XVIII

Back on Course

"You have a record and reputation which will insure that you are one of those who will be considered in the selection of the next Chief of Staff."

—Major General George S. Simonds to Marshall, February 14, 1938.

SOON after receiving notice of his promotion Marshall took leave and with his wife went east, traveling by boat from Detroit to Buffalo. They attended a house party in Vermont, a wedding in Exeter, visited the McCoys in New York, stayed in Mrs. Marshall's cottage on Fire Island, stopped off in Washington, and then headed back to Chicago by way of Uniontown.[1] The new general had few ties left with his hometown but he did find his old chum, Andy Thompson, still there, prospering now in business and prominent in state politics. George and Andy talked of their childhood, conscious of being middle-aged strangers who inexplicably had memories in common. This was the last time they met. Andy and his brother, John, died on October 18, 1938, three days after Marshall became Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army.

In Chicago at the end of September, Marshall got orders to his new post. He was to command the 5th Brigade of the 3d Division, stationed in Vancouver Barracks, Washington, and to

supervise the CCC camps in the district, which included Oregon and part of Washington. He decided to drive west, but not in the old Ford that had been worn out in the service of the colonel. After a convivial tour of automobile agencies in company of two friends, the General came home with a new Packard.[2]

Early in October he set out with Mrs. Marshall and Molly across country in the new Packard. They were in no hurry. For three weeks Marshall indulged his taste for sightseeing and history. As they toured he drew from his memory tales of the frontier and of Indian wars, in which he had always taken a special pleasure.[3]

It pleased him to find his new post both drenched in history and superbly located in lovely country. He wrote to General Keehn in Chicago: "Vancouver Barracks is one of the old historic outposts of the Army. Established in 1849 on the site of a Hudson Bay Company station, the traces of whose lookout station are still discernible in a tall fir tree, for more than fifty years it was the center for the development of the Northwest. General Grant's log quarters are a part of the present post library building. Phil Sheridan left here a lieutenant to start his meteoric rise to fame. Pickett was a member of the garrison. My quarters were occupied by a succession of Civil War celebrities or Indian fighters. General Miles built the house, which was later occupied by Canby, Crook, Gibbon, and Pope.[4]

". . . Giant fir trees ornament the parade; every yard has its holly trees and a profusion of shrubs. The original apple tree of the Northwest, planted in the yard of the old trading post, still lives and is carefully fenced against possible harm.[5] In my yard is a cherry tree of reported antiquity, with three grafted varieties of the fruit. All in delightful contrast to the institution-like appearance of many Army posts.

"The Columbia River, bordering our aviation field (we have four planes) in extension of the parade, emerges from its famous gorge a few miles above the post. In the distance the symmetrical cone of Mount Hood stands covered with snow, summer or winter."

On the new general's arrival there was inevitably a military formation, though he had asked that there be no formal review.

There was also his Irish setter, Pontiac, whom at risk to his dignity he had faithfully walked in the vacant lots of Chicago and who now, despite the formality of the occasion, jumped all over him. And there to salute and shake his hand was the acting commander of Vancouver Barracks, commanding officer of the 7th Infantry, stationed there, Colonel Hossfeld, who thirty-four years before had served with a fellow shavetail in Calapan in the Philippines.[6]

Marshall was back with troops; back on the main road of his career again. The next twenty months were to be as happy as any he had spent in the Army. But they began with a blow that almost ended his career. At Fort Benning he had been bothered by an irregular pulse which was diagnosed as due to a malfunctioning thyroid. By careful treatment the trouble had been brought under control, but in Chicago, just before he headed west, it flared up again. He underwent tests in Vancouver, and it was decided to send him to a hospital in San Francisco in December. He stayed a month recuperating from an attack of flu and then underwent an operation in which a diseased lobe of the thyroid gland was successfully removed.[7]

Anxious lest reports of ill health block the newly opened career road, he said as little as possible about the nature of his illness and even about the fact that he was being operated on. He had not even written to General Pershing, who received the news from other sources with "quite a shock." [8] Actually Marshall scarcely exaggerated the dangers of rumor. It was in fact said in Washington even the next year that he was seriously ill. By that time, however, the gossip was demonstrably without basis. His recovery had been rapid and he was returned quickly to full duty by a board of medical officers.[9] Thereafter he himself closely watched for any telltale variations in his pulse beat and kept Colonel Stayer, his old doctor from Fort Benning, informed. He had stopped smoking shortly before he left Chicago, and now he made more of a point than ever of taking regular and conspicuous exercise. To his customary early morning horseback rides, he added tennis, hunting, fishing, and a little golf, indulging in these sports as often as he could.[10] No doubt the exercise was good for him and it forestalled any talk that he might be approaching decrepitude.

