

George C. Marshall  
Interviews and Reminiscences  
for Forrest C. Pogue



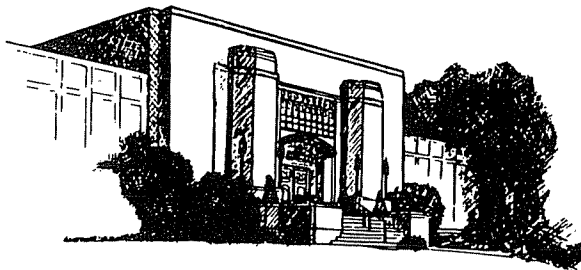
George C. Marshall  
Interviews and Reminiscences  
for Forrest C. Pogue

*3d edition*  
*with a Foreword by Walter LaFeber*  
*and an Introduction by Dr. Pogue*

Larry I. Bland, editor

Joellen K. Bland, assistant editor

Sharon Ritenour Stevens, photographs editor



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# CONTENTS

Foreword . . . . .	vii
Some Highlights of George C. Marshall's Life . . . . .	xi
Illustrations . . . . .	xv
Introduction: Interviewing General Marshall, by Forrest C. Pogue . . . . .	1
Tape 1 (February 21, 1957) . . . . .	19
Childhood in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, 1880-90s	
Tape 2 (February 28, 1957) . . . . .	53
Childhood in Uniontown; family background and parents; first trip to Washington	
Tape 3 (March 6, 1957) . . . . .	89
VMI and Lexington, Virginia, 1897-1901; influences on later life; home life; reading; first trip to Washington; Gen. Pershing	
Tape 4 (March 13, 1957) . . . . .	115
VMI; Philippine assignment, 1902-3; Fort Reno; Texas mapping ex- pedition	
Tape 5 (April 4, 1957) . . . . .	149
Fort Reno; Leavenworth schools, 1906-10; World War I; National Guard service, 1908-12; mother; European vacation, 1910; Philip- pine assignment, 1913-16; aide to Gen. Bell, 1916-17	
Tape 6 (April 5, 1957) . . . . .	183
Preparedness and mobilization duties, 1916-17; First Division in France, 1917-18; Gen. Pershing; GHQ duties; Madame Jouette	
Tape 7 (April 11, 1957) . . . . .	219
World War I: St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne; First Division; French lead- ers; MacArthur; aide to Pershing, 1919-24	
Tape 8 (December 7, 1956) . . . . .	255
National Guard, 1939-41; relations with the British and the Army Air Corps; Brazil Visit, 1939	
Tape 9 (January 15, 1957) . . . . .	279
Mobilization problems, 1939-41; Atlantic Conference, 1941; rela- tions with the British; Philippine Islands defense	
Tape 10 (January 22, 1957) . . . . .	297
Mobilization problems, 1940-41; draft; relations with Congress and the Air Corps; Lend-Lease	
Tape 11 (November 15, 1956) . . . . .	321
Tunisia, 1943; relations with the British, Congress, and the French; army appropriations, 1941; Marshall Plan speech, 1947; secretary of defense, 1950; relations with Stalin	

Tape 12 (November 21, 1956) . . . . .	351
Morning briefings, 1944-45; Arcadia Conference; PX organization; YMCA; China mission, 1946; Pacific strategy	
Tape 13 (February 4, 1957) . . . . .	385
World War II miscellaneous; Eisenhower and Patton, 1944; logistics and manpower problems; battle of the Bulge; Malta and Yalta Conferences	
Tape 14 (February 11, 1957) . . . . .	409
Ultra leak to Dewey, 1944; shipping shortages; Dill-Marshall relationship; politics and the JCS; relations with FDR; atomic bomb development and use	
Tape 15 (February 14, 1957) . . . . .	427
Pacific theater problems; Leahy and the JCS; relations with Hopkins, King, Somervell; intelligence failures; war and democratic society; weapons development; Civil Affairs School; training; information and films for soldiers	
Tape 16 (February 15, 1957) . . . . .	467
Elite units; training problems; qualities of U.S. and other soldiers; atomic bomb development; mobilization problems; media relations; morale problems	
Tape 17 (February 20, 1957) . . . . .	493
Demobilization problems, 1945; African-American soldiers; promotion policies; aides and personal assistants; mobilization problems, 1940-41; relations with FDR	
Tape 18 (November 19, 1959) . . . . .	527
Marshall Plan; elimination of unfit officers; lessons of World War I; reforming the Infantry School, 1927-32; Patton	
Tape 19 (November 20, 1956) . . . . .	549
Churchill's Balkan plans; Marshall Plan; State Department reorganization; MacArthur and Pacific strategy; Lend-Lease	
Interview Notes (September 18, 1956) . . . . .	577
Rear area problems, 1942-45; cross-Channel attack plans, 1942-43	
Interview Notes (October 5, 1956) . . . . .	587
British and cross-Channel attack plans, 1942-43; training problems; TORCH planning, 1942; relations with the navy	
Interview Notes (October 29, 1956) . . . . .	603
Stilwell and China; relations with MacArthur, Churchill, the French, and the Army Air Forces	
Interview Notes (November 13, 1956) . . . . .	619
Relations with the British, Dill, and FDR; Mediterranean theater; comments on Reserve officers	
Index . . . . .	628

# FOREWORD

Dean Acheson, as the title of his widely noted autobiography tells us, was *Present at the Creation* when the United States became the world's superpower between 1941 and 1952. It was George Marshall who created and directed much of that power.

During World War II, Marshall, as army chief of staff, emerged as the dominant military strategist, one of the few who thought globally. Winston Churchill called him "the true 'organizer of victory.'" At war's end, Marshall looked forward to retirement, only to have President Harry Truman ask him to undertake the impossible task of going to China to try to mediate a settlement in the most profound of all twentieth-century revolutions. A little more than a year later, the sixty-six-year-old Marshall returned from China, again looked forward to retirement, and again obeyed the president's wishes by becoming secretary of state. Between January 1947 and January 1949, Marshall presided over the most remarkable and creative two years in the history of U.S. foreign relations. The man who had organized the destruction of Germany and Japan, and whose armies had devastated much of western and central Europe, now prepared far-sighted peace terms for the former enemies and devised perhaps the single greatest success in American diplomacy—the Marshall Plan (or "the so-called Marshall Plan," as the general himself would modestly term it)—that was pivotal in rebuilding Europe.

In September 1950, Truman, besieged by a bitterly divided Cabinet, war in Korea, and a virulent McCarthyism, again turned to Marshall. Serving as secretary of defense, the seventy-year-old Marshall once more organized U.S. forces, but now for a limited war where there was to be no clear-cut victory. He became a central figure in Truman's decision to assert civilian control over the military by dramatically recalling another American hero, General Douglas MacArthur, from his command of United States and United Nations forces in Korea.

Later in 1951, Marshall again retired, this time for good. But he returned to the world spotlight in 1953, when the success of the Marshall Plan led to the general winning the Nobel Prize for Peace. He was the first professional soldier to receive this honor. In Marshall's case, however, receiving the Prize was less a paradox than an example of why he has become a great figure—indeed, in Truman's mind, the greatest American of his time and matched only by George Washington in all the nation's history.

