MARSHALL MYTHS AND LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS

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George C. Marshall

“A lean, tall, straight figure whose cold blue and seldom smiling eyes could make a man feel superfluous.”
General Marshall – “A Dual Personality”

Remembering George Marshall: A Conversation with COL Merrill Pasco (VMI ‘37) (UVA Law ‘40)

MARSHALL LEGACY SERIES: VISIONARY IN WAR AND IN PEACE
Frequently Asked Questions

- General Marshall’s

  - “black book:” myth or real?

  - “packing” of the Chief of Staff’s office with VMI grads?
Frequently Asked Questions

- What experiences in World War I shaped his decision-making in World War II?
- What concerns influenced the U.S. strategy in World War II?
- What was his relationship with the press?
Frequently Asked Questions

Why ...

... did General Marshall not write his WW II memoirs?

... hasn’t there been a movie about General Marshall?
General Marshall’s

- Political ambitions
- Selflessness
- Speaking “truth to power”
- Relationship with Generals MacArthur and Patton
On the Cover of *Time* Magazine

- **July 1940**
- **October 1942**
- **January 1944**
  - Man of the Year - 1943
- **March 1946**
- **March 1947**
- **January 1948**
  - Man of the Year - 1947
Time Covers

- “… cool and unhurried… a thorough going democrat.”

- “No other general has had to wage war on the total global scale. God help General Marshall.”
Man of the Year 1943

“The American people do not, as a rule, like or trust the military but the people have learned why they

“The indispensable man.”

than any military man since

George Washington: he is a civis Americanus.”
“An American to whom freedom owes an enduring debt of gratitude, a soldier and statesman whose ability and character brook only one comparison in the history of this nation.”
Question

- Who were the other two Americans who served as U.S. Army officers – not career officers -- who were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize?
Theodore Roosevelt - 1906

Awarded the Peace Prize for negotiating the peace in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904-5.
Charles G. Dawes - 1925

Charles Dawes received the Peace Prize for 1925 for his contributions (Dawes Plan) to the resolution of the reparations crisis that threatened the stability of post-World War 1 Europe.
Dawes and Marshall – An Enduring Friendship

Marshall “kept in touch with Dawes for the rest of his life, and at their last meeting, rode with him in the funeral procession for their mutual friend, General Pershing.”

George C. Marshall: Education of a General 1880-1939

General Charles G. Dawes
AEF’s General Purchasing Agent in Europe

Charles G. Dawes
Chairman of Allied Reparation Commission (Dawes Plan)
General Marshall & Political Office

Did General Marshall ever consider running for political office?
A Democrat or a Republican?

- “I have never voted.”
- “My father was a democrat, my mother a republican, and I am an Episcopalian.”
“Chief” Roller to General Marshall

“You have personality, intellect, and courage. You are the type of man that workers and thinkers would want for President of our country.”

General Marshall to Roller

“Putting such an idea into a man’s head is the first step toward destroying his usefulness.”

Post War - 1947

“I will never become involved in political matters and I cannot be considered a candidate for political office.”

Stanford, Neal. (1947, January 21). The Secretary’s Statement at Union Station. Christian Science Monitor.
Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas to General Marshall

General Marshall’s Response

“I am honored that he should think of me qualified and worthy to succeed him.”

Letter to Justice Douglas; December 24, 1954

“General Lejeune of the Marine Corps, who commanded the second division, arranged for me to command the Twenty-third Infantry.”
“Not being my own master and having been directed by General Pershing, I would not go to the Twenty-third Infantry but would report as Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the First Army.”
General John A. Lejeune USMC

- Commanding General U.S. Army's Second Infantry Division (July 1918 – August 1919)
- 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps (1920 -1929)
- 5th Superintendent of VM (1929 -1937)
Question

- How many divisions were combat-ready when the American Expeditionary Force arrived in France in 1917?
Lesson Learned: Words and their Meaning

“Seligman turned to me and said, ‘It is understood that 'en principe' no truck for baggage will be furnished.’”