Typically Marshall's own career difficulties made him particularly sympathetic to other officers in similar trouble and alert to help them. As he tried to rescue bright young officers from the seniority mills, so he sought to save those threatened by unimaginative application of physical-fitness regulations. It was while at Vancouver Barracks that he intervened to keep in service a highly capable second lieutenant, Charles E. G. Rich, of the 7th Infantry, who was discovered to be color blind. "He is far too good to lose," Marshall wrote, "and, in my military opinion, it would be a distinct loss to the government—while some slow-witted fellow who knows 'Alice blue' is kept on." [11] Rich, saved for the Army, vindicated Marshall's judgment and became subsequently a division commander and commandant of the Infantry Training Center at Fort Benning.

On recovering from his operation Marshall threw himself vigorously into the things he liked best to do, organizing and training men. The principal body of troops at Vancouver Barracks was the 7th Infantry. Its administration Marshall left almost entirely to its commander, Colonel Hossfeld, and later Colonel Ralph Glass, keeping hands off just as he did with the other regiment of the brigade, the 4th Infantry, stationed at Fort Missoula, Montana.[12] As he had found at Forts Screven and Moultrie, overseeing the CCC took a large part of his time. The CCC activities came under a separate headquarters. Routine brigade business was handled by his brigade executive, the first of whom was Colonel Walton H. Walker, later commander of the XX Corps in World War II and of the Eighth Army in Korea. Able assistants similarly relieved him of the daily CCC routine.[13] His own job, as he conceived it and carried it out, was to see for himself in the field how the men under him fared and how their work was going and to take such corrective steps as he found necessary. He set the training policies for troops and directed the exercises in which these policies were tested. He concerned himself minutely with the human details of his command but scarcely at all with the organizational paper work, except to continue his passionate fight against it.[14]

"Every time I turn my back," he wrote in 1938, "some staff officer calls on some poor devil for a report or an extra copy for some more damned papers—and I will not have it. I am off for

maneuvers next week, and I am not going to allow a mimeograph machine in the war." [15]

Marshall made his principal impact as a man who in a great variety of baffling human situations always seemed to know just what to do. At Christmas the post chaplain, Martin C. Poch, whom Marshall called an "excellent" officer "who did tremendously fine work," came to him with a problem. Although enlisted men were not supposed to get married without permission of their commanding officers, inevitably some had. Now the chaplain wished to include these men in the distribution of holiday packages to families. But when the regimental commander got wind of the scheme he asked for the names of all men on the chaplain's list. Chaplain Poch decided to appeal to General Marshall even though he realized that if Marshall overrode the regimental commander Poch's own position henceforth would be very difficult.

Marshall proceeded by indirection. At a party one evening, in the presence of the colonel of the regiment, he said casually, "I understand they are having a Christmas basket drive for the men who are married without permission and the chaplain is in charge and I think it is a very, very fine thing to do this Christmastime. . . . Mrs. Marshall and I are not asking who [they are]." So the colonel, instead of having his orders countermanded, was simply relieved of responsibility for making a report he perhaps did not wish to make anyway.[16]

It was not a question of softening discipline but of providing help where it was needed and providing it "in a dignified manner." Yet where children were concerned, at least, there was always with Marshall something more. The son of a sergeant on the base, who had had polio in infancy, grew up with one leg so much shorter than the other that he could "hardly walk back and forth to school." Since no military hospital was prepared to take care of him the chaplain approached the Shriner's Hospital in Seattle. There he was told that they could help but unfortunately the waiting list was so long that it would be many months. Poch reported to Marshall and asked if the General would write a letter. As Poch related the story: "He told me he would not write the letter, which didn't seem like him

at all. Then he told me he would not let me write it, nor would he sign it; and when I was groping for an answer and then looked at him, there was a smile on his face and he said, 'I'm going up there myself.' " [17]

