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Marshall's Men

". . . control of troops closely engaged with the enemy is the most difficult feat of leadership and requires the highest state of discipline and training."

EVEN in his happiest and most relaxed periods, lecturing at the War College would not have offered scope enough for Marshall's energies. In the emptiness left by Lily's death he found the surroundings unbearable. "At a War College desk I thought I would explode." [1] He needed hard demanding work into which he could throw himself full time, and the outdoors to release his spirit. At Fort Benning, Colonel Frank S. Cocheu was completing a tour as assistant commandant of the Infantry School. Marshall was asked if he would like to take that position, go to Governors Island as chief of staff of that corps area, or remain at the Army War College. "I thought it best professionally and in my present frame of mind to go to Benning," he wrote Lily's Aunt Lottie.[2] Orders for the change arrived in October, and he was out of Washington early in November. With the help of his sister, who had come down from Greensburg, he moved into a small house on the post, "actually as old as the hills, 1850, but the nicest one I ever had." [3]

Fort Benning, nine miles from Columbus, Georgia, comprised ninety-seven thousand acres of land, including the houses of

some old estates which had been bought by the government as part of the reservation. At the time Marshall was there it had not been adequately developed for its most important activity, the Infantry School, and the Inspector General in 1929 commented on the poor location and "unattractive housing" of the Academic Department and the fact that almost two hundred student officers could not find accommodations at the base at all but had to live in Columbus, where the rents, for lieutenants, proved prohibitively high.[4]

As assistant commandant, Marshall was head of the Academic Department. Under the two generals who commanded while he was there—Edgar Collins and Campbell King, with both of whom he had formerly served—he had almost a free hand to mold the course and direct the methods of teaching as he wished. Although Colonel Cocheu had already done much to raise the level of instruction, Marshall intended to go further. With strong and revolutionary ideas, many of which had been developing in his mind for some years, he had often itched to be just where he now found himself, in position to apply them to the training of young combat officers.[5]

It was a happy circumstance that at his "most restless moment" he was given a teaching job (the work he had always found stimulating) with, for the first time, the authority and scope to make a mark not only on the Infantry School but on the United States Army. At Benning he found for himself "an unlimited field of activity, delightful associates, and all outdoors to play in. . . . The change to Benning was magical. . . ." [6] As for the Army, it found in Marshall one of those rare teachers who make a difference, who open minds in such a way that they never afterward quite close again or forget the excitement of a new idea. The importance of that influence cannot be statistically measured, but a roll call of the Benning staff and graduates of Marshall's five years there (a quarter of the school's history between the great wars) is studded with the Army high command of World War II and after—Bradley, Collins, Ridgway, Decker, Stilwell, Bolté, Dahlquist, Almond, Van Fleet, Huebner, Paul, Bedell Smith, Bull, Terry Allen, Leven Allen, Eddy, Cota, Moore, Hull, Cook, Timberman, Hilldring, Lanham, John R.

Deane, and William Dean. Courtney Hodges, while neither a staff member nor student, sat with Marshall on the Infantry Board, which studied new weapons for the infantry. In addition to the hundred and fifty future generals of World War II who were students and another fifty who were instructors there during this five-year period,[7] hundreds of future field-grade officers also felt the impress of Marshall's Benning when they were learning the basis of their trade.

What Marshall intended and at last achieved at Benning was "an almost complete revamping of the instruction and technique." But that was not to be attempted overnight. He felt it necessary to proceed "quietly and gradually, because I felt so much opposition would be met on the outside that I would be thwarted in my purpose." There was also opposition to be overcome on the inside, from staff members who preferred "the even tenor of their theoretical ways." [8] Besides, it had always been Marshall's style to lead by commanding assent rather than mere formal obedience. When, some years later, a question arose of changes at the Command and General Staff School at Leavenworth, he wrote: "To issue an edict or regulation would probably do more harm than good. The job must be a personal one, to be effected slowly as faculty minds, physical means, and other tangible factors are gradually rounded into shape for each step. Sudden changes in an educational plant are bound to be destructive, and any material changes must be timed by the men on the ground." [9]

To Benning, Marshall brought the fruits of his own education. And because Benning was the basic training ground for the Army's basic fighting branch, the things that Marshall had learned and thought about he could now transfuse into the Army's main blood stream. The greatest of his lessons was the need for simplicity in the techniques of troop leading. He had caught the enthusiasm for "simplicities in tactics" first from Major Morrison at Leavenworth some twenty years before.[10] In subsequent experience with the National Guard he had been impressed with the fact that a citizen army, which could be led only in small part by highly trained professionals, must concentrate on learning the essentials of tactics. Its own officers must

know how to think clearly about problems of the battlefield without being entangled in elaborate techniques if leadership was to be effective, particularly in the early stages of a war. In World War I, Marshall had been involved in some of the over-elaborate planning and proliferation of written, "highly paragraphed" orders, which reflected both the American Army's anxiety to show itself professional under the scrutiny of its Allies and the fact that it had time to do so as long as the Allies accepted primary responsibility for conducting the battle. American success in battle, however, he felt did not prove the soundness of American techniques. He warned against being tempted to that conclusion.

