XIII

Aide to Pershing

"My five years with you will always remain the unique experience of my life."
—Marshall to Pershing, September 18, 1924.

WHILE America rushed back—as it thought—to normalcy, the Army renewed its usual postwar struggle for survival. The test of war had exposed grave faults of American military organization. Clearly once again the country had been caught seriously unready to meet its military commitments. Despite advance warning and, indeed, some advance preparation during 1916, a year passed between the declaration of war and the entry of an American division into battle. The great American industrial machine never did get into full war production. At the Armistice, almost no United States artillery ammunition except shrapnel and not a single American-made gun corresponding to the 75mm. gun or 155mm. howitzer, the workhorses of World War I artillery, had reached the front. Fewer than a thousand American-built airplanes—of some fifty thousand which it was at first estimated could be produced—got into action.[1] Because there were at the beginning no plans and no organization in existence either to mobilize industry or recruit and train men, much of the extraordinary effort put forth by industry, the armed forces, and the citizenry at large was ex-

pended in improvising techniques before the job could be done.

Once more, as after the war with Spain, Army leaders were determined to profit by experience and reform the defense establishment so that it could be much more rapidly effective if needed again. And once more the reformers were to meet resistance, actively from those who read the lessons differently and passively from many more who could not be bothered to think about next time, especially when even thinking about it was likely to be expensive. Marshall, at Pershing's side in Washington for the next five years, was to see at close hand and take some part in the Army's struggles, gaining invaluable experience in dealing with congressmen and congressional committees. It was to be training not only in the political art of the possible but in the temper of democracy.

Immediately after the Armistice the War Department had asked that Marshall's old friend Colonel John McAuley Palmer be sent home to take part in discussions on the future organization of the Army. Palmer, then in command of a brigade of the 29th Division, reported to Chaumont for Pershing's instructions. There were none in detail. GHQ had made some tentative sketches of a future Army but none had Pershing's approval, and he was wholly absorbed in the thousand details of providing for the occupation, demobilizing, setting the record straight, and getting the story told.

Palmer had his own ideas. As a member of the War Department General Staff in 1911 he had worked on plans for a small regular establishment conceived essentially as a ready force for small emergencies and as machinery to recruit, organize, and train the citizen army that would fight any major war. This was still his basic concept. By the time he reached Washington, however, he found that the Chief of Staff, General March, had settled on a different approach.[2] March, thinking in terms of maintaining a skeleton organization for combat which in case of war would absorb into its own structure the citizen levies, had decided to ask for a standing army of half a million men. Secretary of War Baker accepted the plan, and a bill embodying it was introduced into Congress early in 1919.

Seldom has any bill had such various and powerful opposition.

On the basis of cost alone it was hardly credible that Congress would authorize a permanent Army more than five times the size of the prewar establishment. Besides that, in the aftermath of the war the anti-militarist movement was rapidly gaining momentum and fresh recruits. Revulsion to war fed the movement. The usual postwar attacks on Army mismanagement and injustice furnished fuel. Organized labor, traditionally opposed to a large standing army as a menace to labor's freedom to strike, joined the attack on the militarists. A growing sense of the need for economy in government was to make many businessmen, including leaders of big steel, champions of disarmament. Liberal groups added scattered but unusually articulate protests against enlarging the influence of the military, which they traditionally regarded as a move toward the garrison state. For Americans generally, the war had been a victory over Prussian militarism; it was better to cherish the democratic virtue we had made prevail than to imitate the ways of our enemies. The editor of the *New York World* just before the Armistice rejoiced that "the disciplined forces of militarism yield at every point to the hurriedly assembled hosts of democracy." [3] So unpreparedness itself could seem like a virtue, recalling the traditional view that all the nation needed for security were citizens with stout hearts and a fowling piece over the mantel. Finally, political suspicion of President Wilson's international ideals led some opponents of the administration to charge—and perhaps believe—that the large Army was wanted in order to send forces abroad.

The mood of the nation, turning its back on war, became the stuff of partisan politics. While the Army was trying to work out its future, the key political fact was that in the elections of November 1918 the Democrats had lost control of Congress. The lame-duck session therefore made no serious attempt to deal with the March-Baker plan. Congress in the appropriations bill for the fiscal year 1919-20 authorized an Army with an average strength for the year of 325,000 men. To come within that figure it would be necessary to reduce the actual number in uniform to about 225,000 by October 1919. General March at once took steps to do so. But he did not alter his ultimate goal of 500,000.

Beginning in the summer of 1919, committees of the new Con-

gress held hearings on the March-Baker proposal and a number of other measures which in the end gave a thorough airing to the military problem.[4] A procession of experts testified before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, headed by Senator James W. Wadsworth of New York, and the House Committee on Military Affairs, under Representative Julius Kahn of California. Almost no one supported the War Department's request for half a million men. Palmer, who on orders had worked on modifications of the original March-Baker bill, came before Senator Wadsworth to argue that not only was the force too large but that the concept was "not in harmony with the genius of American institutions." He believed that democracy's defense should be not only militarily effective but politically congenial, and he spelled out in some detail his own ideas about the regular establishment as the core and mentor of a citizen army. It was a reasonable position and, as it happened also to be close to the committee's own, Senator Wadsworth promptly asked that Palmer be assigned to the committee to help write a bill to substitute for the War Department's.[5]

This was early in October and for all practical purposes signaled the death of the five-hundred-thousand-man Army some weeks before General Pershing was scheduled to testify. Yet it was of course inevitable that Pershing's views should be sought and probable that they might weigh in the final decision of what alternative shape to design for the postwar Army.