He had the true commander's devotion to his command—to its welfare, its effectiveness, and its standing. So he took care of his men, worked at their training—there were two sets of maneuvers in his first year, division exercises in May 1937, and Fourth Army exercises in August—and busied himself with the physical condition of the post. He was vigorous and successful in raising money for improvements—in two years getting some two hundred and fifty thousand dollars for "an elaborate program of rehabilitation" from both the War Department and the State of Washington. His energy and humanity generally kept morale high. During his command the regular Army units at Vancouver Barracks had the best re-enlistment rate in the corps area.[18]

As commander of an important post he was a notable personality in the community. He accepted with enthusiasm, as he had at Forts Screven and at Moultrie, the obligation to live harmoniously and co-operatively with the civilian society. In that, he was helped by an old and warm friendship with the governor of Oregon, retired General Charles H. Martin (Portland was just eight miles away across the river). Martin gave him entrée into Portland political and social circles that Marshall's predecessor had found "standoffish." But Marshall also put himself out to develop the friendliest ties, personally and officially, with political and business leaders. He staged military displays at the post for the community and he made the band and troops available for civic celebrations. He himself accepted scores of speaking engagements in which, wary of political implications, he talked about the Army, work with the CCC, and his own recollections. He was popular enough so that by the end of the first year he was ruefully conscious of being too often on his feet "talking for my supper." Yet he thought it worth while nevertheless, because there had been "so little contact in the past between the post and the people of Portland and other points in the state of Oregon. . . ." As to the personal risks of

loquacity, he added, "Eventually, I will get my foot off the base, but I hope to cool down on this business before that time occurs." [19]

It is not likely that at this time he would have expressed excessive enthusiasm for the New Deal. Although he continued in wholehearted approval of the CCC, he was critical in private letters of some of the work projects and sympathetic with Governor Martin's efforts to curb activities of some of the labor unions—efforts that made the governor unpopular with many state and national Democratic leaders.

About six months after he arrived Marshall, waiting for breakfast one Sunday morning (it was June 20), read in his newspaper of the flight of three Russians, Valeri P. Chkalov, Georgi P. Baidukov, and Alexander V. Beliakov, from Moscow over the North Pole. The three had taken off in a single-engine monoplane two days before and were expected momentarily to touch down in Oakland, California. Actually, as the General was presently informed, the plane was then overhead and about to land at Pearson Field south of the parade ground of Vancouver Barracks, almost literally in his front yard. The Russians would be in time for breakfast. Marshall promptly ordered it and then went out to the field to greet his unexpected and already world-famous visitors.[20]

At about eight-thirty the three fliers, dirty and exhausted from their long, record-making flight, were brought to Marshall's quarters for baths, breakfast, and sleep in approximately that order, though as it turned out they were served food while still in their baths. While the fliers slept, Marshall found a good part of the world converging at his door. Soviet Ambassador Alexander A. Troyanovsky came up from Oakland, where he had planned to greet the Soviet heroes. Newspapermen who had congregated in Portland, photographers, and radio reporters were on hand within a half-hour and demanding to see the fliers. With a brusqueness that some reporters called "testy" the General announced that for the present the airmen would not be disturbed. Soldiers were on guard at the staircase and in front of the bedroom door upstairs. One of the radio networks appealed to the IX Corps Area commander and to the Chief

of Staff, but Marshall was left in control and afterward congratulated on his handling of the matter. In fact he was cooperating but in accord with his own sense of fitness. He set up a news room in his study, brought in several telephones, and made his living room available for broadcasts by the Russians. When a planeload of hungry, tired reporters arrived from Oakland, Mrs. Marshall won their good will and notice in papers throughout the country by supplying a ham, bread, and a huge GI pot of coffee.

Meanwhile, to outfit the fliers, who had brought only their flying clothes, Marshall called the owner of the Meier and Frank Department Store in Portland, Mr. Julius Meier, and with his permission sent an Army truck to pick up twenty suits, pairs of shoes, shirts and underwear from which the men could pick what fit them. Two tailors were corralled and the post barber set up in the orderly's room.