The techniques of 1918 suited a particular end-of-war situation in which the Allies had a virtual monopoly of initiative. Errors made by the AEF, Marshall believed, were harmless only because the enemy in those last months could not take advantage of them.[11] After the war, as Pershing's aide, re-examining the Army's peacetime needs, he developed further his conviction that "our equipment, administrative procedure, and training requirements are all too complicated for anything but a purely professional Army." Finally, in command of troops in China, he found his convictions borne out. After five months there he wrote: "I find the officers are highly developed in the tactical handling or functioning of weapons, in target practice, in bayonet combat, and in the special and intricate details of paper work or administration generally, but that when it comes to simple tactical problems, the actual duties of troop leading, they all fall far below the standards they set in other matters." [12] During one of the training exercises in China he observed one bright officer faced with the problem of enveloping the flank of a hostile force. There were no special complications but "nothing happened. Time passed, and the situation finally died. I found this officer on the bank of a canal trying to draft a written order for seventy men, and completely stuck because he could not tie the order to the limited data on the blueprint of General Van Deman's sketch of the terrain. I learned that he had stood first at Benning, and I then and there formed an intense desire to get my hands on Benning. The man was no fool, but he had

been taught an absurd system, which proved futile the moment a normal situation of warfare of movement arose." [13]

Part of the campaign for simplicity was negative—a constant struggle to get rid of the petty and merely formal requirements of the traditional technique. "I insist we must get down to the essentials, make clear the real difficulties, and expunge the bunk, complications, and ponderosities; we must concentrate on registering in men's minds certain vital considerations instead of a mass of less important details. We must develop a technique and methods so simple and so brief that the citizen officer of good common sense can readily grasp the idea." [14]

But the drive for simplicity was a battle, too, against a kind of military scholasticism. The image of that theoretically trained young officer by the bank of the canal stumped by a simple battle reality was always goadingly in the forefront of his mind. His efforts to free instructors and students from "the book," in which problems were laid out neatly in the front and solutions cut and dried in the back, called on all his great energies and ingenuity and often wore out those endowed with less.[15] One class of officers was dismayed when the assistant commandant one morning required each of them to draw a sketch map of the route they had followed to the classroom, locating both natural and man-made terrain features. Perhaps it was not an altogether fair demand but it helped to drive home Marshall's point that a well-trained troop commander was one whose eye and mind were alert all the time to the salient military facts of any situation in which he might suddenly be called on to make a command decision.

In the classroom, battle was organized and predictable. "I found that the ordinary form of our tactical problems committed two deadly sins, relieving the student from the greatest difficulties of his tactical task in warfare of movement. The information of the enemy was about 80 per cent too complete. And the requirement called for his decision at a pictured moment, when the real problem is usually *when* to make a decision and not *what* the decision should be." [16] In the field it was the unexpected that was normal; Marshall was constantly trying to toss the unexpected at the student officers. In exercises he would

send some of them out with troops to attack an enemy force. The enemy would obligingly withdraw, and about dusk when the student felt the problem was just about wound up, another force would attack from a wholly different direction. In the ensuing confusion Marshall himself would turn up to criticize and explain.

In an annual command post exercise instructors and students took turns commanding regular Army troops of the 29th Infantry stationed on the post along with troops brought in from Fort McPherson. In the exercise of 1930 General Matthew Ridgway (then a captain), who had served under Marshall in China before coming to study under him at Benning, recalls that the intelligence estimates contained an inconspicuous reference to an undetermined number of tanks of unknown type in the enemy force. No one paid much attention. The attack proceeded, and the Blue Force got one brigade partly across a river when hostile tanks suddenly appeared. They came out of a wood behind a screen of smoke and caught the attacking troops in the open. Many threw down their rifles and ran. In the confusion, without prior preparation, the maneuver officers had to make decisions to rally their men and restore their position. This sort of experience in training, Ridgway believed, could result at last in a kind of mental conditioning more important to a combat officer than any number of learned techniques. It "cut down the time in which you have to think things out, so that your decisions come out almost instantaneously, and they are sound decisions, if you have worked your brain through this . . . before." [17]