To rest and prepare for his appearance before the Joint Committee, Pershing in the latter part of September took Marshall and a few members of his personal staff to Naushon Island off New Bedford, Massachusetts, where for about three weeks he was the guest of W. Cameron Forbes, former governor-general of the Philippines. At Naushon one of the ways these usually serious, dignified Army officers found to relax was to write and perform a play. Marshall collaborated on a little farce as full of impersonations as *Charley's Aunt* and in it played the role of a policeman named George Marshall. Pershing improvised verses and sang.[6] From there, in early October, Pershing, Marshall, and Colonel Quekemeyer (the General's social aide) joined General Conner at a camp belonging to Mrs. Conner's father on

Brandreth Lake in the Adirondacks, where in almost complete isolation they stayed for another three weeks, hunting and fishing and working nearly every night until midnight on the presentation Pershing was to make to Congress. Marshall managed to shoot a buck slightly smaller than the one Pershing killed—an achievement of both skill and tact for which he was congratulated by his guide but in which he himself took no pleasure.[7]

At the working meetings there were technical problems and still thornier political ones to discuss. One of the most difficult was the relations between Pershing and March. Pershing on the way home from France had received word that a grateful Congress had given him the permanent rank of General of the Armies, carrying four stars. March's four stars were temporary—his permanent rank carried only two—yet as Chief of Staff he was Pershing's superior. This would have created difficulties between the most forbearing of generals. In fact March was an autocrat in the mold of General Ainsworth, determined to yield neither substance nor shadow of supreme authority. He was, Marshall believed after intimate dealings with him and study of the record, a great administrator "with a weakness for antagonizing everybody and, in particular, in having men about him who were curt, almost rude." Pershing was not the man to suffer such treatment patiently. He enjoyed supreme authority himself and was used to it as commander of the AEF. In France he had exercised virtually independent military command, treating the War Department rather as a service agency than a superior headquarters. Furthermore he had acted as personal representative of the President in many matters of high strategy that were quasi-political. March had very recently been his subordinate, serving under him as director of a field artillery training school at Le Valdahon near the Swiss border until February 1918.

Hostilities between the two Generals broke out almost as soon as March took over as Chief of Staff on May 24, 1918, and began issuing orders to the AEF commander, as General Harbord put it, "in a tone which might have been used by a commander-in-chief of all the armies of the United States, if there had been any such authority except Wilson." [8] Marshall, who came into the middle of the bitterness after it had already hardened, admired

both men and thought both were at fault, "because it was essential that they get together and they didn't." He later deplored the harsh tone of March's memoirs and tried in vain to get Pershing to omit similarly bitter statements from his. Quite probably Marshall's distaste for the subsequent public controversy shaped his later fixed aversion to writing his own autobiography.

Newton Baker, for whom Marshall had unbounded respect, calling him in later years "the most penetrating observer of Army facts and fancies" and "the greatest American or the greatest mind that I ever came in contact with in my lifetime," did his best to mitigate the antagonism of the two generals or soften its consequences. "He rode a very difficult horse," Marshall remarked, "there between General Pershing and General March and he did it extraordinarily well." He managed at least the very difficult task of being friend and chief to both men. The question of the command relationship between the two he resolved temporarily by permitting Pershing to remain as AEF commander with his own staff until he could make his official report. So Pershing had taken office space at 8th and E Streets and in form remained an overseas combat commander so far as the War Department some ten blocks away was concerned.[9]

His co-operation on any project of General March's was not to be expected. In any case, he could see another weighty reason for rejecting the five-hundred-thousand-man Army, quite apart from any technical objections: it was sure to be highly unpopular. Whether or not at this time Pershing entertained active political ambitions, he was having them thrust upon him by the usual American search for presidential timber wherever a hero grows. He had no politics, had never voted, but he was the son-in-law of Republican Senator Warren. It was obvious enough that the Republican party behind the intransigent leadership of Senator Lodge was not going to be saddled with advocating a big Army or with any other issue that unpleasantly might recall Wilson's war to the American voter. It was not apparent that the Democrats were any more eager to buck normalcy in 1920 with an issue of preparedness. Indeed, from any politically sensitive point of view, whether in furtherance of personal ambition or in quest of the most effective military organization that Congress would

accept, defense of the War Department scheme was impossible.

Pershing, moreover, was sympathetic with the conservative economic view which opposed such a large army as an undue burden on the country's resources. He knew intimately the temper of the business conservatives from wartime association with industrialists and bankers who had visited him at Chaumont and Paris and from such close friends as Charles G. Dawes, Chicago banker, and Martin Egan, member of J. P. Morgan and Company. Their conviction that the budget must be balanced and taxes reduced was also his conviction; as a soldier he tried to shape an Army establishment to fit fiscal needs yet provide what he could reasonably and honestly defend as an adequate defense.

In making final preparations for his testimony Pershing, Conner, and Marshall rounded out their study with formal talks with twenty key officers, including General March. Marshall had already made Pershing familiar with Palmer's presentation.[10] His homework done, General Pershing went before the Joint Senate and House Military Affairs Committee meeting on October 31 to begin three days of testimony.[11] Conner and Marshall were there to assist. It was for Marshall his first taste of a democratic procedure of which he himself was later to become a master.