Marshall's genius lay in his ability to combine an immense talent for

organizing global military (and diplomatic) operations with a unique sense of how such organization had to be accomplished in a democracy. He shaped not only America's emergence to superpower status, but the emergence of Americans to internationalism. Marshall understood that his nation possessed the talent and resources to mobilize for victory. With good reason, he was less certain that Americans possessed the historical understanding and the political system necessary for international cooperation and leadership once victory was won. In a way no other U.S. military leader other than Washington and Dwight D. Eisenhower has comprehended, Marshall understood the care with which Americans and their democratic system have to be taken into and out of international commitments. And Eisenhower, it should be noted, was Marshall's protégé.

Marshall's great political talents, as James Reston wrote in the *New York Times* in early 1947, lay not in being "the back-slapping type," but in being "a serious man. He moves not from tactics to action, which is the normal procedure on Capitol Hill, but from principle to action." These principles included speaking unvarnished truth to those holding power. In 1917, as one of the first U.S. officers to arrive in Europe after the United States entered World War I, Marshall heard General John ("Black Jack") Pershing dressing down a division commander. Pershing was an American icon, but the young Marshall told him he was wrong, and did it so effectively that the general appointed him to his personal staff.

By 1938, Marshall, who never commanded troops in the field, had had his promotion repeatedly delayed by the deadeningly slow seniority system until his skills for planning and organization (and his perception that air power could be a decisive force in future wars) led to his appointment as deputy chief of staff. At a White House meeting, Marshall was the most junior, but also the only one who politely questioned President Franklin D. Roosevelt's views on the composition of the military. Such reasoned audacity drew him to the president's attention, as did Marshall's notable work with FDR's closest adviser, Harry Hopkins, on the Civilian Conservation Corps. A year later, Roosevelt passed over more than thirty officers senior to Marshall to name him chief of staff. Marshall's distinguished biographer, Forrest Pogue, has noted in his magisterial four-volume work that the general insisted on being reserved with FDR so that he would not be overwhelmed or have his views detoured by the president's charm. He even refused to laugh at Roosevelt's jokes. FDR, Pogue adds, probably did not much enjoy Marshall's company. But he kept the general by his side to win a war.

Preoccupied with transforming a peacetime army of 174,000 into, ultimately, a global force of more than 8,000,000, Marshall never lost



sight of American society's possibilities and peculiarities. He emphasized the role of the citizen-soldier by building up the National Guard and improving its readiness by integrating the units into the regular army for training, a radical step in 1939–41 but taken for granted later. Most notably, once the nation entered the war, he strongly urged an early cross-Channel invasion of France and opposed Churchill's eloquent, persistent demands that Allied forces first pursue the less-costly strategy of attacking through the Mediterranean (where, it so happened, important British imperial interests were also located). Marshall insisted on his plan not primarily because he hoped to counterbalance the Soviets in Europe, but because he believed that only such an invasion would prevent having to fight a long war—which he feared Americans would not tolerate—and would demonstrate that U.S. troops could quickly achieve the most important strategic goal of defeating Germany. Churchill was able to delay Marshall's second front until 1944. When, however, the prime minister repeatedly tried as well to divert U.S. forces into the eastern Mediterranean for an invasion of Rhodes, Marshall finally stopped it by telling Churchill directly, "No American boy is going to die on that goddamned beach."

An episode that especially revealed Marshall's principles and political talents occurred on January 7, 1947, when he arrived in Washington to be sworn in as secretary of state. He had just travelled half-way across the world after the gruelling attempt to mediate the Chinese Revolution. His appointment announced that day by Truman was, as the *New York Times* headlined, a surprise for world capitals: "London is Amazed." Speculation ran rampant that Truman, just repudiated in the 1946 congressional elections by a Republican landslide victory, would not run in 1948 and was grooming Marshall for the presidency. At the general's request, no welcoming party greeted him at Washington's Union Station. But when newspaper reporters surged around him on the train platform, he quickly gave them a statement: "I will never become involved in political matters and therefore I never can be considered as a candidate for political office. . . . I never could be drafted. . . . I mean just what I said and not something else."

In one stroke, Marshall had not only shown full allegiance to Truman, but he had made it much more difficult for the Republican Congress to oppose Marshall's foreign policies on the grounds of partisan politics. Several years of historic bipartisanship now began, when Republican legislators and Democrats in the Executive cooperated in constructing the cornerstones of U.S. Cold War policy: the Truman Doctrine, which committed the nation to containing Communism; the Marshall Plan; and, in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the nation's first such military alliance in nearly 150 years, and the most important

alliance in the last half of the twentieth century and beyond. Vowing never to “become involved in political matters,” the general proceeded to pull off a series of unprecedented political coups.

When Marshall served as secretary of defense, his successes were fewer, but his understanding of the nation’s political requirements was just as acute. With private reservations, Marshall nevertheless demonstrated total loyalty and public support for the president as he helped Truman bring down MacArthur. When Senator Joseph McCarthy and his minions attacked Marshall, of all people, as part of a gigantic “conspiracy” controlled by Moscow, the secretary of defense refused to respond. He saw his job to be ending the Korean War, not further inflaming the paranoia or enhancing the opportunism of the McCarthyites. Anyway, as Marshall declared privately, “if I have to explain at this point that I am not a traitor to the United States, I hardly think it’s worth it.”

Eric Severeid, the highly respected CBS news correspondent, observed Marshall as “a hulking, homely man of towering intellect, [with] the memory of an unnatural genius, and the integrity of a Christian saint. The atmosphere of controlling power he exuded made one feel oneself a physical weakling.” (Quoted in *American Scholar* 60 [Summer 1991]: 466.)

Central to Marshall’s success was indeed the controlled power he exercised, especially over the organizations he directed and his own temperament. “I have no feelings except those I reserve for Mrs. Marshall,” he told Acheson. That comment, however, misled. Pershing and Roosevelt, for example, were seldom under any illusion about Marshall’s feelings, nor was Churchill after he urged the invasion of Rhodes. Marshall harbored strong personal feelings, but they were above all delicately sensitive to the frailties, potential, and principles of the society he served.

His public reserve, Naomi Blevin has written, was ironically “a disservice to his countrymen. For Marshall mastered or obviated difficulties so effectively and so quietly that he persuaded several generations of Americans that they were better than they were.” (*New Yorker*, August 6, 1990, p. 99.) Perhaps. But that does not mean that future generations cannot learn much about the nature and potential of American democracy from George Marshall’s principles, actions, and, herein, his words.

WALTER LAFEBER\*

Noll Professor of History  
Cornell University

\* The author thanks Kathryn Comerford for her research assistance in the preparation of this Foreword.

# SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF GEORGE C. MARSHALL'S LIFE

George Catlett Marshall, Jr., was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, on December 31, 1880, to George Catlett Marshall (1845–1909) and Laura Bradford Marshall (1846–1928), both of Augusta, Kentucky. His siblings were Stuart Bradford (1875–1956) and Marie Louise (later Mrs. John J. Singer) (1876–1962). He attended the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, between 1897 and 1901, where he held the highest cadet rank each of his last three years and graduated in civil engineering. On February 11, 1902, soon after he received his commission in the U.S. Army, Marshall married Elizabeth Carter Coles (1874–1927) of Lexington.

After duty in the Philippines and the continental United States, he served in France during World War I, initially with the First Division and eventually on General John J. Pershing's staff. During the interwar years, he served as aide to Pershing, with troops in China, and at Fort Benning, Georgia, and other posts in the United States. Three years after his first wife's death, Marshall married Katherine Boyce Tupper Brown (1882–1978) of Baltimore, Maryland, on October 15, 1930. Marshall acquired three step-children by this marriage: Molly Brown (later Mrs. James J. Winn) (1912– ), Clifton Stevenson Brown (1914–1952), and Allen Tupper Brown (1916–1944), who was killed in action near Anzio, Italy.