Students at Benning worked out their problems on the terrain of a reservation that had been accurately and minutely mapped. But battles might have to be fought on unfamiliar ground with inadequate maps or none at all. "In warfare of movement, division or corps staffs will seldom have time or opportunity to see the ground except from a plane. They will usually have to work from small-scale maps. They may secure a mosaic in time, but they will be under the necessity of drafting instructions to be used by the lower echelons with reference to the small-scale map, or no map at all. . . . If you get your

mosaics, fine! But the hard thing to learn is how to manage without them." And that, Marshall found, was not even being taught. "Early in my stay at Benning," he wrote, "I accompanied two instructors out with the class for a terrain exercise in a battalion engagement during the development phase of an action, where the hostile dispositions and intentions were not clear. A large-scale map was used. After the students had dispersed to work on their solutions, I asked the instructors to put away their maps and solve the problem for me on the basis of no maps available. They were at a complete loss for a workable solution method (or technique) to handle the affair, and were two hours preparing a solution—a very poor one. Fifteen minutes should have sufficed." [18] Time and again he required that classes work with road maps, foreign maps, maps that were out of date. After World War II an officer who had been one of his students, General Charles Bolté, said: "I think he was so right, because that's exactly what we had—maps of North Africa that were no good, and as far as the Pacific was concerned, if you got a sketch you were lucky. . . . I have never forgotten [his] dictum: . . . 'study the first six months of the next war.' Over and over he put that down." [19]

Marshall's emphasis on training for warfare of movement recalled Pershing's insistence in 1917-18 on preparing the AEF to move out of the trenches into "open warfare." Pershing had argued both that open warfare was better suited to the temper of the American soldier and that it was the one hope of forcing a decision in battle. Marshall was certainly imbued with that point of view. It is not necessary to suppose, however, that he had a fully developed concept of the war of movement that would come on battlefields dominated by the tank and airplane, and there is no evidence that he had any such vision. He remained essentially an infantryman, though one who welcomed and readily recognized the significance of technological changes. He had a special tank company established at Benning. He tried to get an air detachment. Balked in that, he arranged for annual demonstrations of air support techniques by a squadron from Maxwell Field. In a determined effort to improve relations, traditionally difficult, between infantry and artillery officers, he

arranged for the exchange of faculty members and troops between Benning and the Artillery School at Fort Sill.[20] He insisted that artillery officers be consulted in discussion of infantry doctrine and vice versa.

As a teacher of tactics, however, he was not primarily concerned with theories of war or even with the grand shape of the battles of the future. He was concerned with methods and principles of command. In almost any battle situation he believed leaders of troops would be required to make up their minds quickly with scant information. He sought, therefore, to teach the art of improvisation, to extricate tactical principles from the procedural formulas in which they had become fixed by the schoolmen. One way to do that was to set problems in rapidly moving situations where even a mediocre solution arrived at in time was better than the perfect tactic discovered hours after the opportunity to use it had passed. "I found," he wrote, "that the technique and practices developed at Benning and Leavenworth would practically halt the development of an open warfare situation, apparently requiring an armistice or some understanding with a complacent enemy." [21]

Most of Marshall's innovations at Benning were designed to jolt instructors and students out of traditionally leisurely ways that had emphasized formal perfection. It had been customary for instructors to prepare written lectures about a month in advance and submit them to the editorial section, which made sure that no sentence contravened accepted doctrine. Marshall, who disliked edicts, issued one on this occasion: no more lectures were to be read. At first he permitted instructors to use cards on which they would note the main points to be touched on. "But when I heard the instructor say one morning, 'I am required this morning to discuss . . .' (it was just a nervous gesture)—I suppressed the card too. I found it was many times more effective when a man talked off the cuff, as it were, although it was a very well ironed cuff."

For some time before Marshall arrived officer students had been required to write a monograph on some aspect of military history. That had always been a time-consuming and nerve-racking exercise, and Marshall made it harder. He required that the monograph be delivered orally in a class lecture lim-

ited to twenty minutes. Once when a class insisted that the time was much too short to allow the subject to be covered properly, Marshall, on the spot, delivered a lecture outlining the Civil War in five minutes.[22] He set great store by the monograph as a device to force officers in training to come directly to grips with a problem and outline it clearly and briefly. He himself seldom missed the presentations. But he never succeeded in making them popular. When Major Harding came to Benning and was moved to write a short play about student life he ended it with an officer's prayer:

> Now into my bunk I creep
> To catch an hour or so of sleep
> And dream about my monograph.
> Help me, O Lord, to stand the gaff.[23]

History properly presented could also underline for students the real problems of decision amid the confusion of battle. Marshall was delighted when one of his staff, Major Truman Smith (later distinguished as the United States military attaché who watched and perceptively reported the rearming of the Third Reich), worked out several lectures in which a historical battle was described and the part played by a small unit outlined. On the basis of the actual fragmentary information the students were required to explain what they would have done had they been in command. Major Harding's section later carried on the idea and wrote a book of such examples from history (published as *Infantry in Battle*). Among those who worked hardest on the volume was a young lieutenant with a talent for writing, Charles T. Lanham. Marshall marked him as one of the kind of young officer who should be pushed for advancement. As for the book, he was pleased with it and with its reception among Army officers and military writers abroad.[24] After he left Benning he wrote an introduction praising it as a text that captured the realities of battle: "By the use of numerous historical examples which tell of the absence of information, the lack of time, and the confusion of battle the reader is acquainted with the realities of war and the extremely difficult conditions under which tactical problems must be solved in the face of the enemy." [25]