On Monday, Governor Martin, Marshall, and the Soviet Ambassador led the fliers on an impromptu parade through the streets of Portland to a hastily arranged welcoming luncheon. The Chamber of Commerce "threw its ideological predilections completely out of the window" and plastered the walls of the banquet room with Soviet flags. The speeches were generous and friendly, though Marshall spoke for no more than thirty seconds, observing, according to the *Oregonian,* that this had been "a most interesting experience for the United States Army." The *Oregonian* itself, though conservative, was warm in praise of the Russians, yielding them "a nonpartisan admiration" and concluding "there is still fine material in the race of man." [21]

It is an interesting fact about Marshall's career, especially after his return from China, that he was thrown so much with civilians—the CMTC, National Guard, organized Reserves, and CCC at Benning, Screven, Moultrie, Chicago, and Vancouver Barracks. It is a significant fact about the man that he welcomed these contacts. From long, varied, and sustained experience with citizen soldiers he drew his faith in the value and effectiveness of a citizen army. From the same experience he became familiar with the civilian point of view in a way rare among professional military men. A member of his staff later commented that "he

had a feeling for civilians that few Army officers . . . have had. . . . He didn't have to adjust to civilians—they were a natural part of his environment. . . . I think he regarded civilians and military as part of a whole." [22]

At Vancouver Barracks, Marshall spent a large proportion of his time on CCC matters. Because the heavily forested Northwest provided abundant opportunities for conservation, boys from all over the country were drawn into camps in this area. Marshall had under his supervision never less than twenty-seven camps in Oregon and southern Washington, many in wild country difficult of access, especially in the months of spring flooding. "To reach a large section of my district in eastern Oregon," he wrote, "I must traverse the Columbia River gorge, finally emerging from the dense green of the vegetation of the damp near-coastal region into the typical barrens of the dry western plains. In winter one passes, within a mile, from overcast skies, fog or rains, into the glare of cloudless skies. It is possible now, with the spring flowers blooming, to motor an hour and a half from here to the skiing slopes of Mount Hood. Oregon is a region of contrasts." And so were the camps themselves with their miscellaneous human gleanings for salvage. Marshall continued: "The CCC companies are a source of great interest. Near Pendleton, the scene of the famous annual 'round up' or rodeo, is a company of Boston boys. Under Beacon Rock—except for Gibraltar, the largest monolith in the world—is a group of young fellows from the swamp regions of Arkansas. Providence, Rhode Island, has a company near Tillamook on the shore of the Pacific. Their road sign reads, 'Tillamook 18 miles. Providence, R.I., 3100.' We have groups from New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Ohio, Kentucky, Minnesota, and the Dakotas." [23] And later companies were sent up from Tennessee with boys drawn from a number of southern and border states.

Marshall was fascinated by the possibilities CCC offered for developing solid, useful human beings. He said long afterward that he wished he could have been the national director. If he had been, he would have introduced some military training and discipline, which he felt would have brought up a generation better prepared for citizenship. Don Mace, his district

educational adviser, recalled that at their first meeting Marshall said he wanted them to become men first, and after that employables[24]—an echo, perhaps, of the philosophy of VMI and a reflection of his own appreciation of the discipline he believed he learned there.

The need for discipline could be adduced from scores of incidents in his own district: one group had tossed a major into the river; another had stolen a sheep and cooked it; another threw stones at the flag from the mess line; another traded supplies to the girls in a nearby village.[25] And their ordinary bearing betrayed varying degrees of indifference or rebellion, mostly normal enough in boys largely underprivileged, largely educated in the individualist if not anti-social mores of big-city streets, and suddenly removed to Spartan communities in the remote wilderness. Marshall wrote: "When an eighteen-year-old can sit on the small of his back with his feet on the table during an inspection, you can see how far we have to go." [26]