Committee members treated Pershing with great deference and gave him every courteous opportunity to shoot down the administration bill. Despite some apparent shifting of ground in the course of his testimony, he did so. He thought a regular army of two hundred and seventy-five to three hundred thousand was large enough and that its primary job should be to train the National Guard and the organized Reserves. He also defended a program of universal military training, which Palmer was writing into the Senate Committee bill. For Palmer such training was the heart of the matter—the kind of military preparedness which was suited to democracy and which would permit the nation to grow militarily strong without suffering a large standing army. But it too was very unpopular. Before debate on the Hill was over, organized labor, farm groups, liberals, would all set up a cry against UMT as the essence of militarism. And even inside the Army there was strong resistance from champions of the Na-

tional Guard and traditional proponents of military professionalism. Nevertheless Pershing made a spirited defense. Before the joint committee he advocated eleven months' training for every able-bodied young American, as called for in the Senate draft bill, followed by service in the reserve for four years. He believed the service not only necessary for national defense but good training in citizenship for young Americans and especially for the large number of foreign-born.[12] The latter, he believed, could be soundly grounded in American principles during their Army training and so protected against the appeal of non-American influences. It was not, on the whole, the sort of argument best calculated to disarm anti-militarists, though it fitted the postwar mood of 100-per-cent Americanism that was about to float through Congress the most stringent of our immigration bills and spill into a nationwide effort to flush out the Reds. Two less controversial matters he also approved were for the adoption of a single list for promotion, with some freedom of selection other than by seniority, and the retention of a strong General Staff system with an effort at long last to make of it the machinery for over-all planning and supervision that Elihu Root intended.

If there had been any doubt as to the fate of the March-Baker scheme, Pershing's testimony ended it. The *Washington Post* pronounced it dead as early as November 4. Congress, however, adjourned without taking action.

As the debate continued in the country Marshall and other members of Pershing's staff turned to finishing the report of the commander-in-chief, AEF. Its release in December 1919 marked the completion of Pershing's assignment, but Secretary Baker found for him at once another congenial job: he wished General Pershing to tour Army camps and war plants throughout the United States to recommend those that should be retained in peacetime. Two special railroad cars were put at his disposal. Most of the key members of his overseas staff went along.[13] On Conner, Moseley, and Marshall fell much of the responsibility for organizing the expedition and preparing the report.

The trip, which began December 3, developed into a kind of triumphal tour, combining formal inspections, minutely prepared in advance, with receptions for the hero, speeches favoring

preparedness, and unmistakable overtones of politics. Whatever the intentions—and one must assume that Baker did not propose to build up a possible Republican candidate—the framework was ideal, the occasions irresistible, for placing the general before the people as one who might be worthy of high office. As the Pershing train moved through the South and Middle West, officials and citizens turned out at every stop to welcome the wartime commander, put on parades for him, entertain him at lunch, at dinner, at receptions, at balls.[14] The most important lesson Marshall learned from this social and official whirl was how to survive it. He managed to stay clear of whatever he could graciously avoid. He learned to dig a little into each locality, get a quick briefing on local problems, prejudices, and personalities. (His whispered asides to the general on who was who at various receptions, Pershing found invaluable.) And he did, as usual, at least his share of the work.

There was a lot to do. At each Army post the local commander, following instructions sent ahead, held a briefing on the facilities of the post, troops in residence, methods of administration, and was prepared with his staff to answer questions on morale, recreation, training capacity, land available for maneuvers, buildings, supply, hospital, sanitation, health. All these things Pershing and his staff would survey, and each officer was then responsible for writing a report on certain findings. Before Christmas, posts in eleven states had been inspected. From each post in this way was gathered a complete accounting not only of its physical capacities but of its present effectiveness and future usefulness in the projected citizen-training program. Citizen training became one of Pershing's major concerns. In major speeches in Savannah, Atlanta, Nashville, Louisville, Cincinnati, and Chicago he stressed the need for a citizen army, while praising local heroes and dropping warnings against the menace of Bolshevism.[15]

So far as the speeches took on the general coloration of a political candidacy, Marshall strongly disapproved. At least later he thought it too bad that Pershing had let himself be touted for the presidency. It was, he believed, soon after Pershing's return that "some of his friends deluded him" on his chances of becoming a candidate. "I know one group came from Tennessee and I sent

them back home. He was away at the time, [and] I didn't even consult him. He was furious with me." The bug had already bitten. But Marshall, aloof from the contagion, thought the chances were never good enough. "I knew pretty well what the general reactions were [to Pershing] and I thought it was a shame that he might in some way cut down his prestige by being involved, unless it was . . . almost by acclamation."

There was probably never any serious possibility of Pershing's nomination by acclamation; most of the Republican party leaders were confident of victory and did not want an amateur to lead them. In the circumstances Pershing's indication that he would accept the nomination if offered was not enough. Yet not until after the Republicans had made their final choice and the Democrats put out feelers did he at last issue a denial of "political ambitions," saying with belated forthrightness that "in no circumstances whatsoever would I think of being a candidate for the presidency." [16]

Unquestionably Pershing hoped for a different conclusion as in the early months of 1920 he continued his triumphal tour. There was a break for Christmas which enabled Marshall to spend the holidays with his wife and his mother in Atlantic City. On January 2 he reported to Chicago to board the Pershing train again and begin visits to twenty-one more states during the next two months, traveling to the Far West, back through Texas and the South to Boston and New York.[17] If politically the trip failed to touch off a Pershing boom, it had long consequences for the Army. It gave three future Chiefs of Staff, Pershing, Marshall, and Craig, who joined the tour in January, a detailed view of the peacetime Army and its local problems; and it put Pershing solidly on record in favor of universal military training. Incidentally it brought Craig in a close association with Marshall, the man whom he, as Chief of Staff, would later name his deputy.