Because he was so much more interested in thoughtfulness

than in mere correctness, Marshall tended to value—and perhaps even overvalue—the unorthodox approach. Major Bull, who was later to be Eisenhower's G-3 in SHAEF, recalled a map exercise in which he was required to halt an armored force threatening a hypothetical advance of troops under his command from Washington toward Chambersburg. He threw away the book and tried a maneuver of his own. Although he was judged by the umpires to have failed, Marshall was delighted with his display of ingenuity. Years later when Prime Minister Churchill, another enthusiast for the unorthodox, visited Benning during the war, Marshall recalled the experiment.[26] One of Marshall's earliest revolutionary edicts as assistant commandant had been to order that "any student's solution of a problem that ran radically counter to the approved school solution, and yet showed independent creative thinking, would be published to the class." One danger in this approach, which some officers felt Marshall did not always avoid, was a predisposition to admire novelty even when not sound and to prefer for advancement officers whose chief distinction was a willingness to experiment. The virtue, noted by Captain J. Lawton Collins, who would become a corps commander in World War II and later Chief of Staff, was that it helped to create "the spirit at Benning, which was a marvelous thing, because if anybody had any new ideas he was willing to try them instead of saying, 'Why don't you let the thing alone instead of stirring things up.' " [27]

Stirring things up was just what Marshall insisted was essential to his teaching purposes. An infantry lieutenant colonel who came to Benning in 1930 for a short refresher course was struck by the opportunity given officers "to disagree at times on questions of military education, regardless of rank, and an attitude of tolerance of ideas which encourages open and free discussion." The Benning staff, he thought, was "thinking seriously about matters, old and new, that may find application in our Army of the future. They are not afraid to look outside the field of what is generally considered military education for ideas to help in solving the problems of national defense." [28]

That appreciation was written about midway in Marshall's five years as assistant commandant. He had by that time largely

effected his quiet and gradual revolution. By the autumn of 1930, beginning his last two years, he had his own staff of chosen men whom he admired personally and who had served recently with troops and found themselves sympathetic with his pragmatic approach.[29]

Heading the Tactical Section at Benning in 1930 was an "old China hand," Lieutenant Colonel Stilwell. Marshall wanted him badly enough to hold the position open for a year until Stilwell became available. The tall, lean, profane man who later became known as "Vinegar Joe" was at least as difficult then as when during World War II he commanded American troops in China and India and acted as chief of staff to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Intense, intolerant, energetic—many lunch hours he spent racing the clock over long distances—he spared neither himself nor those who worked for him. He was a rebel by instinct, chafed against any and all authority, mocked at those in command, continually burned to remake the situation in which he found himself, and throughout his Army career walked the razor's edge of insubordination. But he was nevertheless a brilliant soldier. Marshall valued him for what he could do, and no doubt also for the very fact that he was a nonconformist. One of the instructors in Stilwell's First Section, another brilliant commander, was Captain Collins.

Marshall's choice of an officer to head the Second Section (logistics, supply, training, equitation, signal communications) was highly unorthodox. Lieutenant Colonel M. C. Stayer was a doctor. But Marshall picked him because he was blunt-spoken, a good judge of men, who could be depended on to say exactly what he thought. The staff under Stayer included two future lieutenant generals, Captain Willard Paul and Major Bull. For Bull, Marshall had a particularly strong and lasting admiration. He gave him credit for creating a simplified supply system for the Army.

"The general supply system of the Army for regiments, battalions, and divisions," he said later, "grew out of the demonstrations at Benning under the leadership of Bull." The system of supply for these units had been so complicated that the manual describing it ran to a hundred and twenty mimeographed

pages and a field demonstration of the process took three days. Early in his stay there Marshall asked that the editorial section cut the length of the manual. Under continued pressure it was got down to twelve pages, but he was still not satisfied that citizen soldiers in the early stages of a war would understand the procedures. "I changed the set-up of this supply business," he recalled, "and gave it to Bull and told him to demonstrate this as a mobile supply problem, not as a set-up affair, and to do it as quickly as possible. Bull had paid no attention to supply and was very emphatic in telling me that. And I must say I gave him no ideas at all except time limits. . . . I was working on the proposition that we had to hurriedly train an Army and if we couldn't be precise and brief, there was no hope in the manuals. . . . As I recall he finally succeeded in getting this [supply demonstration] to a day and a half. And as I perfectly recall, he later . . . cut this down to a half-day. This was the supply basis for the Army. . . . From being the most unpopular course in school it became one of the most popular."