Taking office as acting chief of staff, U.S. Army, on July 1, 1939; Marshall was sworn in as chief of staff on September 1, 1939; he served in that capacity until November 16, 1945. After his special mission to China (December 1945–January 1947), President Truman appointed him secretary of state. After two years in this post, he resigned in early 1949 and later became president of the American Red Cross. He was recalled to government duty for a year in 1950–51 as secretary of defense.

Marshall received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953 for his initiation of the European Recovery Program (i.e., the "Marshall Plan"). He died on October 16, 1959, at Walter Reed Army Hospital, Washington, D.C.

## PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Commandant, Danville Military Institute, Danville, Virginia, September–

December 1901  
*Commissioned second lieutenant,*

- February 2, 1902*  
 Duty with the Thirtieth Infantry in the Philippine Islands (Manila and Mangarin, Mindoro), May 1902–November 1903
- Duty at Fort Reno, Oklahoma Territory, December 1903–August 1906 (detached service for mapping part of Texas, summer, 1905)
- Student, Infantry and Cavalry School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, August 1906–June 1907
- Promoted to first lieutenant, March 7, 1907*
- Detached service at the Pennsylvania National Guard summer camps, 1907–10
- Student, Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, August 1907–June 1908
- Instructor, Army Service Schools, Fort Leavenworth, August 1908–June 1910
- Inspector–instructor, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, Boston, June 1911–September 1912
- Duty with the Fourth Infantry (Fort Logan Roots, Arkansas; Fort Snelling Minnesota; Texas City, Texas), September 1912–June 1913
- Duty in the Philippine Islands, August 1913–May 1916; aide-de-camp to Maj. Gen. Hunter Liggett
- Promoted to captain, July 1, 1916*
- Aide-de-camp to Maj. Gen. J. Franklin Bell (San Francisco, California; Governors Island, New York), July 1916–July 1917
- Duty with the American Expeditionary Forces, June 1917–April 1919:
- Assistant chief of staff, G-3 (Operations), First Division, June 26, 1917–July 12, 1918
- Promoted to major (temporary), August 5, 1917*
- Promoted to lieutenant colonel (temporary), January 5, 1918*
- Duty with G-3 Section, A.E.F. General Headquarters, July 13–August 20, 1918
- Promoted to colonel (temporary), August 27, 1918*
- Assistant to the chief of staff, First Army, August 20–October 17, 1918
- Assistant chief of staff, G-3, First Army, October 17–November 19, 1918
- Chief of staff, Eighth Corps, November 20, 1918–January 15, 1919
- Duty with G-3 Section, G.H.Q., January 15–April 30, 1919
- Aide-de-camp to General Pershing (France and Washington, D.C.), May 1919–June 1924
- Promoted to major (permanent), July 1, 1920 (temporary rank ends)*
- Promoted to lieutenant colonel, August 21, 1923*
- Duty with the Fifteenth Infantry Regiment, Tientsin, China, September 1924–May 1927
- Instructor, Army War College, Washington, D.C., July–October 1927
- Assistant commandant (head of the Academic Department), Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, October 1927–June 1932
- Commanding Fort Screven, Georgia, and Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) District “F,” June 1932–June 1933
- Commanding Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, and C.C.C. District “I,” June–October 1933
- Promoted to colonel, September 1, 1933*
- Senior instructor, Illinois National Guard, Chicago, October 1933–October 1936
- Promoted to brigadier general, October 1, 1936*

- Commanding Fifth Brigade of the Third Division, Vancouver Barracks, Washington, and C.C.C. District, October 1936–June 1938  
 Assistant chief of staff, War Plans Division, War Department, Washington, D.C., July–October 1938  
 Deputy chief of staff, War Department, October 1938–June 1939  
 Acting chief of staff, U.S. Army, July 1–September 1, 1939  
*Promoted to major general, September 1, 1939*  
 Chief of staff, U.S. Army, September 1, 1939–November 18, 1945  
*Promoted to general (temporary), September 1, 1939*  
*Promoted to General of the Army (temporary), December 16, 1944*  
 Special representative of President Truman to China with the rank of ambassador, November 27, 1945–January 20, 1947  
*General of the Army (permanent), April 11, 1946*  
 Secretary of state, January 21, 1947–January 20, 1949  
 Retired from active military service, February 28, 1947; restored to the Active List, March 1, 1949  
 Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission, January 26, 1949–October 16, 1959  
 Member, Board of Visitors, Virginia Military Institute, 1946–1954  
 President of the American Red Cross, October 1, 1949–November 30, 1950  
 Secretary of defense, September 21, 1950–September 12, 1951  
 Chairman of the United States delegation to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain, May–June 1953

## MILITARY DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

## UNITED STATES:

- Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster  
 Silver Star  
 Gold Medal expressing “Thanks of Congress”  
 Philippine Campaign Medal  
 Mexican Border Service Medal  
 World War I Victory Medal with four battle clasps  
 Army of Occupation of Germany Medal  
 American Defense Service Medal with Foreign Service Clasp  
 American Campaign Medal  
 Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal  
 European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two bronze service stars  
 World War II Victory Medal  
 National Defense Service Medal

## FOREIGN:

- Brazil—Order of Military Merit, Grade of Grand Officer  
 Chile—Order del Merito  
 Columbia—Grand Cross of the Order of Boyaco  
 Cuba—Order of Military Merit, First Class  
 Ecuador—Star of Abdon Calderon, First Class  
 France—Legion of Honor, degree of Officer (1919); promoted to degree of Grand Croix (1945)  
 Great Britain—Knight Grand Cross, Order of Bath (Military Division)  
 Greece—Grand Cross, with Swords, of the Royal Order of George I  
 Italy—Order of the Crown of Italy, Grade of Officer; Order of Saints Maurice and Lazarus, Grade of Officer

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Liberia—Centennial Medal            | Orange Nassau                           |
| Montenegro—Silver Medal for Bravery | Panama—Medal of La Solidaridad,         |
| Morocco—Grand Cross of Ouissam      | Second Class                            |
| Alaouite Cherifien                  | Peru—Gran Oficial del Sol de Peru       |
| Netherlands—Knight of the Grand     | U.S.S.R.—Order of Suvarov, First Degree |
| Cross with Swords in the Order of   |   |

## CIVILIAN AWARDS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Theodore Roosevelt Distinguished<br>Service Medal of Honor, 1945   | Disabled American Veterans, New York<br>Chapter, Citizenship Award, 1950 |
| Varieties Club Humanitarian Award,<br>1947   | Virginia Distinguished Service Medal,<br>1951                            |
| Freedom House Award  | Four Freedoms Foundation Award,<br>1952                                  |
| National Planning Association Gold<br>Medal, 1949  | Distinguished Service Medal of the<br>American Legion                    |
| National Civil Service Award, Order of<br>Eagles, 1949   | Nobel Peace Prize for 1953   |
| New York Board of Trade Award for<br>distinguished service and contri-<br>bution to the American Way, 1949 | AMVETS Tenth Anniversary Award   |
| U.S. Conference of Mayors Award for<br>Distinguished Public Service,<br>1949                               | Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award<br>for Distinguished Service, 1956       |
|  | Pennsylvania Meritorious Medal, 1957                                     |
|  | International Charlemagne Prize of<br>the City of Aachen, Germany, 1958  |

## HONORARY DEGREES

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Command and General Staff School,<br>1934 | Brown University, 1947         |
| Washington and Jefferson College,<br>1939 | Columbia University, 1947      |
| Pennsylvania Military College, 1940       | Harvard University, 1947       |
| College of William and Mary, 1941         | Lafayette College, 1947        |
| Trinity College, 1941                     | McGill University, 1947        |
| Norwich University, 1942                  | Oxford University, 1947        |
| Amherst College, 1947                     | Princeton University, 1947     |
|   | University of California, 1948 |
|   | University of London, 1948     |

# ILLUSTRATIONS

The sources for the illustrations are listed below. The accession numbers for the photographs at the George C. Marshall Research Library (GCMRL) are provided.