en principe

“I replied, ‘Yes,’ and, unknowingly, eliminated not one truck but thirty-two trucks ‘en principe’ from the train the French were furnishing us.”
World War I Casualties – St. Mihiel

“If we suffered that many casualties, the American people, not accustomed to such huge payments in human life, would have seized upon it as a basis for condemning our own Commander in Chief.”
World War 1 Casualties - Meuse-Argonne

U.S. World War 1 Casualties

200 Days of Combat

53,402 Battle Deaths

Congressional Research Service Report RL32492
Sworn in as Army Chief of Staff

“Conscious that any military display could be interpreted as showing favor for U.S. intervention in Europe, Marshall sought to avoid upsetting the American public.”
Civilian Clothes?

“I didn’t want to antagonize the public and the Congress with the easily aroused feelings toward the military that always existed.”
Preparedness for War in 1939

How many complete U. S. Army infantry divisions could be put into the field in 1939?

...and 5 brigades in various stages of completion; and only a few special units available — medium artillery, tanks, signal corps, engineers, medical troops, etc.
World War II Readiness

Louisiana Maneuvers 1940 - Horse cavalry with M3 light tank

German Panzer Corps in Poland 1939
In 1947 when General Marshall prepared to attend the foreign ministers conference in Moscow, how many divisions were available to support U.S. foreign policy?

“We had four regiments of active infantry in the entire United States.”

See It Now; Edward R. Murrow

The Army Almanac; A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 1950.
Factors of Greatest Concern to General Marshall in WW II

- 4. The Pacific
- 3. Expense
- 2. Duration
- 1. Casualties

America Announces 44,143 Casualties

WASHINGTON—The Office of War Information has announced the first official list of casualties suffered by the American armed forces as 44,143, adding that most of the number listed were participants in the Philippine debacle. Majority of those listed as missing are believed to be prisoners of the Japanese.

The totals released do not include the heavy casualties among the Philippine Commonwealth army nor the men definitely known to be prisoners of war. They are divided among three branches of service as follows:

- Army—902 killed; 1,413 wounded; 17,452 missing.
- Navy—3,420 killed; 1,051 wounded; 7,672 missing.
- Philippine Scouts—479 killed; 754 wounded; 11,000 missing.
Keeping the President Aware

U.S. Military Personnel Serving and Casualties

(December 1, 1941, through December 31, 1946)

- Total Number Serving - 16,112,566
- Total Deaths - 405,399
- Battle Deaths - 291,557

American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics; Congressional Research Service
General Marshall’s Thinking

“We had to go brutally fast in Europe. We could not indulge in a Seven Years’ War. A king can perhaps do that, but you cannot have such a protracted struggle in a democracy in the face of mounting casualties.”

Interview with General Marshall, July 25, 1949
“Personally and aside from all logistic, tactical, or strategical implications, I would be loathe to hazard American lives for purely political reasons.”
American Casualties: Speaking Truth to Power

- Winston Churchill – 1943 – Invasion of the Island of Rhodes
  - “God forbid, if I should try to dictate, but not one American is going to die on that goddamned beach.”

Marshall’s “Black Book”

“Eisenhower won a favorable entry in Marshall’s Black Book and his name was listed with those of Bradley, Hodges, and Clark.”
Marshall’s “Black Book”

“Larry Bland, the editor of Marshall Papers, stated, Forrest Pogue, Marshall’s biographer, told the editors of the Marshall Papers that the General had not kept a ‘little black book’ that listed individual and their capabilities, and that Pogue was sorry he repeated the myth.”

Cited in D.M. Giangreco; Hell to Pay: Operation DOWNFALL and the Invasion of Japan, 1945-1947
Wait - look what we found!
Call Mark Stoler!
Call Brad Coleman!
Call the NYT and the WAPO!
General Marshall’s Memory

“Then he answers them in order. The fact is he has drilled himself in keeping pertinent facts in his mind.”
“As far as I am concerned the press is one of my best inspector generals.”

“I was not briefed daily on editorial opinion ... if I got too involved in it, I lost my perspective about the war.”
The Press and the Post War

“God bless democracy! I approve of it highly but suffer from it extremely.”