The Third Section taught the use of weapons and developed weapons doctrine. Marshall appointed to head it a quiet-spoken man, as different in temperament from Stilwell as it is possible to imagine, Major Omar N. Bradley, who would command an army group in World War II and become Chief of Staff of the Army afterward, and was, in Marshall's opinion, an officer "conspicuous for his ability to handle people and his ability to do things simply and clearly." As an instance, Marshall later recalled that at the time there had been an obsession "with the idea of machine-gun barrages with the 30 caliber weapons, and [many veterans of World War I] wished practically to equip companies with a great deal of the communications set-up of a battery of artillery. I was opposed to this, not that I knew much about the details, but I was certain it was not a good thing to load down an infantry company with so much equipment. I transferred Bradley to [head] of the Weapons Section and told him to take a close look at the machine-gun situation." After careful study, Bradley's section gave a detailed demonstration of the problem. Marshall was delighted to find that the companies "already had enough equipment to do the whole thing," and

that the presentation took half of the allotted time. He called it "the best demonstration I ever saw" and ordered that it be repeated for every class that came to Benning as an illustration of how to simplify instruction.

To the Fourth Section, in charge of history and publications, Marshall brought his old friend from China days, Major Harding. He contributed to morale with a lively column for the *Benning Herald.* Another post publication, *Mailing List,* Harding developed into a significant professional aid by publishing tactical problems to be solved by readers. Marshall, in summarizing the state of training at Benning just after he left, singled out the *Mailing List.* "It now has readers," he wrote, "where formerly it only had subscribers. Its small problems make the real picture of a battle. It is being used throughout the country by National Guard and reservists, and not filed or dumped into the wastebasket." [30] As noted, it was also Harding's section that prepared *Infantry in Battle.*

Marshall himself believed that the faculty of the Infantry School during his last three years there "was composed of the most brilliant, interesting, and thoroughly competent collection of men I have ever been associated with." Yet characteristically he was not satisfied with what they were able to achieve. "We all learned together, but we had a devil of a time getting started. We never got to the point of teaching tactics as General Morrison taught it—most of our supposed tactical instruction fell into the domain of technique." [31] For what was achieved he gave the staff the credit, and in telling about the Benning revolution he protested against being "in the embarrassing position of seeming to be the one who knew, when as a matter of fact I am recording my own experience in the AEF and later training in the Army when I was with General Pershing and my own experience in these schools." He did not feel that he had been the originator. "In all this, I must say, in a sense, I had no part. I furnished the directive and the drive and the arbitrary orders it must be done." Yet to Colonel Truman Smith it seemed that Marshall was using his instructors as weapons to carry out his ideas. Harding, too, felt the initiative was Marshall's. "He would tell you what he wanted and then you would do it. There

was something about him that made you do it, and of course you wanted to do it the way he wanted—which is the trait of a commanding officer." [32] Marshall kept close to his staff, and with some, including the heads of sections, he met frequently at his quarters to discuss problems of command. Seeking constantly to stretch minds, he would often have Major Gilbert Cook (later a corps commander under Patton in Normandy) act as master of ceremonies and hand out books on psychology, sociology, or military history to read and discuss.[33]

Benning's primary function was to train company-grade infantry officers in the art of leading small units. But it also offered short refresher courses for more senior officers as well as for officers of the National Guard and organized Reserves. Marshall was particularly interested in bringing in the citizen soldiers and among other things arranged to have the Air Corps fly in National Guardsmen and reservists who lived at some distance. Among them there appeared in his last year two Negro officers. This was Georgia in the days before the nation had accepted responsibility for integration. Some officers circulated a petition demanding the Negroes withdraw. Marshall denied it and the two officers remained. One of them wrote him later to say: "Your quiet and courageous firmness, in this case, has served to hold my belief in the eventual solution of problems which have beset my people in their ofttimes pathetic attempts to be Americans." [34]

While at Benning, Marshall found another way to keep up with and influence civilian training. In 1929, at Pershing's suggestion, he was appointed a member of the Mershon Fund Board, set up by Ralph D. Mershon, who had worked with the officials of Ohio State University to develop the concept of the Reserve Officer Training Corps before World War I. The objective of the fund was to promote reserve-officer training and improve civilian-military relationships—aims to which Marshall himself was devoted throughout his life. Marshall continued active on the board for several years and was particularly influential in meetings of ROTC instructors and university officials at Lehigh in 1933, and at Purdue in 1934.[35]

The vigor with which Marshall plunged into his work at Ben-

ning was partly an expression of his natural abundance of energy and particular interest in teaching, partly the product of his loneliness after Lily's death. Because he himself craved to be continually active, he kept not only his officers, but his officers' wives, continually on the go. He organized so many hunts and pageants that some on the post would gladly have settled for a short period of ennui.