## *frontispiece*

General of the Army George C. Marshall, 1945. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo P-11242; GCMRL #485A

## *following page 208*

1. GCMRL #90
2. GCMRL #87
3. GCMRL #88
4. GCMRL #1399
5. GCMRL #1398
6. GCMRL #39
7. GCMRL #2603
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10. GCMRL #1197
11. GCMRL #113
12. GCMRL #1774
13. GCMRL #738
14. GCMRL #1505
15. GCMRL #101
16. GCMRL #102
17. GCMRL #1482
18. GCMRL #235
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20. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 49024; GCMRL #124
21. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 49026; GCMRL #884
22. GCMRL #1227
23. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 157961; GCMRL #1152A
24. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 63787; GCMRL #132

25. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 63783; GCMRL #133
26. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 63864; GCMRL #135
27. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 63939; GCMRL #140
28. GCMRL #1724
29. GCMRL #1744
30. GCMRL #1484
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32. GCMRL #770
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35. GCMRL #312
36. Wide World Photos; GCMRL #2908
37. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 114106; GCMRL #970

## *following page 432*

38. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 115947; GCMRL #218
39. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 317925; GCMRL #217
40. GCMRL #167
41. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 125855; GCMRL #1655
42. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 129811; GCMRL #332
43. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 130482; GCMRL #3341
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45. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 152378; GCMRL #2920A

46. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 175179; GCMRL #973A
47. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 178038; GCMRL #348
48. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 317934; GCMRL #310
49. GCMRL #771
50. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 190721; GCMRL #340
51. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 190720; GCMRL #3217
52. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 192610; GCMRL #202
53. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 194481; GCMRL #353
54. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 195355-S; GCMRL #8A
55. U.S. Army Signal Corps Photo 199763-S; GCMRL #355
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58. GCMRL #645
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61. Wide World Photos; GCMRL #957
62. UPI/Bettmann; GCMRL #243
63. *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*; GCMRL #2544
64. Wide World Photos; GCMRL #2045
65. UPI/Bettmann; GCMRL #704
66. GCMRL #1079
67. GCMRL #2877
68. GCMRL #296
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70. GCMRL #288
71. Wide World Photos; GCMRL #1326



## Introduction

# *Interviewing General Marshall*

by Forrest C. Pogue

**M**ORE than ten years after I completed these interviews, I was one of a group of historians who organized the Oral History Association of the United States. I was on the Committee on Guidelines and was elected to the first Council long term. Larry Bland, editor of this revision of my interviews with General George C. Marshall, has suggested that I describe how I became an oral historian and the way my experiences as combat historian and in writing the official Army volume on General Eisenhower's command led ultimately to my selection as General Marshall's interviewer and biographer.<sup>1</sup>

### *My Background in Oral History*

My training in history was in the field of international relations and diplomacy. From 1933 until 1942, I taught college level history and worked on my doctorate (granted in 1939). In 1937-38 I was an American Exchange Fellow at the University of Paris. Study in the period of world problems of 1919-36 and extensive travel in France, Germany, Italy, Austria, and Czechoslovakia turned out to be excellent preparation for my particular future.

Drafted into the army in 1942, I was a clerk in the Reception Center at Fort Harrison, Indiana, for almost a year. In the spring of 1943, I was transferred to the Intelligence Section, Second Army, Memphis, Tennessee, where I served as assistant to the historian of that army, Bell I. Wiley. Research there on the training of several divisions made me familiar with some of the directives and problems of Army Chief of Staff

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1. The notes in this essay were added by the editor. For additional background, see H. Lew Wallace, "Forrest C. Pogue: A Biographical Sketch," *The Filson Club Quarterly* 60 (July 1986): 373-402.

George C. Marshall, and a study of maneuvers between Second and Third armies acquainted me with the names of George S. Patton and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In mid-March 1944, I was ordered to the Historical Division, War Department, Washington, to become one of a small number of combat historians being organized to go to London in time to participate in the invasion of Normandy. Field historians were already at work in the Southwest Pacific and the Mediterranean area, but enlargement of the combat historian program had resulted from a request by General Marshall for a series of pamphlets on battle actions that could be quickly produced and made available to men wounded in action or to families of men killed on various fronts. I was one of the first ten men brought to Washington to be briefed and sent to the United Kingdom for service as a combat historian in the cross-Channel attack.

We came to London in mid-April where we joined a similar group recruited from U.S. units already in Britain. After three weeks of briefing on the proposed operations, we were assigned to First or Third Army and then attached to corps headquarters. Second Lieutenant William J. Fox and I, a buck sergeant, were attached to Fifth Corps (a part of First Army) that would command divisions landing on Omaha Beach. Cleared for access to BIGOTED material, Fox and I read the massive plans for the coming invasion. A few weeks later we were attached to a company of the Twenty-ninth Division that was scheduled to cross the Channel in the late afternoon of D-day.

Our first experience in talking to combat troops came while waiting to cross from Land's End near Penzance. We went aboard an LST with troops of a follow-up wave on June 2, and became acquainted with the exigencies of life on a cramped war craft, waiting for action. Heavy fighting on Omaha Beach on June 6 delayed our departure from Falmouth harbor, so that we did not arrive off the Normandy coast until late evening. While the fighting troops left for the shore in small boats, we and some thirty other attached troops were kept on board until the beaches were secure. Fox and I were told that troops wounded on the beaches would soon be brought aboard our LST, temporarily converted into a hospital ship for minor surgery, and that we could interview the wounded as soon as they were able to talk to us. Thus we began our combat interviews on the D-day action while still offshore.

I spent much of June and July, until the breakout west of Saint-Lô, interviewing troops mainly at company and battalion levels about their experiences in the first phase of the landing and the fighting in the hedgerows. During the early days of the sweep toward Paris, I was sent back to the advanced section of the Communications Zone south of Cherbourg to serve as research assistant to Lieutenant Colonel Charles

H. Taylor, executive officer of the Pentagon's Historical Section, to prepare the pamphlet General Marshall wanted on Omaha Beach. Taylor, in civilian life holder of the chair of French history at Harvard, had attended the University of Paris ten years before I did. We went to Paris with members of the Historical Section from London in early September. I stayed there for nearly twelve weeks, working on the Omaha Beach book and editing some of the combat interviews coming in from the field.

Returning to Fifth Corps in late November, I interviewed units on the dash across France to Belgium and was in Huertgen Forest interviewing veterans of the recent battles there when the Battle of the Bulge began. I was still interviewing men who had held the north flank of the Bulge and members of the division that captured the Schwammeneau Dam on the Roer when units from the corps to our left took the bridge at Remagen. Our corps boundary ran to the south of Remagen so I had no part in covering that story. The bridge had collapsed before the end of the month, so I crossed the Rhine by pontoon bridge on the first of April, at Neuwied.