With the ordinary methods of military discipline foreclosed by law, camp commanders had to discover indirect ways to establish control. One appointed a former Portland street gang-leader as his first sergeant; another picked as his informal executive "a black-eyed Irishman who had been runner-up in the Golden Gloves tournament." [27] When in February 1938, at Camp Brothers, Oregon, thirty-seven boys refused to work, the camp commander ordered them discharged. Marshall upheld the action but he observed nevertheless that, as in most such cases, the final blow-up was brought on essentially by poor handling of men in very difficult situations. The Oregon mutineers were New York and New Jersey boys set down in a new campsite in bad weather fifty-six miles from a town of any importance.[28] This was one of the Grazing Service camps which were always "in the most desolate country, far from streams and lakes, usually with a dearth or complete absence of trees, and almost always with a large population of snakes, desert insects, and other unpleasant residents of such regions." [29]

Marshall worked to remove the causes of rebellion. Against the advice of his staff and with only the reluctant approval of corps headquarters he appointed three sub-district commanders

to assist him in inspecting and improving camps. He stipulated that they should have no headquarters and make no written reports except a rough diary once a week and a telephone message three times a week. They were to go where they liked when they liked, with "their guiding mission . . . to raise the standard of poor camps to that of the best.[30] In addition they established command posts to co-ordinate fire fighting when needed and organized informal schools for clerks, cooks, and bakers. Marshall defended this delegation of authority as "the very bedrock of any military organization," provided only that it generated action and not paper.[31]

Fundamental to a successful operation, he believed, were first to make sure that the men in charge, camp commanders and staff, were able and themselves convinced of the worth of what they were doing, and second to assure them of his support. He backed his educational adviser in eliminating poor instructors. Even when the level of instruction was most elementary—a battle with illiteracy or, as one camp commander put it, only partly in jest, "first I want to teach them to wear shoes"—even then Marshall and Mace agreed in demanding "nothing less than a high standard of performance." On the other hand, to able subordinates in the field he pledged the full support of his own staff with a minimum of red tape. "We, in headquarters," he said on one occasion to his staff, "live and have our being in order that the people in the field may carry out their mission. If they ask for anything, regardless of its nature, give it to them. If I find out later that their judgment was faulty I will handle the situation." [32] It was a common-sense, though not so very common, view, reconciling the service and command functions of higher headquarters that Marshall would notably take with him to the War Department. "While I was pretty ruthless about getting rid of the poor fish," he said, "I felt, on the other hand, that it was highly important to build up confidence and trust on the part of the others whose commissions or livelihoods are at your mercy." [33]

He thought it important, too, for the command to encourage in every possible way the educational part of the program because it prepared "a boy for a job in civil life, which is the

real purpose of the CCC." He himself put his whole prestige behind Don Mace, ostentatiously demonstrating his interest and confidence in the educational adviser in the presence of his staff.[34] At the General's request, camp commanders selected ten boys from the district who had been particularly helped by the program and arranged for them to appear at a luncheon of the Portland Chamber of Commerce, where each of the ten talked about his background, training, and hopes for the future. For some of the businessmen of Portland the familiar initials came suddenly alive in human terms; this simple demonstration of how the CCC experience actually helped a few boys was talked about for months.[35]

Building on his editorial experience at Chicago, Marshall a few months after his arrival prompted the establishment of a Vancouver Barracks district newspaper, *The Review,* and put Captain V. J. Gregory in charge. Largely devoted to the sort of local gossip that helped maintain group morale, the paper also published the results of a dental survey which Marshall urged dental officers to make to take advantage of the gathering in one place of young men from widely scattered parts of the country. The report was picked up by *Time* magazine.[36]

What was really notable about his work with the CCC was the simple enthusiasm with which he did it. "The best antidote for mental stagnation that an Army officer in my position can have" he called the CCC, and later referred to his work with it as "the most instructive service I have ever had, and the most interesting." [37]

It was also work which frequently took him deep into the northwest country, where the hunting and fishing were excellent. Often Mrs. Marshall went with him on inspection trips, staying at a hotel while he visited the camps and then joining him for a day on a trout stream. On several occasions they took a cabin in the woods for a weekend and invited the General's adjutant, Major Claude M. (Flap) Adams, Mrs. Adams, and the aide, Captain E. C. Applegate. Major Adams had a sense of humor that appealed to the General and the fearlessness to exploit it. Adams and Marshall were both fond of practical jokes, often elaborately prepared. Adams, for instance, recalled the day of

a formal presentation of awards when Marshall suddenly called him forward, eulogized him, and presented him with a watch. Surprised as he was touched, the major joined Mrs. Marshall and heard her whisper that he had better look carefully at that watch. He did and found it was his own, which somehow Marshall had managed to sneak from him for the award.[38]