Beginning about the first of October and lasting until April, hunts were held about twice a week. Sixty or more officers and their wives rode to the hounds. Sergeant Thomas Tweed, whose private pack served the first hunt in 1923, was the permanent Huntsman in Marshall's time and in fact took part in most of the hunts until his retirement after World War II. For less strenuous hunting the Benning reservation abounded in quail, wild pig, and raccoons. During the war Marshall came down when he could to shoot and nearly always took Sergeant Tweed with him.[36]

As always, Marshall was an indefatigable horseman, though he preferred a quiet canter to the cross-country pursuit of foxes. Occasionally he held competitive night rides in which pairs of riders were assigned points to be reached between start and finish but were permitted to make their way between them in any way they pleased. Marshall himself competed and, although a comparatively slow rider, used his intimate knowledge of the terrain to finish well up. One of the legends of the post is of the colonel returning from a treasure hunt on horseback, wearing a Japanese kimono and Filipino hat, and carrying a bird cage.[37]

Marshall's pageants became famous. Staged for visiting dignitaries in place of formal military reviews, which he found tiresome, the pageant consisted of a series of acts presenting the activities of the post. In one of these, students marched by with their weapons, tennis players with their rackets, polo ponies and riders, basketball players, baseball players—and then, as climax, a pack of hounds following a scent laid down earlier in the day burst through the crowd, followed by huntsmen. It was Marshall's favorite show and he repeated it as often as he found occasion.

Marshall's Benning was not only physically strenuous; it could also be intellectually wearing. At official gatherings he risked

becoming a bore by suggesting brain-teasing games, testing the ability of his guests to solve problems or recall obscure capital cities and their population. He himself might talk almost steadily through the evening as if by compulsion to let out the loneliness in him. He encouraged dramatic and musical productions, his own favorites being Gilbert and Sullivan. Diversion for him was only another form of busyness. There were, moreover, those who found the assistant commandant lacking in cultural taste, uncomfortably prudish in his tight-lipped distaste for the most modestly told off-color story, and overweening in his paternalistic concern with the leisure as well as the working hours of the post. Well out of earshot they called him "Uncle George."

Under the constant drain of strenuous work and play in his first years at Benning, Marshall lost weight. His lean, bony face, never handsome, was drawn and plainer than ever. A nervous tic from which he had suffered since his days in France and which pulled up one corner of his mouth in a grimace that the unwary often mistook for a smile became more pronounced. It was during these years that he began to suffer periodically from a thyroid disturbance that produced an irregular pulse. It worried him, but Lt. Col. Stayer, to whom he confided the trouble, was able to keep it under control.[38]

Marie Singer, who made several long visits to Benning, was disturbed by the fact that her brother kept the house filled with photographs of Lily so that in moving from room to room he was constantly reminded of his loss. The reminder was made more painful when less than a year after Lily's death, in October 1928, his mother died from a heart attack suffered at Marie's home in Greensburg. Within another year Lily's mother, Mrs. Coles, also died, and the last of Marshall's close emotional ties to the past was broken.

He tried to fill his loneliness in part by sharing the family life of some of his friends on the post. Childless, he and Lily had always been fond of children, and it was one of Marshall's most characteristic poses to unbend, gravely affectionate, to a child. His quarters at Benning were near the tennis courts, and he formed the habit of inviting youngsters in for refreshments after their game. Sometimes he would ask a child to go with him to

an entertainment on the post. One little girl of nine won his heart one day by telling him that she had worn a blue dress, which he admired, because it matched his eyes. Remembering her for years thereafter, he wrote letters of fatherly advice to her on the eve of her marriage and later asked that he be allowed to be godfather of her first son.[39]

When he wrote to a child it was with an easy sense of humor and sense of style rare in the rest of his surviving correspondence. A few years later after visiting the young daughter of a friend of his in the hospital Marshall sent her this note:

> I do hope your patience and fortitude will be rewarded with a quick recovery, though I must say I never saw you looking prettier. I found your company of fish, turtles, and guppies quite fascinating —much more attractive than the average group I meet socially— even if one did escape down the drainpipe.
>
> I have been pondering over what might be added to the collection, and hoping to hit on something that will be self-supporting, and not demand so much maid service from your Father. I believe that a chipmunk of the type they have at Crater Lake would be just the thing, because you can feed those peanuts in bed and they have no other interests, sentimental or otherwise.
>
> With my sympathy, and my admiration for your patience, I am affectionately . . .