From that point on to the Elbe, combat troops pursued the retreating Germans and combat historians pursued both. Fox and I followed troops of the Sixty-ninth Division into Leipzig, and a few days later were with elements of that division when its patrols linked up with forward units of a Russian division near Torgau. I watched the formal meeting of the American and Russian division commanders when we crossed the Elbe to the castle east of the river the next day. From here we slipped south to Grafenwoehr and were entering Pilsen when the city lights came on for the first time in years, and we knew then that the news of the armistice at Reims was a fact. We celebrated VE-day in Pilsen.

Four days later I was called back to Paris where Colonel S. L. A. Marshall, now theater historian, was setting up historical teams to write battle narratives of the war. Fox and some other historians had volunteered to return to the United States, and supposedly proceed on to the Pacific to cover the final onslaught on Japan. I was assigned to a section writing on the earlier pursuit across northern France. In Paris we were quartered in the former Gestapo headquarters on Avenue Foch, working through masses of interviews and growing mountains of official records that had been directed back to the Historical Section. We were still there when the war ended in the Pacific.

I was eligible for return home, but I preferred to take a discharge in France and accept a job as a War Department historian. Thus, I was under contract in November when Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith telephoned Colonel Marshall to ask him to send a historian to the American segment of Eisenhower's former Supreme Headquarters Allied

Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in Frankfurt. Before leaving to take General Marshall's place as chief of staff in the Pentagon some weeks earlier, Eisenhower had directed that a short history of his command be prepared.

Colonel Marshall, who had recently presented me with the Bronze Star that First Army had awarded me for frontline interviewing, and who had recommended that I get the only Croix de Guerre allotted for an enlisted man in our unit, took me to Frankfurt to begin the history of Eisenhower's command. As a civilian, I was no longer a master sergeant but had a rank analogous to that of lieutenant colonel for billeting and travel accommodations. General Smith opened the files of SHAEF to me and directed me to write a short history of the Supreme Command. At my suggestion, he radioed General Eisenhower that I later be given full access to his personal papers and to War Department documents so that I could expand my short history into the official account of his command.

I was sent at once to London to the Historical Section of the War Cabinet Office to write a chapter on cover and deception based on classified British files. In January I returned to Frankfurt to begin a series of high level interviews with members of Eisenhower's wartime staff still in Germany. I completed the short draft in late May and returned to the States.

After a brief visit in Kentucky, I reported to the Historical Division of the War Department. General Eisenhower then appointed me the official historian of SHAEF. He instructed me to return to Europe to revisit battlefields and to interview former members of his command on the widest possible basis. He invited the British to appoint one of their historians to work with me, but Field Marshal Sir Henry M. Wilson, of the British Mission to the United States, asked that I serve also for them.

In November I flew to Paris and began a series of trips to Normandy and Brittany beaches, battle sectors of Belgium, Holland, and the Rhineland, then on to Berlin. I interviewed British, French, and American officers in London, Paris, Rome, Caserta, Cairo, and Fayid on the Suez Canal. I was able to talk with wartime British Chiefs of Staff: Alanbrooke, Cunningham, Portal, and their associates, Ismay and Mountbatten. In France I talked with General de Gaulle, Marshal Juin, and General de Lattre de Tassigny. I worked closely with British official historians and visited military headquarters in Britain and France. Returning to Washington after nearly six months, I began interviewing American commanders of the war. General Marshall, then on his mission to China, later secretary of state, head of the American Red Cross, and secretary of defense, was one key figure that I was not able to interview.

I had completed my manuscript and had gone back to Europe as a

member of an Operations Research team under contract with Theater Headquarters, Heidelberg, in the summer of 1952, without having met General Marshall. Our group was helping to supply historical information for current war plans that required frequent travel over the European theater, and I was on a trip to Athens and Istanbul in late November, 1953, when I heard that General Marshall was to receive the Nobel Prize for Peace at Oslo on December 10—the first professional soldier to receive the Peace Prize. I called the U.S. ambassador in Oslo and was told that I could get a ticket for the award ceremonies in the Norwegian capital. I saw the general get the award but did not get to meet him.

After the ceremony, I wrote to General Marshall of my regret that he had decided not to write his memoirs. I urged that at least he talk to a professional historian in a series of taped interviews, and said that many historians with experience in interviewing, like myself, would be glad to conduct the interviews without pay. He replied graciously that he had decided to leave the writing of his story to future historians.

At the same time, I wrote to General Eisenhower and sent him a program and an account of the awards ceremony. He thanked me and invited me to visit him at the White House when I came back from Europe. When I returned a few months later, my volume on the Supreme Command was in the press and a meeting was arranged so that I could present the volume at the White House on May 8, the ninth anniversary of VE-day.<sup>2</sup> The Historical Division had attempted to have General Marshall and General Bedell Smith at the presentation, but arrangements fell through and I felt that my last chance to meet General Marshall had passed.

### *My Selection as Official Biographer*

For the next two years I was back in Kentucky as a history professor. In late May 1956, J. Clifford Miller, Jr., vice-president of the George C. Marshall Research Foundation in Lexington, Virginia, wrote to ask if I would be interested in becoming director of the George C. Marshall Research Center that was to be established at the Virginia Military Institute, Marshall's alma mater. Mr. Miller said that I need not send references inasmuch as my name was on lists of recommendations from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense and State

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2. Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, a volume in the *United States Army in World War II* (Washington: GPO, 1954).

Department historical offices, and other diplomatic and military historians. He also had a strong letter from my former chief in Paris, Brigadier General S. L. A. Marshall, who stressed my qualifications arising from my work in the war.

Although the offer was a surprise, news of the establishment of a Marshall Foundation had been known to me for some months. Washington friends had sent me clippings indicating that Marshall had recently given his personal papers and memorabilia to the Marshall Foundation. More important, he had agreed at last to be interviewed on his career, apparently for an authorized biography. The general had stipulated that he would leave the selection of the author to others, that the interviews must start soon, and that no payments for a book based on his papers or interviews were to come to him or his family, but must be used for research. The search committee had added that the author should have a doctorate in military or diplomatic history, have written in one of the fields, and have a proficiency in conducting interviews.

I was invited to come to Lexington in early June, on the day before the Virginia Military Institute finals, at which, incidentally, Marshall was to speak. On my arrival, I learned that my writings on Eisenhower's command and my experience in interviewing during and after the war were crucial to the committee's purposes. Marshall at the end of 1956 would be seventy-six. He had recovered slowly from pneumonia at the time of the Nobel Prize award. He now was recovered and his memory excellent, but haste was of great importance. How soon could I begin interviewing? I said that I had a hundred questions in my desk at home that I had been trying to ask General Marshall for a number of years. Members of the committee said that if I would take the job, they would hold no further interviews. I asked for an opportunity to talk with officials in Washington to determine the matter of access to official records. That was agreed, but the interviews must begin by fall.

Soon afterwards I flew to Washington where I talked to Marshall's aide, Colonel C. K. George, in Marshall's Pentagon office, and consulted officials of the National Archives and the Defense Department historian. I learned that President Eisenhower had recently renewed President Truman's order of 1953 directing the secretary of defense, secretary of state, and the general services administrator (who then administered the National Archives) to make available to the director of the Marshall Research Center official papers pertaining to General Marshall as far as possible under government regulations.

I found that Colonel George had worked closely with two other officers who had been close to Marshall as aides, Brigadier General Frank McCarthy and Major General Marshall S. Carter, in persuading the general to talk to a historian about his career. General Carter had

mentioned my name to the officials of the Marshall Foundation as an experienced interviewer. Colonel George had not only mentioned my name but when an old friend of Marshall's had asked him what he could get the general for his seventy-fifth birthday, George had suggested a tape recorder. It was that machine that I would use some months later in taping the interviews.