Adams was one sort of companion Marshall enjoyed. Another was a quite different kind of man, Erskine Wood, an attorney in Portland, brother of Congresswoman Nan Wood Honeyman, a sportsman and spinner of tales.[39] Wood's father, a regular Army officer, had fought against the great Indian Chief Joseph of the Nez Percés and later had befriended him. Erskine, born at Vancouver Barracks, spent several months with Chief Joseph when he was in his early teens and heard from him, as well as from his father, great stories of the frontier days. These he recalled for Marshall while, perhaps, they tied flies for the next day's fishing at Wood's camp on the Metolius River. Indian lore, history, and the outdoors—these were embedded in Marshall's earliest and best-loved memories. It is no wonder that he enjoyed his friendship with Wood with a particular savor and tried years later during the war to visit the Portland lawyer whenever he could break away.[40]

Although he did not know it, the twenty comparatively relaxed and happy months at Vancouver Barracks were a kind of physical and spiritual conditioning for trials ahead. During these months acts of aggression were multiplying in the world as the dictators grew increasingly arrogant. In the East, Japan continued its encroachments on China. Toward the end of 1936 she signed the anti-Comintern pact with Germany, which Italy adhered to a month later, to shape the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis. In July 1937 Japanese troops clashed with the Chinese near Peiping and Japanese aggression begun in 1931 flared into open war. Before the end of 1937 the Japanese had conquered Chiang Kai-shek's capital at Nanking and forced him to move the government to Chungking. Chiang, who had never succeeded in completing the Chinese revolution and gaining control of the whole country, had an uneasy understanding with the Communists to join in resisting the Japanese, but the weakness of Chinese resistance was already apparent.

In Europe the agony of Spain continued; Stalin was purging his army; Hitler was constructing his. Marshall got an inside view from several of his former associates who were now stationed abroad. Early in 1937 he heard from a friend, Major John Winslow, United States military attaché in Warsaw, that the "problem which agitates every foreign office is simply when and where Hitler will embark on an inevitable military adventure." [41] He received detailed reports from a former instructor at Fort Benning, Major Truman Smith, military attaché in Berlin. Toward the end of the year the major wrote that German aircraft factories were capable of producing six thousand planes a year, perhaps more. Smith thought the development of German airpower was one of the most important world events of the time. That was a year before Munich, a few months before the United States announced plans to increase the American Air Corps by four hundred and seventy-six aircraft within the next two years.[42]

The fact was that despite intimations of world war the United States once again decided to depend on physical isolation and the shield of legal neutrality. President Roosevelt, pushing for a more realistic policy in October 1937, remarked in Chicago the analogy between the spread of aggression and epidemics. In the latter, he noted, "the community . . . joins in a quarantine of the patients in order to protect the health of the community against the spread of the disease." A warning to the dictators, the "quarantine" speech was directed more urgently to probing the temper of the American people. Reaction was prompt and strongly hostile to the implied invitation to collective action. The President, finding himself apparently too far out ahead of public opinion, drew back.

Official United States policy toward the spreading "pestilence" of aggression, as Marshall had called it even before the President's speech, was embraced in the Neutrality Act of 1935 as strengthened and made "permanent" by the Act of 1937. The acts sprang from an oversimplified reading of history: that America had been drawn into war in 1917 against her national interests by unfortunate and unnecessary trade contacts with the belligerents. In the neutrality laws Congress tried to limit such contacts; but the logic of the argument demanded that they be

cut off altogether, and this Congress for obvious reasons would not do.