For more than two years Marshall suffered his loneliness. Then one evening in 1929 he went to dinner at the house of the Tom Hudsons in Columbus, who had as their guests for the evening a widow, Katherine Boyce Tupper Brown, and her teen-age daughter Molly. Marshall arrived first and, it is recorded, was standing by the fireplace when Mrs. Brown, tall and striking, walked in. Marshall quite clearly stared. Mrs. Brown has written of that moment: "I will never forget. George had a way of looking right straight through you. He had such keen blue eyes and he was straight and very military." They were attracted and fell at once into an easy bantering conversation. At the end of the evening he offered to take her home. She was staying with Mrs. William Randolph Blanchard, mother of one of her college friends and Molly's godmother. George assured her that he knew just where Mrs. Blanchard lived. At the end of about an hour,

during which they drove through a good part of the city, she observed mildly that he did not seem to have learned his way around Columbus yet. He replied that if he hadn't known his way around so well he wouldn't have been able to drive for an hour without getting on to that street. The next day he asked her to come to a reception at the post. When she demurred he sent a soldier in a car to get her.[40] She came, and he monopolized her so completely that she met few of the guests and the Columbus people at the reception complained that they had no chance at all to talk to her before, ending her brief visit, she returned to her home in Baltimore.[41]

Mrs. Brown was a handsome and unusual woman. Born Katherine Boyce Tupper in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, in October 1882, she was the daughter of a Baptist minister, Henry Allen Tupper, who became one of the most distinguished of his day.[42] His wife, Marie Louise Pender, was the daughter of a North Carolina hotel owner who during the Civil War ran the northern blockade chiefly in trade with Bermuda to supply the southern armies. As Pender and his wife both died during the war, Marie was reared by a relative, another Baptist minister, Jeremiah B. Jeter, who lived in Richmond.[43]

From this strongly Baptist background (her grandfather, Henry Allen Tupper, and her uncles, James Pettigru Boyce and Kerr Boyce Tupper were also eminent divines) Katherine took a new and, to her father, disturbing departure. She wanted to be an actress. After completing her studies at Hollins College she persuaded her father to permit her to study at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. She stayed for two years and then won permission to go abroad with her sister Allene to continue her study. (Allene was to study art but her true bent was literary, and she would in time write plays, among them *The Creaking Chair,* in which Tallulah Bankhead starred in London in 1924.) The sisters settled in a boarding house in London in 1904, and Katherine, armed with letters of introduction and superb self-confidence, sought an interview with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, perhaps the most Olympian figure of the London stage. He saw Katherine, listened to her, and then gave his opinion that even if she had the histrionic

talent of Ada Rehan he could not engage her with her American accent. Undismayed, she applied next, on the advice of the brother of Walter Hampden whom she had met on shipboard, to Frank Benson, who had Shakespearian companies touring Australia, Scotland, and the provinces of England. For him she declaimed the lines of the dying Camille, and when she had finished he looked at her a long time and said, "You know you will have to study English." But he was interested enough to propose that she join his company as a student. He first asked a fee, but when she explained that her father was going to cut off her allowance as soon as she joined the cast, he agreed to waive the fee.

It was arranged that Allene would give up her art and go along with Katherine as chaperone and visible means of support, since she, not being on the stage, would continue to get her allowance from home. For one season they toured England and Scotland, staying in cheap boarding houses, often with little to eat. When not on the stage Katherine spent hours each day practicing her diction. Her first speaking part was as the voice of the ghost in *Hamlet*—a considerable advance from her role in *Macbeth* in which she was required to stand where she could catch Lady Macbeth when she fainted.

In her second season one of the leading ladies married Walter Hampden and left the company. This left parts for Katherine in *The Rivals, She Stoops to Conquer, The School for Scandal,* and five Shakespeare plays, in which she acted on tour in Ireland. At the end of the season she summered with her sister and parents in Lucerne and then returned to London, where she signed a seven-year contract with Benson.

The next year she began suffering severe pains in her side and shoulder which she first attributed to fatigue from practicing continuously for new roles. One night in Glasgow, however, the pain was so bad that she could not go on and the curtain was rung down. After a rest she seemed to recover and undertook the part of Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice* in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Stricken again on the stage, she was taken from the theater to the hospital, where the doctors told her she had tuberculosis of the kidney. She came home. A specialist in Baltimore took a less grave view. Her trouble, he thought, was exhaustion,

and he sent her to rest in the Adirondacks. There a childhood friend from Baltimore, Clifton S. Brown, caught the moment to declare his love and urge her to give up the stage and marry him.

She refused. Her career seemed promisingly begun. She had an offer from Richard Mansfield of a place in his company provided she could get her release from Benson, and when she felt well again she accepted. Then she went out to Chicago to play at the National Theater. The familiar pains struck again. She got through two or three performances; then one evening when the final curtain fell she found herself unable to move and had to be carried from the stage. Back in the Adirondacks for another rest, she found Clifton Brown again. To his renewed urging, family and friends added their pressure, and at last she yielded. That decision to turn her back on the stage cost her such heartache that for two years she could not bear even to go into a theater.

