect his particular theories on the

training of officers brought him into a painful conflict with Secretary Stimson in the spring of 1941. At issue were two different concepts of officer procurement and training. In World War I the Army had copied the British system of commissioning college-trained men after a short period of military training in the belief that they would excel in leadership qualities. Marshall had accepted this system at that time and during the period between wars had backed the civilian military-training camp program, sponsored by the Reserve Officers Training Organization and by Stimson, Grenville Clark, Patterson, and others. Once selective service was adopted, he proposed a different method of procuring officers. Believing that every officer should have a taste of a private soldier's life, he recommended that candidates be selected by officers under whom they had trained.

At the urging of Grenville Clark and Under Secretary Patterson, Stimson raised the issue in 1941. The matter of officer training was soon lost in the larger question of whether the Chief of Staff or the Secretary of War's civilian advisers were to determine War Department policy. In late March, Marshall called in his staff and requested advice on ways to battle the proposal. He asked them to study various other methods, pressing the importance of answering the argument that the Army should adopt the Navy's practice of awarding commissions to college-trained specialists. His military assistants spread the word that the boss was set for a showdown with the civilian authorities who were trying to run the War Department.

Armed with sage advice, Marshall bluntly told Secretary Stimson that he must decide whether he intended to follow the views of his Chief of Staff and the General Staff in military matters or listen to Grenville Clark and other civilian advisers. The General reviewed his arguments for selecting officer candidates from outstanding selectees. He offered to open commissions to qualified men outside the service who would volunteer for officers' school after they had taken basic training. Stimson was startled at Marshall's vehemence. In the midst of the argument the Chief of Staff suddenly declared that he would resign if the Secretary insisted on holding civilian military camps.

Seeing that the Chief of Staff was troubled "far out of proportion to the importance" of the issue, Stimson quietly assured him

that he "would not have him unduly worried" and made clear that he would follow his advice. His assistants were displeased by Stimson's surrender. Patterson and McCloy criticized the Army's opposition, calling it "simply a mark of incompetence and narrow-mindedness." The General later expressed regret over his offer to resign, saying incorrectly that it was the only time that he had used this threat to get his way. Undoubtedly Stimson's civilian advisers would have liked to recall their aspersions on the Army. Stimson, at least, conceded that "the solution reached was a better one than any of them had anticipated."<sup>38</sup>

With this background General Marshall watched closely over the first class of officer candidates at Fort Benning. He insisted that they be chosen for mental aptitude and qualities of leadership from units throughout the Army and then carefully trained and tested for their knowledge of weapons and tactics. He recalled again his insistence at the Infantry School that officers must be taught to fight the brutally tough battles of the first six months of a war when properly trained troops and adequate weapons were often lacking.

He was on hand to deliver the graduating address when the first class finished in the fall of 1941. His remarks were brief, but they went straight to the heart of what he wanted from his future combat leaders. "Warfare today," he reminded them, "is a thing of swift movement—of rapid concentrations. It requires the building up of enormous firepower against successive objectives with breathtaking speed. It is not a game for the unimaginative plodder."

Marshall spelled out for them the difficulties of commanding American troops. Their characteristics of individual initiative and independence of thought, which made them potentially the best fighters in the world, could become possible sources of weakness without good leadership. Lacking the homogeneity of the British people, Americans did not have their ability to "glorify a defeat by their stubborn tenacity and dogged discipline." The American soldier's unusual intelligence and resourcefulness could become "explosive or positively destructive . . . under adverse conditions, unless the leadership is wise and determined, and unless the leader commands the complete respect of his men."

His mind went back to his experience in the Philippines, on the



battlefields of France, and in China during the trying days of the 1920s as he tried to picture for the young lieutenants about to receive their first gold bar of rank all the things he had learned from rugged old sergeants and tough old colonels and the other leaders who had won the love or respect of the men they commanded. He recalled for them how soldiers changed their minds, once they hit combat, about officers they had once regarded as "tough" or "easy." The great task of leadership, he said, would come "during the long and trying periods of waiting and marching here and there without evident purpose, and during those weeks or months of service under conditions of extreme discomfort or of possible privations and isolations." Then the true leader must surmount the difficulties, maintain his discipline, and develop his training.

Marshall then ticked off alertness and initiative as qualities he expected of them as well of his senior officers: "Passive inactivity because you have not been given specific instructions to do this or to do that is a serious deficiency." He charged the first of the Army's ninety-day wonders with the care of the small units of the great army with whose command they would be entrusted—whose quality, discipline, and development would depend on them. In an effort to make them see the awful demands of true leadership he recalled that the failures of the units, great or small, would be charged to their incapacity. After underlining their responsibilities he cautioned his listeners: "Remember this: the truly great leader overcomes all difficulties, and campaigns and battles are nothing but a long series of difficulties to be overcome. The lack of equipment, the lack of food, the lack of this or that are only excuses; the real leader displays his qualities in his triumph over adversity, however great it may be." <sup>34</sup>