Shortly afterward, I went to Richmond to talk with Frank McCarthy and John C. Hagan, president of the Marshall Foundation. They pressed me to do the interviewing and stay for at least three years. I replied that I would gladly work the interviews in with my regular teaching, but that if I stayed for three years, I would have to write the biography. There was some hesitation on this score as the general had repeatedly opposed publication of a biography while he was still alive. After I was assured that I would ultimately write a biography, I agreed to come in mid-August 1956, and to begin interviews with the general as soon as he was ready to start.

Later, it was clear to me that my wartime experience in military history, my interviews with the key military commanders of World War II, and my work with army documents for ten years had been decisive in my selection. The general was aware of the extensive interviews I had done for *The Supreme Command*. Shortly after we began the interviews, he wrote President Truman that he was talking with the historian who had worked with Eisenhower and that the project seemed to be going well.

### *Taping the Interviews*

The Marshalls were on vacation at Eagle's Mere in Pennsylvania when I reported to Washington and was told that Marshall's papers were in the office allotted to him as a five-star general in the Pentagon, on the floor beneath the office of the Secretary of the Army. The general seldom used the office and suggested that I sit at his desk. A few days later, I went with Mr. Hagan and Colonel George to meet the general at his home in Leesburg.

That I had seen him get the Nobel Prize at Oslo helped break the ice and we were soon chatting easily. A few days later he came to the Pentagon, announced that I would definitely use his office, and took me to lunch at the secretary of defense's dining room. Several of his old friends, including the assistant secretary of the army and a news correspondent he had known during the war, came up to greet him and he told a little story about each one that contributed to our getting acquainted process.

He arranged for his secretary to drive me to his home at Leesburg a few days later and take notes of the interview. He seemed somewhat leery about the tape recorder and preferred the familiar dictation routine. Soon after we arrived, he announced that the World Series game, involving the Dodgers, was about to begin and that we should listen to the game before talking of World War II. I was glad to agree, for although it shortened the time for the interview, the interlude made the interview easier. A few days later there was an informal luncheon with the general and Mrs. Marshall and his secretary. We sat on the terrace in pleasant weather and he told numerous stories of earlier days in the army.

He made one more visit that fall to the Pentagon to accept the Woodrow Wilson Award in his office with Mrs. Wilson present. There was another session at Leesburg when he listed several people that I should talk with, before he said they would soon leave for his winter home at Pinehurst, North Carolina, and that I should come there for more interviews.

My first trip down was somewhat confused because Colonel George had arranged to ship down a tape recorder that I already knew how to use, and someone threw it off the train at the station, so I found it broken when I arrived. George had arranged for me to stay at Southern Pines, several miles from the Marshall home. The general sent his orderly, Master Sergeant William J. Heffner, for me the next day, and arranged for my move to Pinehurst to a hotel a short walk from his house, and offered his gift tape recorder for my use.

In a more informal atmosphere, with Sergeant Heffner to operate the tape recorder, I felt we were ready to start on detailed questions, but at once the general had problems with the microphone. He grasped it tightly, and spoke too loudly and too closely into it, creating a harsh, rasping sound. I had typed out a number of questions for him, and he clutched the sheet of paper in one hand, which caused it to rattle into the microphone, and began, "You have asked me" so and so, and then added, "In reply to question one," so and so. My solution to this problem was to buy a more sensitive microphone that would pick up his voice from anywhere in the room and to set it well out of his reach. I read the questions while Sergeant Heffner watched the machine. The general began to relax.

This new arrangement did have some unexpected results. The sensitive microphone picked up telephone conversations in the kitchen and hearty greetings from neighbors unaware of the microphone. Later, when he was answering my typed questions when I was not present, I heard, on replaying the reel, his sudden warning, "Johnny, don't touch that mike!" followed by a suggestion that Johnny go to the kitchen



where Mrs. Marshall would give him an orange. Then he added, "Katherine, take this cannibal and feed him!"

When I asked him who might be this Johnny who was elbowing his way into history, Marshall explained on tape that Johnny was a youngster who had been photographed with him on his seventy-fifth birthday. This photograph had been widely printed in the press, to Johnny's satisfaction, and he often popped in to ask, "General, what countries are we in today?" Sometimes a visitor would be asked to supply a name that was momentarily evasive. One day he was searching for the name of Vladivostok and asked a lady who had called to help him think of it.

After several sessions, when I had asked some personal questions, he said that he felt as if I had him on a dissecting table. I told him that biographers were supposed to seek such details about their subjects, adding, "If you decline to answer me, the Freudians will get you." My reply amused him, but he was never completely at ease answering such questions. As a result, neither was I in asking them.

I felt encouraged one cold day when I walked up to his house, bundled up in hat, scarf, gloves, and overcoat, and he said with a grin, "You look just like John Foster Dulles coming up there." Aware that they had not always agreed, I asked, "Is that good?" Dulles had recently been reported as recovering from cancer. Marshall replied, "You have to admire a man who has beaten a thing like that." (I thought of this exchange in 1959 when Dulles, suffering a recurrence of cancer, was in the special suite in Walter Reed Hospital usually reserved for the president, and Marshall, after a stroke at Pinehurst, was brought to the hospital. Dulles urged that Marshall should have the Presidential Suite, knowing that Eisenhower had often made it available to the general. Marshall declined the offer and stayed in another room on the same wing, where he lay for several months after Dulles died.)

We had several interviews before the general admitted to me that sometimes lately he had difficulty walking. However, he was aware that the Foundation was paying my expenses while I was there to interview him, and he was determined to see me every day I was there. One day he seemed unusually unwell and his answers were vague. He said, "I don't remember" to question after question. At last he said he hoped that people wouldn't hear those answers and conclude his mind was gone. He feared it would cast doubt on the value of sessions when his thoughts had been very clear.

Near Thanksgiving, when I told him I was returning to Washington for the holidays, he said he would be glad of a rest and that perhaps we should wait until he came back to Leesburg in the spring to continue. I did not want to risk the chance of never continuing, and suggested that I could mail him questions, and that on his good days Sergeant Heffner

could set up the machine and read my questions to him. This arrangement worked extremely well.

Fortunately, we had covered the war period, but I had recorded nothing on his boyhood, the years at V.M.I., and his early years in the army, particularly World War I. I had no specific questions on his earlier years and sent questions that were general, about his home and its surrounding area, boyhood games, and schoolboy escapades that encouraged semi-stream-of-consciousness type of recollections. He enjoyed this part of my "interviews" more than all the others, and roamed through memories of his boyhood with delight, recalling the natural beauty of the countryside and the way growing industrialization had destroyed it.

I asked him about books, uncertain of what he had read. I had read books owned by my grandfather, who was Marshall's senior by thirteen years, and those of my father, who was nine years younger, and hoped that somewhere in between I would catch a book that Marshall had liked. Both he and my grandfather had liked Dickens. I mentioned books by G. A. Henty that my father had read. The general said that all he knew of Hannibal had come from Henty's volume, *The Young Carthaginian*.

When I was inspired to ask about Conan Doyle's historical novels, he gave me a full outline of *The Refugees*, and spoke with great relish of *Sir Nigel*, which I had discovered in high school. He told me, again by tape recorder, that he had visited Sir Nigel country on his second honeymoon with his first wife in 1910. Twice he told me of sitting next to the Queen Mother at the Coronation of Elizabeth II festivities in 1953, and of delight in finding that they both had loved *Sir Nigel*.