In the report on his inspection, submitted March 23, 1920, Pershing recommended that nearly all existing posts be retained if universal military training should be adopted. Concerned about morale, he proposed better pay, more equitable handling of rank, and a number of schemes to develop pride of organization.[18]

Work on the reorganization of the Army had meanwhile proceeded and two bills were before the first regular session of the 66th Congress. The Wadsworth bill in the Senate, which had been largely drafted by Palmer and his assistant, Colonel John W. Gulick, contained a provision for universal military training to be given all able-bodied young men between their nineteenth and twenty-first years. To reduce political opposition the training period was cut to four months—a schoolboy's summer. But even this much was under increasing attack. Members of Congress were being bombarded with letters and telegrams from constituents who objected to the cost, to the implications of militarism, to the futility of preparedness when war had been abolished, and, of course, though they seldom said so, to the direct burden and discomfort of sending their sons into service or going themselves. So strong was the tide that, when it was reported that the Democrats were going to make a party fight against the program, Senator Lodge decided that the Republicans could not afford to support it. Anticipating that retreat, Palmer already had redrafted the Wadsworth bill to substitute "voluntary" for "compulsory" citizen training.[19] He was ready to accept the change because he felt that he could still save the concept of the regular Army as a training establishment and the machinery for the peacetime organization of the citizen army. These, he thought from the long view of preparedness, were the essentials. The amended Senate bill passed and on reconciliation with a companion House bill became law on June 4, 1920, as the National Defense Act. Written as an amendment to the National Defense Act of 1916—Palmer remarked that this was like Jefferson writing the Declaration of Independence as an amendment to the Book of Job—the new law was in fact a new charter for the peacetime Army. The authorized strength of 297,800 officers and men conformed with Pershing's estimate of what was adequate.

Under wide latitude to reshape the field force, the War Department shortly created by General Orders the new military establishment. To a small standing Army organized for immediate tactical use were closely linked National Guard and organized Reserve divisions ready to be mobilized if needed.[20] Instead

of the old geographical military departments, the country was divided into nine corps areas, in each of which one regular Army division would be stationed. With each regular division was to be associated one reserve division (a paper organization) and two National Guard divisions whose component units would be contributed by the states within each corps area as they themselves determined. The nine corps with their regular troops and citizen components were grouped in three armies. Provisions for federalizing the Guard in war and for training it in peace were held over from the 1916 act. The General Staff was strengthened, though Congress cut the number of General Staff officers on assignment in Washington from the two hundred and twenty-six requested by the War Department to ninety-three.[21] Congress also betrayed lingering suspicions of the general staff idea, associated with threats of militarist domination, by creating a War Council of the War Department to consider military policies. To it, General Pershing was assigned along with the Secretary and Assistant Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff.

Under the Act of 1920 was established in all essentials the Army which Marshall would head in 1939. On paper the establishment was sound and flexible. Its great weakness was that as a military structure it rested ultimately on a body of trained citizenry, but the provision to ensure such a body was dropped out. Surrender on universal military training, as it turned out, paved the way for other surrenders. It was difficult to maintain the urgency of Army training centers when there were only a relatively few volunteers to be trained. So in subsequent years when Congress, normalcy-bent on economy, successively cut the number of men whose keep it would pay for, the General Staff itself recommended giving up the training centers. In practice, therefore, the Army lost its position at the core of a citizen organization and reverted to a skeleton combat force which in case of war would again have to try to flesh itself out largely with another generation of raw recruits.

Although Marshall had little to do directly with drafting the reorganization bill he found himself sympathetic to both its philosophy and its principal authors. In the course of the hearings he had made a friend of Senator Wadsworth and become

more closely associated than ever before with Palmer, for whom he developed a deep personal as well as professional respect. Not long afterward he persuaded Pershing to name Palmer as an aide with specific responsibility to continue research and writing on the development of our national military policy.[22] In later years he saw much of the Palmer family in Washington and tried hard to get Palmer some official recognition for his work in reshaping the Army. Marshall would write in 1935 that he knew of few people who had done so much and had received so little credit.[23]

Two days before the bill passed Congress, Marshall went to Maine with Pershing and was there when the Republican National Convention in Chicago seemed to be threatened with deadlock. Pershing cut short his tour and returned to Washington a day earlier than he had planned. He wrote Secretary Baker, recalling an earlier conversation, in which he had expressed the thought that he might resign from the Army. "I feel," he wrote, "that after the completion of the work contemplated by the Army Reorganization Act, I could relinquish military duty without detriment to the service and thus be free to engage in something more active." The timing of the letter and its prompt release for publication by Pershing's headquarters led some newspapers to speculate that the general was standing up for the lightning from Chicago to strike him.[24] Yet whether it struck him or not, the fact was that Pershing had indeed come to the end of the period when he could plausibly function as a quasi-independent field commander. General March still had a year to go as Chief of Staff, and it remained unthinkable that the General of the Armies should serve happily and effectively as his subordinate. (The incongruousness was underlined when, in July, March reverted to his permanent rank of major general while Pershing, of course, kept the four stars Congress had awarded him.)