Sharing the headlines with the portents of war in mid-February 1938 was the announcement that General Pershing, American leader in the half-forgotten world conflict of 1917-18, was seriously ill at Tucson, Arizona. Almost immediately the Chief of Staff ordered Marshall to Washington. Adamson, Pershing's aide, had informed General Craig of Pershing's wish—expressed several years before—that Marshall should "take charge of arrangements" in case of his death. In 1925, on the eve of his departure for South America, Pershing had already asked Marshall, then in China, to act with Martin Egan as co-executor of his papers. General Craig, after briefing Marshall, sent him to Tucson. Meanwhile the IX Corps Area headquarters at San Antonio had already dispatched a special train to bring the former Chief of Staff's body to Arlington for burial. It is said that when Pershing heard of these activities he swore he would recover. If so, he was as good as his word. Less than two months later he appeared as best man at his son's wedding in New York. The episode, demonstrating again the close bond between the country's best-known soldier and George Marshall, also brought Marshall again into personal contact with the Chief of Staff and his chief subordinates, reminding them of his claims for advancement.[43]

Less than two weeks after he returned home from Tucson, Marshall had definite word from General Craig that his remaining days in Vancouver Barracks would be few and that his next job would be in Washington. He was not surprised; the signs had been pointing to Washington for some time. As early as 1936 General Craig had said he would bring Marshall to the War Department as soon as possible.[44] It seemed the time had come at the end of 1937 when Marshall was announced as a member of a War Department board, along with Fox Conner and Lesley McNair, to pass on the merits of a smaller infantry division, but because of Conner's illness the board never met.[45] It is not certain who originated the idea of assigning Marshall as Chief of the War Plans Division, but Major General Stanley D. Embick, Deputy Chief of Staff, later took credit for proposing that Mar-

shall be brought back temporarily as War Plans director, with the idea of appointing him as deputy chief when Embick was assigned later in the year to a corps command. The plan appealed to Secretary of War Woodring, who was said to have welcomed a chance to build up an alternative to General Drum for the Chief of Staff's office. It appealed also to Assistant Secretary Louis Johnson, who in most matters was at sword's point with the Secretary, but who happened also to have been impressed with Marshall, whom he had met on a visit to Vancouver Barracks on January 8, 1938.[46]

Whether General Craig had a similar vision of things to come is not clear. He did not spell out the prospects in that way to Marshall. Marshall did know, however, before he left Vancouver Barracks, that he was slated to take Embick's place.[47] Even so, he viewed the Washington assignment without enthusiasm. The post of Chief of Staff had not traditionally led through the deputy's office any more than the highroad to the presidency led through the vice-presidency. He had still intently in mind the need to get his second star. Recognizing that he was still junior on the list of brigadier generals, he would have preferred further troop duty as more likely to make him available for promotion to higher command vacancies.

Yet he could not seriously have doubted now that he would reach near the top even if he could not attain it. The Intelligence Division of the War Department proposed to send him as attaché to some European or Latin American posts and two or more corps commanders asked for him as chief of staff of their headquarters. General McCoy in 1937 had even held out the prospect of the 1st Division command, but Marshall felt that he was too junior to hope immediately for this coveted assignment.[48]

Marshall's orders to Washington arrived while he was on an inspection trip at Fort Missoula, Montana, May 11-13, 1938.[49] He had a month of maneuvers to go through before his departure. In this, his last troop duty, he again led the Red Force in joint regular Army–National Guard maneuvers. Once more given a numerically inferior force and assigned the role of loser in the script, he attempted an unorthodox solution. His effort to attack during the hours of darkness was assailed by some of the regular

Army commanders, and it was assumed by them that he would be criticized in the post-maneuver critique. Instead the officer charged with this duty, Major Mark Wayne Clark, G-3 of the 3d Division, concluded that Marshall's approach was an imaginative one, based on World War I experience. Marshall would remember Clark and strongly recommend him for an assignment to the Army War College, from which Clark went on to a distinguished career.[50]

The remaining weeks Marshall spent resting, fishing, and, with Mrs. Marshall, saying farewell to their friends. Portland and Vancouver clubs and officers of the post all arranged parties in his honor. On the evening before their departure the Vancouver High School and 7th Infantry bands serenaded them at their quarters.[51] It was no more than was due the brigadier general commanding, but on both sides there was genuine affection. Looking back, some fourteen years later, Marshall wrote: "Altogether, we experienced one of our most delightful periods of Army service and one that we look back on with additional warmth because there followed from the very month we left the Northwest long fearful strain and struggle with a world turmoil which has not yet subsided.

"Those days along the rivers of the Northwest, among its magnificent mountains, and its picturesque seashore appealed to us as a pleasant dream in comparison with the troubled days that followed." [52]