On his years at V.M.I. the tapes are splendid. I had seen yearbooks covering his years in Lexington and read carefully the columns of the local newspaper for that period, and my questions paid dividends in his vivid stories.

He was voluble and precise in discussing World War I. I learned from his files that at the close of the First World War, he had written a short volume about his experiences. He had left the book with a publisher but reclaimed it years later when the publisher suggested that it would be a good time to publish it. Marshall said he had left instructions that the manuscript be destroyed, and after his death, Mrs. Marshall told me that she had complied. Some years after his death, his step-daughter found a carbon that he had given her before World War II. She had it published.<sup>3</sup> When I read it, I realized how sharp was his memory

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3. George C. Marshall, *Memoirs of My Services in the World War, 1917-1918*, Foreword and notes by James J. Collins, Jr. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976).

in recalling on tape many of the highlights of this long-ago written account.

Later I was sorry that I had not interviewed friends at Uniontown nor had visited the areas of his early home before I sent my questions. His recollections furnished good questions to ask his contemporaries. I discovered that his family had subscribed to the local weekly, *The Genius of Liberty*, and I was able to buy microfilms of the paper for the years that the Marshalls had lived in Uniontown until after Marshall left V.M.I. It provided precise dates for stories he had told. When his sister, Marie, several years older, challenged one or two stories I had repeated to her from his tape recordings, she said that it could not be right because it happened before he was born. She was right, but newspaper files proved that he must have recalled correctly stories he heard from his parents. His undated accounts of the first electric lights in Uniontown, his first conversation on a telephone, a public hanging he had seen as a boy, and a period when there were outlaws in the mountains were confirmed in contemporary accounts.

His last taped interview was on April 11, 1957, about the close of World War I. He promised to talk with me further in May when he came north, but he did not feel up to it. When he went to Pinehurst that fall, his health had deteriorated. He wrote me from time to time, but not to suggest further interviews. I continued to send him questions, and he had many on the China mission and other postwar activities, when he had a stroke early in 1959. Even after coming to Walter Reed, he rallied for a time, enough to talk with an old friend about his early days in the army. General Charles Herron phoned to suggest that I come and tape their conversation. Clearly, this was out of the question but I encouraged General Herron to write out Marshall's story, a tale of Christmas spent at Fort Logan Roots in Arkansas.

Technically, my sessions with Marshall did not cover in any detail the postwar period of his career. Early on I had feared that the general's stamina might not last, or that a stroke, which defeats historians almost as much as death, might occur. When I could, I used points raised in discussing World War II to lead into aspects of postwar developments. When speaking of Stilwell's problems with Chiang Kai-shek, I led the general into talk of his own experiences during the China Mission and thus covered much of that story. His quip about my looking like John Foster Dulles culminated in a lengthy discussion of the Marshall Plan. Unfortunately, there was never a chance to talk about the Korean War or the dismissal of MacArthur.

His aide, Colonel George, gave me lengthy descriptions about the general's participation in the Coronation ceremonies, and I read the long letter Marshall wrote former President Truman detailing these experiences. George again furnished copious details on Marshall's trip

to Oslo to get the Nobel Prize for Peace, and I was able to add my own observations from my attendance at that event.

A number of letters written regularly by Colonel Marshall S. Carter, who went with Marshall to Moscow in 1947, to his wife and parents, full of shrewd observation and detail, and interviews with Carter and George and with Colonel Vernon Walters, translator for Marshall at the Bogotá and Rio conferences and at the U.N. General Assembly meetings in Paris, enabled me to round out many gaps in Marshall's postwar career, as did long interviews with Robert A. Lovett, who had worked with Marshall in the War Department from 1940-45, and then as under secretary of state, 1947-49, and finally as deputy secretary of defense, 1950-51.

One of my efforts with Marshall failed signally. I asked him to evaluate the services of a number of American and foreign political and military leaders that he had known. He refused to do this, declaring that he did not want people searching through the books to see who he had insulted on such and such a page. However, he could not always keep his voice neutral in tone when discussing some persons with whom he had differed. He would avoid criticism of them, but a careful listening to his voice revealed his feeling despite his care in choosing his words.

Awareness of this fact led me to disagree with my friend, Louis Starr, head of the Columbia Oral History Project and one of the founders of the Oral History Association. Starr held that when an interviewee had read the transcript of his oral statements and corrected or changed it, the tape of the statement should then be destroyed because it was no longer correct. I argued that the original tape should no more be destroyed than memoirs later corrected by an author. The initial tape may have its own revelations, tonal nuances which the most careful transcript can not capture. I believe Starr and many of his supporters later dropped this contention.

Early in our sessions, the general's answers revealed his problem in remembering names. After casting about for the right version, he explained that he had long suffered from a mental block on certain names that he knew quite well. One tape shows his effort to make clear to me that he did know the man he was talking about. He could not recall the name of the air force commander, Hoyt Vandenberg. He explained patiently that he was talking of a youngish Air Force officer who had risen to high rank, and mentioned several commands that he had held, and that he had the same name as a famous relative who was a senator, a leading senator who went with him to South America and was extremely helpful on the European Recovery Program. This was taped on a reel made when I was not present, and I think it was not until the next day that he remembered the correct name.

He was careful to avoid any appearance of claiming too much credit for proposals, of being mainly responsible for certain developments. He would often protest that a statement made him look as if he thought of the thing under discussion, or that he was all-knowing, when it was because he was chief of staff he had to make the decision. Sometimes when I asked him for greater elaboration of some proposal, he would answer that he really did not know all the thinking back of it; it was something he got from so-and-so. Infrequently he would mention a compliment he had received from a colleague, and it was clear that while trying to remain modest, he was still deeply pleased.

I sometimes tried to entice him into personal comments about a contemporary by quoting something the individual had written about him. When I mentioned one or two sharp remarks about him that Sir Arthur Bryant had cited from Field Marshal Alanbrooke, he would not rise to the bait but merely replied, "Is that what they say now? After all it helps to sell the book." Then he added that someone had told him that Alanbrooke needed the money. He also noted that Alanbrooke must not have been serious about his sharper barbs because he had sent Marshall a copy of the book in which he had written a generous inscription.

His talks with Winston Churchill led to fascinating accounts. He told of a plane trip with the prime minister in May 1943, from Washington to Algiers. Marshall wanted to avoid debate on certain proposals being made in Washington until he had a chance to talk with Eisenhower. To keep Churchill off the subject, he used a book he had been reading, Macaulay's account of the trial of Warren Hastings. Marshall asked Churchill to explain the process of the writ of attainder, which he had come upon in the book. Churchill embarked on a lengthy commentary which Marshall thought could have been published exactly as he spoke it.

A question about the flight of Rudolf Hess to the United Kingdom kept Churchill expounding on that subject for some time. Then Marshall grabbed at the topic of Edward VIII's marriage to Mrs. Simpson, as he remembered that Churchill had been a strong supporter of the king, and the prime minister eagerly waded into that controversy and talked until the plane was landing.

Marshall was much taken with Churchill's oratory, and recalled that he delivered his rolling thunder while grasping his lapels, and how a "spit curl hung down" as the old lion pleaded for American support for an operation against Rhodes. Churchill's persistence on that subject finally angered Marshall and he said, "Forgive me, but no American soldier is going to die on that goddam beach." However, he left no doubt of his respect for Churchill's eloquence. There was a time, he

said, when Churchill had defended England almost solely by the force of his eloquence. He thought the other great speaker of his day was Woodrow Wilson, although his English was too perfect. Churchill moved people.