June ended political uncertainties with the nomination of Harding. Pershing, after making clear he was not interested in overtures from the Democratic National Convention—some Brooklyn politicians had proposed a Pershing–Al Smith slate—attended the graduating exercises at West Point and then at Marshall's behest went down to Finals at VMI.[25] Marshall was gratified by the visit and wrote Pershing afterward that his gra-

ciousness and tributes to VMI and Southern leaders had made a profound effect on the people of Lexington who were "painfully conservative" and still lived in the Civil War. But one Southerner, at least, remained impervious and unreconstructed. On the ride down from Washington they stopped near New Market. Marshall, anxious to point out to Pershing exactly where the VMI cadets had made their famous charge, approached an old resident on a farm nearby, "a tall, angular, Lincolnian individual with beard and cheeks stained with tobacco. I went in," Marshall recalled, "and asked him if he had been there at the time of the Battle of New Market. He said he had. . . . I asked him if he had seen the cadets. He said, 'Yes, I watched them march by on that hillside right there.' " They talked a little about his memories, then Marshall said, "Outside here, waiting to be shown some of the battle scenes, is General Pershing. He commanded all our troops in Europe." The old man spat but said nothing. Marshall said, "I said outside here is General Pershing who commanded all our troops in Europe," and added that they were on their way to VMI. "The fellow looked at me and said, 'I heered you the first time.' " Told by Pershing in Lexington, it made a good story for the cadets and a suitably modest introduction for the Yankee general.

All during the summer the War Department worked on reorganization plans. Pershing stayed on with some of his old staff at the Land Office Building. Marshall himself was detailed to a committee with Conner, Drum, and eight other officers to consider a new shape for an infantry division. Like Pershing, he believed the great square division with two infantry brigades and four infantry regiments—totaling some twenty-eight thousand men—while perhaps justified for the trench warfare of World War I, was unnecessarily cumbersome. Pershing wanted a much smaller "triangular" division of about seventeen thousand men, and Marshall strongly urged it in committee. But he was overruled largely by General Drum, who "was the ardent proponent of the large division." [26] That part of the reorganization could wait.

Marshall that summer found himself back in the familiar position of a very junior officer with responsibilities co-equal to

those very much his superior. With the ending of wartime ranks, he slipped back to his permanent rank of captain and then on orders the following day was promoted to major. By a curious twist of fortune, and the intervention of Secretary Baker and General March, Brigadier General MacArthur—now the superintendent of the Military Academy—had been named to one of four vacancies in the list of permanent brigadier generals submitted to Congress in February.[27] So the men who had been lieutenants at Leavenworth ten years before were now three grades apart and separated by the immense chasm that existed between general officers and all others. There is no evidence that Marshall felt any resentment at his own bad luck or at the better fortunes of others. Indeed, apparently on his own, he prepared a list of older officers for Pershing to consider for possible promotion. In response to Pershing's request for more information, Marshall submitted lists which he and Conner had worked out, arranging the men in the "proposed order of merit." When near Christmas of 1920 it appeared that Congress might adjourn without approving a number of promotions, Marshall interrupted Pershing's vacation to ask whether he should not intervene with Senate leaders to speed confirmation to general's rank of officers "who played an important part in the AEF" and "will rather expect you to put up a fight for them." [28]

As time came for the change of administrations, Pershing's own future was uncertain. Though the obvious job for him was Chief of Staff, that had to wait until General March had reached the end of his term. Briefly there was talk of raising him to the position of Secretary of War in Harding's cabinet; then, after John W. Weeks got that post, further speculation that he might be shelved altogether. Weeks, in April 1921, announced that the General of the Armies would head a special staff to draw plans against the contingency of another war. The scheme, duplicating War Department General Staff functions and fouling lines of responsibility, was on the face of it unworkable, although it had actually been proposed earlier by General Conner to Pershing himself as a means of putting the AEF commander in a top position but free from the routine duties of the Chief of Staff's office.[29] Coming now from Weeks, it had other connotations: the idea

struck some as not only unwise but probably mischievous. Weeks was a Massachusetts man. Massachusetts opinion, the *Boston Transcript* in the van, was still boiling over Pershing's relief of General Edwards, commander of the 26th (Yankee) Division, just before the war ended. The *Transcript* now hailed Weeks' proposal as a device to eliminate the taint of Prussianism from the American Army by sidetracking Pershing. As for Pershing, he declined absolutely to go along with the proposal, threatening to resign if Weeks insisted. Apparently the President intervened. Within a few days the proposal was dropped and Pershing was announced as the next Chief of Staff to take office on July 1. While the *Transcript* scented a political payoff to the general for helping stop Leonard Wood as a presidential candidate and a potential cabinet member, most of the press remarked the obvious: that the appointment was altogether fitting and had been expected.[30]

As Chief of Staff, Pershing occupied the huge office in the State, War, and Navy Building given up by the Secretary of Navy when the Navy Department moved out of the building in the fall of 1921. With General Harbord as his Deputy Chief of Staff (followed by General Hines in January 1923), Pershing promptly made over the War Department General Staff in the image of Chaumont. The five staff divisions he established—G-1 (Personnel), G-2 (Intelligence), G-3 (Operations and Training), G-4 (Supply), and War Plans—remained through World War II. War Plans Division, which Pershing expected to furnish the staff for the commanding general in any new conflict, in World War II became the Operations Division of General Marshall's command post.