“This incidentally is not for quotation.”

A Selfless Man

“Never did General Marshall think about himself.”

President Harry S. Truman

Was General Marshall ambitious?

Letter to General Pershing

“Two or three BG vacancies now exist. I want one of them. As I will soon be 54, I must get started if I am going anywhere in the Army.”

To General John J. Pershing: November 19, 1934
From The White House to the Sec. of War
The Five-Star Rank – A Navy Initiative

General Marshall to Admiral King

“I do not think it would be wise to submit such a proposal. It would involve the implication that we were are proposing something for our own personal advancement.”

The Papers of George C. Marshall; Vol. 3
Furthermore,

- “I didn’t want any promotion at all. I didn’t need it.”
- “I wanted to go to congress with no personal ambition.”
Selection of Supreme Allied Commander

Quebec Conference August 1943

Roosevelt and Churchill agree that General Marshall should command Operation Overlord.

Churchill, Winston S. The Second World War: Closing the Ring
Admiral Leahy Recalls

“Never once while working on this cable, in our personal conversations, or discussion in the Joint Chiefs of Staff about supreme command did he utter one word that would indicate his desires.”

Leahy, Fleet Admiral William. I Was There.
FDR – The Decision

Cairo Conference November 1943

General Marshall meets with President who asks, “What I wanted to do. Evidently it was left up to me.”

George C. Marshall: Interview and Reminiscences
General Marshall’s Response

“I repeated that I wanted him to act in whatever way he felt was to the best interests of the country … not in any way to consider [my] feelings.”

Ibid
The President’s Response

“Well, I didn’t feel that I could sleep at ease if you were not in Washington.”

McCarthy, Frank. George C. Marshall Research Library Newsletter; March 1966
The immediate appointment of General Eisenhower to command of the Overlord operation has been decided upon.

Roosevelt
“Dear Eisenhower. I thought you might like to have this as a memento. It was written very hurriedly by me as the final meeting broke up yesterday, the president sighing it immediately.”

GCM
Was General Marshall Disappointed?

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson stated,

“I know what was the deepest ambition in his heart and it was to command the invasion of France.”
Was General Marshall Disappointed?

- General Marshall’s Staff
  Secretary Colonel Frank McCarthy (VMI ‘33) said,
  "I believe this was the greatest disappointment of his life."

McCarthy, Frank. George C. Marshall Research Library Newsletter; March 1966
COL Frank McCarthy (VMI ‘33)

- Frank McCarthy produced the movie:
General Marshall’s Memoirs of World War II

- If General Marshall wrote his memoirs of World War I, why didn’t he write his memoirs of World War II as did Bradley, Churchill, and Eisenhower?
General Marshall and His Memoirs

- General Marshall declined an offer of $1 million to write an “intimate book.”

  - “Unless you tell everything in the context of the time it would be of no value historically.”

  - [Also,] “there are too many people still alive who would be hurt.”

Richmond Times-Dispatch; May 7, 1955
“There is another factor involved. One adverse item will be seized upon ... that literally ... blackens the whole. And yet that adverse item may be most important historically, showing the difficulties in preparing for war in a democracy.”

General Marshall to Virginius Dabney, Editor Richmond Times-Dispatch; May 12, 1955
“I interpose no objection, though this [script] ... omits the items that I am proud of: .....
First in a Class of 38

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Honor and Distinguished Graduates:

- Marshall, C.C. Jr., 2d Lt. 30"Inf.
- Kerth, W.C., Capt. 23d Inf.
- Rhodes, C.D., Capt. 6" Cav.
- Beebe, R.E., 2d Lt. 29" Inf.
- Hodges, H.L., 2d Lt. 1" Cav.

GeneralMerit
And a Marshall Movie?

“He didn’t go around slapping soldiers, packing ivory-handled pistols, or wearing a non-regulation cap and smoking an oversized corncob pipe.”
To whom was COL McCarthy referring?
Marshall and MacArthur

“In regard to my being hostile to General MacArthur, it is damn nonsense.”

