

Notes 27N, Copy 2

Mr. Taylor Carter

Jefferson Hotel

St. Louis, Missouri

April 23, 1958

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Interview with Mr. Taylor Carter, classmate of Gen Marshall, Jefferson Hotel, St. Louis, April 23, 1958, by F C Pogue.

I attended VMI from 1897-1901; was an assistant professor there two years. Later took PhD in physics at Johns Hopkins. Didn't want to teach so went into business.

VMI was a school; we were very close together. I was adjutant the last year. Roller was QM. We sat with Marshall. I was third in class; Roller was fifth. I saw a lot of Marshall that year. There was nothing about negative. Everyone knew where he stood.

Marshall's outstanding characteristic--he always knew what he wanted. He always had an objective and worked towards it. George had the highest military office in every class. Best soldier I have ever seen. He developed fast after leaving VMI. Went to the Philippines and made a place for himself.

Rats don't know each other well. Keep close to their roommates. I didn't know George too well the first year. Was close to him the last year. He was forceful. I don't think he cared for high scholastic honors or he would have done more in that line. He still graduated in the upper part of his class. He was an all southern tackle. However was not a gymnast.

I never had the idea that he was hard to know. He was always dignified. I think he was a very modest man. Conscientious in his work. I remember when he was head of Red Cross he came through here and I met him at the Country Club (first time I had seen him since VMI). I said I had followed his career and that all his friends were pleased with his great success. He said it hadn't all been success by a long shot.

I always thought he made a mistake in going to China. I also thought he made a mistake in not going on in Europe instead of letting Russia have Vienna and Prague and Berlin.

Despite my views, I think Marshall was so honest and sincere that no one can doubt his straightness.

At the mess he was normal and friendly. Was forceful in dealing with cadets. Good on discipline.

First wife was a fine pianist.

Spoke of Marshall and MacArthur; said Marshall made clear he viewed MacArthur as great success as leader in army.

Marshall told me: "Roosevelt didn't like me."

We shifted back to VMI in 1897-1901. Mathematics very good. Prof of Math--E. N. Nichols, later supt. Wrote book on analytical geometry. History, English and basic things not strong. Physics man--Francis Mallory, a Johns Hopkins man, studied under Rowland, fine teacher. We lacked laboratory work; had no time for it nor lab. Engineering and languages not good. Math and physics good enough that I did not feel handicapped when I went to Johns Hopkins.

VMI main job was turning out disciplined leaders. Method of teaching good. Sent each man to the board and made him think and talk on his feet.

Marshall was strong on his knowledge of military things. He spoke well and clearly; way above average scholastically. Thinks Marshall would have been picked out as a man likely to succeed. He was a man with force and determination. How much he studied and had to work I don't know, but there was never any question of his getting through. However, it would have been hard to predict that we would end as Chief of Staff. I think he was not a great student. But he had a good, quick mind. His mind probably developed most afterwards. I saw a man named Locke who knew Marshall at VMI and later in the Army. He said Marshall was the finest officer in the US Army. Marshall was honest with himself, sincere, no blow-all. Never had a swelled head.

Marshall was very military; all duty. Splendid looking soldier. No one thought of taking liberties with him. Looked like a soldier. Gear always in fine shape. He was of great value to his office. Naturally was proud of his achievements. Nicholson said he was pleased of a photo which showed Marshall showing off his chevrons as first corporal.

Speaking of poor teaching in some subjects at VMI, I think a man can learn everywhere. Generally speaking their method of instruction was good.

Marshall had basically a strong and good mind. When he got into his vocation he was interested in developing it to the utmost. Then he grew and made best use of his mind.

When I first heard of Marshall I had no idea he was connected with the Marshalls of Virginia; assumed he was a Yankee.

Recalls the hazing--bayonet story of Marshall. Not as bad on hazing then as later.

Scott Shipp was heavy on the military side. Had charge of corps at New Market.

It was Marshall's Job to take the corps to mess hall. He would turn corps over to me and I would read the orders. VMI was a first class military school, comparable to West Point. Tradition very strong. They lacked many things you have in a modern university. Lacked time for lab work and the like. But the things they did, they did well. (I think I was the only PHD from my class. No handicapped at Johns Hopkins. I went with Union Electric Power Co. My work in line of industrial engineering, developing new uses of electrical power for industrial purposes).

I think VMI made an all-round man. Don't want to see them drop their discipline and training for just academic distinction.

Pity you didn't know Nicholson and Peyton. He stayed close to them, Nicholson had him address the American Press Association; he made a great hit; talked of Churchill. Peyton called

Marshall just before he died. Marshall said he thought Peyton knew he was going to die. I believe he had started to see Marshall when he had his heart attack.

We had an honor system, but I never knew a case of cheating to come up. Does not recall a case of drumming out. We didn't handle the honor court. Rigid rule against drinking. Usually had a little trouble when students came back at first of year.

Recalls the trip to Nashville.

The corps was small, so the staff had to do little planning. Food was plain. Primitive plumbing.

We got Christmas Day off and perhaps New Year's.

Miller was a halfback and Marshall a tackle. One of our best teams. Beat VPI. Roller was QB (Roller proud of this). Roller rather critical of Marshall. Says he made a mistake in accepting Secy of State job and mission to China.

The Sgt Major keeps the books--he is a second classman. He makes out books and brings to adjutant. Reads all the orders from Supt. Has charge, of Guard mount and parade (this is adjutant) Does not attend drill. Demerits handled at Supt's office. Nothing to do with discipline (that is adj does not have). 1st Capt could handle minor infractions like a man not having shoes shined.

On running block doubts if Marshall would have done it if there had been a chance of his being broken for it.

Speaks of old timers--John Pennington the barber and fife player; Winfield the bass drummer; Herman Kraus who played a horn; Larue who played the kettledrum,

Miss Maggie Freeland fed us meals; was a godsend.

Discipline was amazing. Wonderful school. Loyalty of VMI men for one another is tremendous.

It is not true that Marshall had no sense of humor. Used to laugh heartily. He was normal person. Ambitious. Forceful, Nothing negative about him. Great dignity, strict disciplinarian. On duty as OD he allowed no monkey business,