Marshall was installed in an office near his chief, where he could be called on for many assignments not usually given an aide. Pershing, easily bored with the routine of the peacetime Chief of Staff job, sent many proposed letters, draft reports, and staff recommendations to "Major M" for comment. On many matters the aide gave his opinions to his chief privately in order to avoid friction with some of the division chiefs. As the years passed and most of the other subordinates who had been with Pershing in France went on to other posts, Marshall drew more

and more assignments. Pershing visited France nearly every year, and between October 1923 and March 1924 was gone for six months. In these intervals he depended on Marshall to prepare reports for his signature, carry out special assignments, and keep him in touch with the situation in Washington.

As one who knew Pershing's views, Marshall was appointed to various boards during the period of Army reorganization. In the fall of 1921 when Congress asked for an investigation of the alleged inequities under the Army's single-list promotion system, a board under Major General D. C. Shanks with Marshall as recorder was established. On the major, in General Shanks' words, "fell the important duties connected with securing, tabulating, and preparing the voluminous records required by the board." After more than thirty meetings the board recommended that the system be retained as essential to the efficiency of the Army.[31] Marshall's work in examining the service records of hundreds of officers gave him detailed background on the careers of many men who would serve under him in later years.

So far the Army had fared remarkably well. After precipitous demobilization, which had rushed draftees back to civilian life (many into the ranks of the unemployed), discharged the National Guard, and mustered out even all the regular enlisted men and noncommissioned officers who wanted release, it had recovered an organization capable of rebuilding an effective defense and a chief whose prestige stood high. But this, which from the Army's and General Pershing's point of view was a good fresh start, in fact was to mark the high point of preparedness. From 1921 on, the generation which admired public frugality, hated war, and shunned collective security was easily persuaded to neglect its own defense. Congress found the coincidence of anti-militarism and saving money irresistibly popular. The special session of the 67th Congress in 1921 cut wartime taxes. Corresponding cuts in the budget, it was clear, would have to be chiefly at the expense of the Army and Navy. At the Washington Naval Disarmament Conference, ending in February 1922, the United States negotiated a treaty with its World War I Allies limiting naval armaments and reducing sources of possible friction, which seemed to make it safe for the United States to let

its seapower decline even below treaty limits. While the Senate promptly ratified the treaties, the House passed an Army Appropriations Act which would have reduced the number of enlisted men to 115,000—less than half the strength authorized in 1920. Pershing in a speech in March protested the cuts as disastrous. They would leave the United States an Army scarcely any larger than the Allies had permitted less populous Germany under the treaty intended to disarm her. General Harbord, in a statement not likely to allay labor's militarist fears, warned that the increase in strikes raised threats of radicalism against which the regular Army might have to act. Congress retreated a little but nevertheless cut appropriations so far that the Army's actual strength by the end of the fiscal year 1923 was 131,254—93,625 in the continental United States.[32]

Clearly the 1920 organization plans, based on twice that many men, could not be carried out. Palmer wished to absorb the cut by scaling down the 1920 plan, maintaining fewer regular divisions but keeping them at approximately full strength and above all holding on to the training centers. But the War Department, under pressure to keep the paper army as large as possible and the command and staff positions correspondingly numerous, decided instead to skeletonize the existing establishment and abolish the corps training centers altogether.[33]

Marshall apparently agreed with Palmer. At least he was more concerned than ever, as the standing Army shrank, with the importance of citizen training and the responsibility of regular officers to keep that task in the forefront of their thinking. He strongly urged Pershing to make the point in a speech to the Army War College in June and drafted for him these key paragraphs, which Pershing delivered.

"In no other Army is it so important that the officers of the permanent establishment be highly perfected specialists, prepared to serve as instructors and leaders for the citizen forces which are to fight our wars. The one-time role of a regular Army officer has passed with the Indian campaigns and the acquirement of colonial possessions. Our mission today is definite, yet so broad that few, if any, have been able to visualize the possibilities of the new fields opened up by the military policy now on the statute books.[34]

"In serving on the War Department General Staff or at corps area headquarters, it is difficult to avoid a detached and impersonal attitude which soon carries one out of sympathy with the subordinate organizations and, especially, with the humble worker in the ranks. It is hard for the man at the desk to see with the eye of a troop commander or of a businessman struggling with self-imposed duties as an officer of the National Guard or Reserve Corps. Unintentionally misunderstanding arises and cooperation fails. It is the special duty of the regular Army officer to avoid this possibility. As a matter of truth, the establishment of a sympathetic understanding is more important than the performance of any routine duties."

No doubt Pershing agreed, but it was Marshall talking out of the heartfelt lessons of his own experience. The earnestness came from the conviction of a teacher who accepted the concept of a citizen army not because it was the best that could be got out of a democracy but because he believed in it and believed in the pre-eminent mission of the military professional to make it effective. He said the same thing on his own behalf at a speech to the Army War College in the fall. And he would get Pershing to return to the theme near the end of his tour as Chief of Staff when he spoke at Camp Merritt, New Jersey, at the dedication of a memorial to the citizen soldiers trained there for the last war. There Pershing emphasized what he hoped would prove the contrast between the unpreparedness of 1917 and the opportunity under the 1920 Act to "enroll and train the framework of a citizen army, with officers prepared for their work and thus not to be left at the mercy of chance." [35] In the same spirit Pershing and Marshall in the summer of 1923 undertook to visit all the fifteen summer training camps in the country.