“I don’t think I ever said an adverse word about General MacArthur in front of the staff, though he was very difficult – very, very difficult.”
Marshall and MacArthur
“… not to my friend, General Patton.”

“I am speaking as the Chief of Staff to General Patton and not to my friend, General Patton.”

“You encouraged the colonel and you destroyed him.”

“I will not promote him. Never mention this to me again.”
The Knutsford Incident

- In an off-the-record speech, Patton mentioned,
  - “It is the evident destiny of the British and Americans and, of course, the Russians to rule the world.”
From Eisenhower to General Marshall

- “Patton has broken out again.”
- “He is unable to use reasonably good sense.”
- “There arises doubts of retaining him in high command despite his capacity in battle leadership.”

S 50908, 29th April 1944 from Eisenhower to General Marshall for Eyes Only
“... unmistakable fact that Patton is the only army commander who has experience fighting Rommel and in landing operations.”

Office Chief of Staff (29 April 1944) to SHAEF
From Eisenhower to Patton

“If you are again guilty of any indiscretion in speech or action I will relieve you instantly from command.”

Eisenhower, Dwight D. Letter to Lieutenant General George S. Patton. 29 April 1944
Patton’s Diary Entry

- “My final thought is that I am destined to achieve some great thing, ... but this last incident was so trivial ... that it is not ... an accident but the work of God.”

- “His will be done.”
“Tell him from me direct not to smirch a magnificent job by comments of any kind.”

“Also, keep out of the camera lens as much as possible.”

To General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Radio No. WAR-80880; August 15, 1944
The Concerns of the Congress

- As reported in the U.S. Press
  - "The English and American peoples ... undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world."

- The crux of the matter – "rule of the world"
  - Congressman Sol Bloom (NY) - "Let God rule the world."
  - Senator Ellison D. Smith (SC) - "I think it's best for us to rule ourselves."

Blumenson, Martin. The Patton Papers: 1940-1945
Like the American people ...

- General Marshall had “only one interest.”
- “Win the damned war as quick as he can, with the fewest lives lost and money expended, and get down to Leesburg and enjoy life.”

Time Magazine, January 3, 1944.
VMI Graduates on the War Dept. General Staff

- In the war, VMI graduates held the:
  - Chief of Staff
  - Deputy Chiefs of Staff
  - Secretaries of the General Staff
  - Division commanders and Corps commanders
Did General Marshall select them?

“As a matter of fact, I did not know one of these men and I didn’t bring any of them into the War Department, or the Deputy Chiefs of Staff’s job, or the Secretary’s job.”

Gioia, Philip, When “The Institute was Heard From” in World War II: The Journal of Military History, October 2014.
A “very anxious” General Marshall

“The thing got so numerous with VMI men, that I called the President of the Alumni Association and requested for them not to make a point of it.”
Tribute to General Marshall (civis Americanus)

- “I have never known anyone who seemed so surely to breathe the democratic American spirit.”
- “The destiny of America at the most critical time of its existence has been in the hands of a great and good citizen.”

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson
Tribute to General Marshall

“It was, indeed, an act of God that made him chief adviser to the President and head of the State Department in 1947.”

Secretary of State Dean Acheson
Tributes to General Marshall

“General Marshall was the organizer of victory. Succeeding generations must not be allowed to forget his achievements.”

Prime Minister Winston Churchill
A Worldwide Tribute

"The self-effacing Marshall possessed such intense respect worldwide that when he entered Westminster Abbey, unannounced, to take his seat at the coronation of young Elizabeth II, the entire congregation arose."

Weintraub, Stanley; 15 Stars: Eisenhower, MacArthur, Marshall: Three Generals Who Saved the American Century
“No soldier since Washington has had his Roman virtues, and so significantly shaped a peace.”

Morrow, Lance. SMITHSONIAN Magazine, August 1997
Informing the World

# of independent states: 195
https://www.state.gov/s/inr/rls/4250.htm
For more information on General Marshall

www.marshallfoundation.org

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