But in time she became reconciled. Her daughter Molly was born, and then two sons, Clifton and Allen, and she took on happily enough her second career as wife of a successful lawyer, champion tennis player, and president of the Whist Club. By 1928, like much of the rest of middle-class America, the Browns were prospering. They had bought a house; Molly and the boys were in private schools. With money enough and no worries, Katherine decided to invest some of her own money in a summer cottage on Fire Island. A few days later she called her husband's office to tell him that she had received the final papers for the property. There was no answer. While she was puzzling over that, two men appeared at the door. They told her that Clifton Brown had a little while before entered the building in which he had his office and found there in a hall a former client. The man, aggrieved over the fee he had been charged, was waiting with a gun to settle accounts. As Brown approached the door to his office the man shot and killed him.[44]

Dazed from shock, Mrs. Brown left Baltimore and stayed with her sister in Connecticut for eight months. She sailed then for Hawaii and spent several months with Molly in a cottage on Waikiki. When at last she was ready to return to her life in Baltimore she stopped fatefully in Columbus on the way.

visit, was moved to satirize it in a skit.[48] After a time, when hors back riding became too strenuous for Mrs. Marshall, Molly su stituted as Marshall's regular riding companion. Molly and "th Colonel," as the two older children always called him, becam good friends. As for Marshall, he fitted easily and gratefull into the role of father and was particularly fond of Allen, wh was young enough to accept him most fully and to whom he wa not "the Colonel" but "George." To Mrs. Marshall he tran ferred the solicitude he had felt all his life for Lily, and th emptiness in him was filled. For the rest of his life his lette reflect his constant care for her well-being and her health.

The last years at Benning were contented and productive. Under regulations, Marshall's tour as assistant commandant ha to end in 1931, but to keep him longer, at the commandant request, the War Department arranged to attach him to th 24th Infantry, part of the garrison of the post. The shift wa made on paper only and he continued to carry on the sam duties as before.[50]

Under Marshall's encouragement, officers at Benning deve oped simplified procedures, wrote new manuals and revised ol ones, worked out better techniques of supply, and experimente with new infantry tactics to fit new or improved weapons. Whe a member of the Infantry Board wrote of changes that th French had recently made in their drill system, Marshall aske Captain Collins first to study them and then to develop an im proved drill. The new drill, on completion, was sent to the Wa Department, where it languished until Marshall, as Deput Chief of Staff in 1938, took steps to get it adopted. These wer tangible products of Marshall's Benning. But more importan were the long consequences of education. Classes of company grade officers of the age to occupy senior command and sta positions in World War II were imbued at Benning with Ma shall's pragmatism, his insistence on the application of princ ples and common sense to battlefield problems, his dictum tha the only orders worth giving were those that could be prepare and delivered in time and readily understood by troops nc long removed from civilian life in the confusion and unreadines of the first days of war. One colonel, writing in 1935, noted tha

It was on that visit that Marshall met her. Apparently it occurred to both of them, during that first evening, that they might get married. Both agreed firmly that they would not marry again. Nevertheless during the summer of 1929, much of which he spent in Wyoming, Marshall wrote frequently to Mrs. Brown and in the fall suggested that Mrs. Etta Blanchard Worsley invite her on another visit to Columbus. The invitation was extended and accepted only in the spring of 1930. Marshall then cleared his evenings and devoted himself wholly to her. By the time she left they were at least tentatively engaged. She insisted, however, that her children must approve.

Molly, having known Marshall from the beginning and grown fond of him, was no problem. Clifton was also readily agreeable. The doubt was Allen, who was then twelve. Mrs. Brown arranged for friends to come to Fire Island and suggested Marshall join them. The situation was then explained to Allen, who first proposed that things be left as they were. Overnight he had second thoughts and in the morning himself wrote to Marshall. "I hope you will come to Fire Island," he said. "Don't be nervous, it is O.K. with me. A friend in need is a friend indeed, Allen Brown." [45]

Five weeks Marshall spent on Fire Island, and if Allen or Clifton had any lingering objections they were dispelled. Marshall on August 1 wrote to Pershing that he was to be married in mid-October and added that he was acquiring "a complete family" and that Molly was "quite a little beauty." [46]

General Pershing was best man at the wedding in Baltimore at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church on October 15, 1930, his presence being of course the news of the occasion. Mrs. Marshall's sister, Colonel Marshall's sister, and the brother of Lily, Edmund Coles, were among the group at the ceremony.[47] Inasmuch as the school year had already begun and Marshall's presence was required, the couple went directly from the chapel to the train for the trip to Fort Benning.

With a sense of humor and the poise of maturity, the new Mrs. Marshall made the transition readily to Army wife. She does not seem to have balked at the regimented routine of the Marshall household, so rigorous that Allene Tupper, during a

whereas once graduates of Leavenworth met on the proud ground of having been "Morrison men," now there were many who called themselves "Marshall's men." [51] And when in 1940 and 1941 the Chief of Staff looked for division and corps commanders, he knew intimately scores of officers who had worked with him at Benning and who valued the same essentials of battle leadership.