They had called at eight and were in San Francisco when the sudden death of President Harding made it necessary for them to return with the funeral train to Washington. The change in Presidents made no easier the struggle to keep something of the shape and function of the Army as envisaged in the reorganization act. Calvin Coolidge proved the perfect guardian of Harding's normalcy. While he did not ask for further Army cuts he was perfectly willing to let the spirit of economy hack where it would. Pershing's annual report for 1923, which Marshall was in

charge of during the Chief of Staff's six months' European trip beginning in October, pleaded for a small increase in the regular Army's force (to 150,000 men and 13,000 officers) and asked that they be suitably housed and be given funds for annual maneuvers. As for the citizen army, the National Guard, then numbering 160,000, should be enabled to build up progressively to 250,000. Funds, besides, were needed to maintain a skeleton of the organized Reserves, to permit reserve officers to have an average of fifteen days' training every three or four years, to develop ROTC units, and to increase the number of trainees in the Citizen Military Training Camps.[36] The modesty of the requests was eloquent of how tight the congressional pursestrings had been drawn.

Nothing came of the plea, and nothing came of efforts at about this time to unify the armed forces for the sake of economy. Representative Walter Brown of Ohio had suggested a Division of National Defense. One of Pershing's closest advisers, General Moseley, proposed a Secretary of National Defense to co-ordinate Army and Navy policies and a Secretary of Munitions to supervise procurement for both services.[37] The idea, though stillborn —both Army and Navy chiefs were opposed—did lead to some study of ways to avoid waste in separate Army and Navy purchasing.[38] The problem was one which had exasperated General Charles G. Dawes when he was Director of the Budget in 1921, and he had once demonstrated in a furious burst of sweeping that two brooms, bought separately by the Army and Navy at different prices, did the same job.[39] Marshall recalled the lesson when he was selected to meet with the Assistant Secretary of Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., on the subject. In the course of a number of meetings he advocated preliminary steps to help Army and Navy officers to understand each other's problems. He wished to exchange officers "from every section of the General Staff with equivalent officers of the Navy Department"—a scheme not of liaison but of actually swapping jobs. He would have liked to apply it also to the "supply departments, ordnance, and communication service," but he found solid opposition from both Army and Navy—solid and durable, for fifteen years later he wrote: "I seem to be out of step with the rest of the world in this

particular idea, but to me it is fundamental, and the only effective lead-up to the proper co-ordination of the two services." [40]

Unification was not practical but exploring it was educational for the future Chief of Staff and Secretary of Defense. There was education, too, in the last of the major projects Marshall completed as Pershing's aide: a complete revision of the First Army report first distributed in 1919 and then at Pershing's request recalled. Marshall had made some changes in it before he returned from Europe and had sent them to Drum, who had distributed the initial draft, for suggestions. In the fall of 1920 Pershing found time to make suggestions, which Marshall attempted to incorporate by rewriting entire sections of the text. Continuing to work on it at spare moments during the years and keeping up an intermittent correspondence with Drum concerning maps, appendices, and various phases of the report, he finally found time during Pershing's long absence in Europe to prepare it for publication in 1924.[41] At the same time he was gathering data for Pershing on the wartime meetings of the War Council in Washington and on the Army's handling of personnel and supply.[42] Although the final report was dry, factual, pedestrian in style, and without evaluations, it provided its author with a thorough review of the war experience and, as a source for the memoirs of both Pershing and Harbord, helped establish the accepted story of American operations.

Marshall's five years with Pershing inevitably involved him in a miscellany of activities to which in retrospect it was difficult to assign any coherent pattern. From the point of view of his career the years were perhaps most fruitful in terms of exposure to politics and to personalities of politics and business, not only in Washington but in the course of his frequent travels through the country with his chief. He sat in on a number of informal talks between Pershing and President Harding. When the trip to inspect citizen-training camps in the summer of 1923 was broken off at Harding's death, Marshall returned on the funeral train from San Francisco and became acquainted with Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. Hoover, he recalled, spent a lot of time in the observation car and did not say much. With General Dawes, Marshall developed a close relationship during

Dawes' year in Washington as Director of the Budget. An old friend of Pershing's, Dawes often dropped in on the Chief of Staff and frequently took time to talk over with Marshall his ideas on governmental finance. Later Marshall visited Dawes at his home with Pershing and accompanied the two men on an excursion by special train to some of Dawes' properties in West Virginia. He kept in touch with Dawes for the rest of his life, and at one of their last meetings rode with him in the funeral procession for their mutual friend, General Pershing. In the fall of 1922 while on a trip through Louisiana, Pershing and Marshall joined the state's Governor John Parker and Bernard Baruch for duck shooting at Pass-a-Loutre.[43] In the years between wars Marshall wrote and talked to Baruch from time to time and kept up the acquaintance until his own death. In 1933 he told Pershing "I always enjoyed talking to Mr. Baruch and Mr. Baker more than any other prominent characters of my tour in Washington with you." [44]