These personal word pictures of great figures he had known added life to some of my later pages, and some were insights I would have found nowhere else. Often the book's accuracy gained greatly from a single sentence of clarification. For instance, I mentioned that an early biographer of General Eisenhower had stated that Marshall first met the younger officer in Panama in 1924 when he and the first Mrs. Marshall had stopped to visit his old friend Fox Connor in the Canal Zone while on their way to China. "Ike" was Conner's aide at the time and the biographer assumed that Marshall would have met him. Marshall said to me, "I don't know where he (Eisenhower) was but I did not meet him until later." When I asked General Eisenhower about the story, he explained that he and Marshall could not have met then because he and Mrs. Eisenhower were on temporary leave at her home in Colorado.

Marshall and Eisenhower agreed that they had first met in General Pershing's office in the old State-War-Navy Building, where Eisenhower was working with Pershing on the American Battle Monuments Commission. Pershing was writing his memoirs during this period, and both Marshall and Eisenhower recalled that they differed over how he should treat the final phases of World War I. Eisenhower felt that Pershing should put more drama and color in that section rather than continue the drab, diary-like form he had used in the earlier part of the book. Marshall, who was in Washington at the time to review pages of Pershing's manuscript, believed that his old commander should continue the format he had used earlier. This rather flinty preference for fact over form never lessened in Marshall.

It was in these interviews that I got many clues to key papers, important assistants, political problems, and political and military procedures. I cherished the occasions when, after an hour of taping fairly routine events, Marshall would suddenly say, "Turn that damn thing off and I'll let you in on something." Usually the "something" was not some amazing revelation but some small matter or bit of byplay that he was not certain should be published.

Thus, after he had talked of the debates in 1942 over whether there should be a buildup that year for the cross-Channel attack or the launching of an invasion of North Africa, he mentioned the final discussion with President Roosevelt. When he had acceded to the president's demand for an attack in North Africa, the president raised his hands in a gesture of supplication, which Marshall demonstrated to me, and said, "Please make it before the election!" The general replied that

the forces could not be ready until a few days after the election, and was pleased when Roosevelt made no effort to change that decision. Not so with Stephen Early, the president's press secretary, who stormed at Marshall a few days later, "You almost lost us control of Congress by the delay!" (The Democrat majority in the House had fallen to twelve.)

When Marshall talked of the great spirit of cooperation he developed with Sir John Dill, head of the British Mission to the United States, 1942-44, he said that perhaps I should omit his account of how Dill often brought him, unofficially, letters from Churchill to Roosevelt, or to Dill, for formal delivery to the U.S. Chiefs of Staff, and the two would discuss the best reply to be returned. Marshall feared that the British might think poorly of Dill if they knew of this practice. I persuaded him to allow me to use my judgment about printing his account after I had checked with Lady Dill. She asked me to put the story into print because it showed most clearly how the Marshall-Dill friendship had aided the war effort.

Another time, as we talked of Churchill, Marshall mentioned with disapproval the prime minister's reference to the British common soldiers as "the dull mass," and suggested I omit the term from my books because he felt it would reflect poorly on Churchill and cause resentment. I decided I had been released from his stricture when Lord Moran, Churchill's private physician, recalled in his memoirs that Churchill had used the term in talking to Marshall.

The Marshall interviews and papers reveal his lively, intelligent curiosity. He was always asking about something that he had observed or wondered about. Occasionally he put me on the spot by his use of a term or expression followed by "I never did know the proper use of that word. Do you know its correct meaning?" When mentioning some measure he had ordered to make life for troops in the field more pleasant, he would want to know if I as a soldier in the field had benefitted from this effort.

Anecdotes surfacing during a description of his experiences as a young officer show a compassion and an understanding of military life that I might otherwise have missed. His tales of a stormy voyage from Manila to Mindoro, of the ravages of a cholera epidemic, of dealing with panic-stricken troops crossing a crocodile infested stream, are balanced by later stories of how he encouraged wives on Soapsuds Row to spruce up their houses.

In dealing with men in the Civilian Conservation Corps, under his supervision in Washington and Oregon in the mid-thirties, he recognized the problems of morale among men from urban areas set out in camps in isolated country. He directed that warehouses or other similar structures near any of the camps be converted into recreation centers where

men could find a brief change from camp regimentation. He said he always opposed the false economy of saving money on camps by omitting paint. If the shelters were to be permanent, he wanted a bit of color.

Readers of these interviews will see what was gained from the talks and realize my disappointment that we could not have completed the interviews in depth. I would have profited greatly if I could have managed to get more information on some aspects of the later parts of the general's career. But I gained valuable insights into his thinking from the answers he did give.

I asked both General Marshall and Admiral Stark if they had conspired with Roosevelt or even talked to him on the night before Pearl Harbor. They were startled at my presumption until I explained that I did not want later historians to ask why I had failed to ask that question. Later, in Marshall's files, I discovered that Hanson Baldwin had written to ask both Marshall and Stark the same question and found that they had answered him much the same way as they did me.

I am delighted that the Marshall Foundation has chosen to collect these interviews, both taped and from notes, together with my questions for those who may want to write further about Marshall. I hope that students of oral history may find some value in the way I proceeded and will learn from my errors and mistakes. The lessons I learned about the techniques of interviewing as a combat historian and as a military historian gathering material for *The Supreme Command* went into these interviews with General Marshall.

I was able to lay the groundwork for cooperation by several visits to the general in his home and in his Pentagon office. I gained enormously from frequent interviews with and letters from his aide from 1947 until his death, C. J. George; with Frank McCarthy, who served with Marshall from 1941-45; and Marshall S. Carter, who was military assistant and military aide during the China mission, and during Marshall's terms as secretary of state and secretary of defense.

Some 175 other interviews with military and political associates of the general in the United States and abroad added their bits to the story. Mrs. Marshall told me frankly at the beginning of the project that she had opposed the interviews because she feared the drain on the general's strength and peace of mind. But in numerous interviews with her after the general's death, I won her complete support.

As to the validity of the interviews, I can only add the general's own warning that he was working without papers and after a number of things had happened and a number of years had passed. As to his willingness to speak, I offer statements he made to a number of his former associates who asked him if they should speak freely to me. He



told them that he had given frank and open answers to my questions, and that whatever they told me was likely to appear in print. To me he said, "I do not ask you to write one way or another. You will succeed if you remember to deal with our stories with the understanding of what we knew at the time, what we had to do with, and what we attempted to do in a limited time." I never felt that the general was doubtful of the result.

As a historian who has dealt for some years with oral history, I remind readers of these interviews that oral testimony must submit to the same proofs as written history—must be tested against documents and the memories of other men.

The general one day asked me frankly how I could be certain that he was telling the truth. I replied that scattered through my questions were loaded ones to which I already had answers from his own papers. He commented, laconically, "That's pretty good."

By this time, the general and I had worked well enough together so that he realized that my test had not been to catch him in errors but to serve as evidence of the accuracy of his memory. Throughout the interviews he strove to convince me of the care with which he framed his replies. Often he would say, "This is about right" or "I'm sure this is correct" and tell me why he was certain. On several occasions he told me of an incident in considerable detail and gave me the wrong date, but almost always a careful check with him or his papers would indicate that his time sequence was correct.

I believe these interviews permitted me to write with a certainty that I could not have achieved from a study of documents alone. I am sure that I profited from glimpses into the way he thought and made decisions, and that these talks with him gave me a closer understanding of Marshall the human being than I could otherwise have gained.



*Forrest C. Pogue*