One story of his encounters with notables that Marshall liked to tell concerned Senator Moses of New Hampshire. Pershing and Marshall were traveling together in a drawing room from Boston to Washington. The senator, they observed, had a Pullman berth in the next car. The general and his aide sat up talking and finishing a bottle of real Scotch the general had been given. Well after midnight Pershing remarked that there was just enough left in the bottle to give Senator Moses a drink. Whereupon they poured a glass and together went down the aisle, Marshall, like a good junior officer, carrying the glass and leading the way. On reaching the space they thought was the senator's, Pershing scratched at the green curtain, whispering, "Senator Moses." When there was no answer he lifted the curtain a little, at which point the woman occupying the berth said sharply, "What do you want?" The general in his shirt sleeves, without identifying collar, dropped the curtain and, as Marshall told it, "ran against me and we spilled the Scotch between us and over us as we raced down the aisle. I had a hard time keeping out of his way because he was running right up my back. But we got to the stateroom and got the door shut. Then he just sat down and laughed until he cried. There was still a little bit of

Scotch and he suggested that I go back with it. I told him he would have to get another aide; I wasn't going back out there again." The next morning they emerged from their drawing room to find Senator Moses waiting for them with the young woman next to him. She had told the story and he had guessed the culprits. "We had an amusing back-and-forth in regard to it."

Marshall liked the story because it showed Pershing in the gay, relaxed, and "youthful" after-hours spirits which were in strong contrast to the public image of him as a "very severe character." In fact both Pershings existed, and the gulf between them was absolute—as Marshall found after the hilarity of the Boston train. "When we got back to Washington and after he had gone home and changed . . . and come back to the office, I came in to see him; he was just as stern as though we had never been together at all."

Stern he was, and often stubborn and autocratic, but his mind was not closed. Not long after he became Chief of Staff he proposed a change in the procedure of the War Department which General March had initiated. The proposal—as many such proposals did—went to Major Marshall for comment. Marshall this time wrote his disapproval in a memorandum, sent it to Pershing, and shortly thereafter was summoned.

"I don't take to this at all," Pershing said. "I don't agree with you."

Marshall said, "Well, let me have it, General; let me have it again."

Marshall went back to his office and wrote a fresh résumé of the affair and another more careful explanation of just why he thought Pershing's proposal was wrong. Again Pershing sent for him.

"I don't accept this," he said.

Once more Marshall took it back, rewrote it again, restating his objections.

"No," said Pershing when he saw the third memo, and slapped his hand on the desk in an angry gesture the aide had never seen him use before, "No, by God, we will do it this way."

Marshall stood his ground. "Now, General," he said, "just because you hate the guts of General March you're setting yourself

up—and General Harbord who hates him too—to do something you know damn well is wrong."

Pershing looked at his aide, handed him back the paper. "Well, have it your own way."

And that, Marshall recalled, "was the end of the scene. No prolonged feeling—nothing—that was the end of the affair. . . . General Pershing held no [grudge] at all. He might be very firm at the time, but if you convinced him, that was the end of it. He accepted it and you went ahead." [45]

That was tribute to Pershing, but tribute also to the aide himself, who knew not only when but how to stand his ground. Pershing for the official record called Marshall "a very exceptional man" and urged that he should be made a general officer "as soon as eligible." Personally the two had got along from the beginning and developed and retained genuine affection for each other. From his next post Marshall wrote his old chief in a note of unusual warmth: "I have a hard time realizing that everything I do is not being done directly for you. My five years with you will always remain the unique experience of my career. . . . Not until I . . . took up these new duties . . . did I realize how much my long association was going to mean to me and how deeply I will miss it." [46]

The years in Washington were also relatively settled and domestic years, despite the frequent excursions. As senior aide to the Chief of Staff, Marshall had Quarters Number 3 at Fort Myer, a short automobile or streetcar ride from downtown Washington. Lily continued to be bothered by her bad heart and suffered particularly in crowded social gatherings when the air was heavy with smoke. Nevertheless she accompanied her husband to most of the dinners and receptions which the aide and friend of the Chief of Staff was expected to attend. Sometimes she even went alone to represent him when he could not make it himself. They entertained a little themselves. Pershing from time to time dined informally with them.

Marshall's mother spent part of each year in Washington at the Grafton Hotel a few blocks from the War Department. In her middle seventies, she was bedridden part of the time. Marshall stopped to see her once or twice a day, usually sitting and

talking to her while she had lunch. Occasionally he brought General Pershing for a visit, and the sight of him or word of his presence rustled the ladies resident in the Grafton like an autumn wind. It was the first time since he had left Uniontown for VMI that Marshall had been able to see his mother for more than brief and occasional visits. It was also to be the last time.

Pershing's tour as Chief of Staff was drawing to a close in 1924 and so was Marshall's eligibility for General Staff duty. In the spring of the year he applied for an assignment he had long desired, with the 15th Infantry in China. His request was granted and he was told in April that he could leave in two months. Pershing, who would be in Europe in the summer on a tour of the French battlefields as chairman of the Battle Monuments Commission, gave the Marshalls a farewell luncheon at the Shoreham Hotel on June 8. But it was actually not until July 12 that Marshall boarded the U.S.A.T. *St. Mihiel* at New York with Lily and her mother, Mrs. Coles.

The trip out was long but pleasantly broken on the way. At Panama the Fox Conners entertained them "with lots of champagne." At San Francisco they were made warmly welcome by General and Mrs. Hunter Liggett, with whom Marshall had kept up an affectionate correspondence. In Honolulu they visited General and Mrs. Summerall. So his friends from the days in France had scattered. And Marshall himself, on his way to Tientsin, with both affection and nostalgia cabled good-by to Pershing across the world. From Paris his old chief replied to the U.S.A.T. *Thomas* out of San Francisco: "Au revoir, Affectionately, Pershing."[47]