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Influence of George Marshall on the World War II  
and post-war Europe

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Declaration

I hereby declare that I worked on this thesis on my own and that I only used the sources listed in the bibliography.

V Olomouci dne 30. 11. 2022

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Vojtěch Neuwirth

## **Abstract**

This thesis focuses on American soldier and statesman George Catlett Marshall. It follows him throughout his life and career, as he went through education and gathered experience in the First World War to then greatly influence the Second World War and the following political development in post-war Europe. It describes what his role was in the conflict and in the creation of the financial aid to war-scarred Europe, which was not only a big economic mission, but more importantly a political one.

## **Introduction**

George Catlett Marshall is one of the most important figures of the Second World War era. He is often praised as one of the greatest generals the United States ever produced but he didn't reach glory leading troops into battle. His great contribution to the military was found somewhere else and this thesis aims to describe how exactly did the progress-hungry officer climb all the way to the top of the army ranks and from there, how did the great general earn his right to be compared to the greatest American leaders.

The thesis follows Marshall all the way from the beginning of his life, showing how he gradually built up his abilities throughout his postings and in the Great War to eventually become the man who constructed the victory of the Allies and democracy in the Second World War, and it also captures his political importance for the post-war Europe. Many people believe that the Marshall was the author of the Marshall Plan but that is not the case, and this thesis describes what exactly was his role in the creation.

The main biographies used as source of information for the thesis were by an American historian Irwin Unger and English Robert Payne. While Unger's biography is more focused on facts and details of events, Payne is more focused on following Marshall's mind and it tries to discover what kind of a man Marshall was. To serve as a source of World War II background, Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart's work was used. These sources are supplemented by additional works by authors and online sources.

## **1 Early life**

George Catlett Marshall, one of America's greatest statesman and soldier was born on December 31, the last day of the year 1880 in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. His father, George Catlett Marshall, Sr. was coal and wood dealer in the town, although not very prosperous (Unger, 2014). Both his father's family – the Marshalls and his mother's family – the Bradfords lived in Kentucky for a long time and originated from the state of Virginia (Payne, 2015).

### **1.1 Education**

George's early education was lacking. In the private elementary schools he attended, he learned very little other than the most basic skills. When his father entered George to the local public school, the admitting officer was caught by surprise with the boy's poor knowledge. He didn't know about Europe or Asia yet, even though these places would be very important later in his military and diplomatic career. George's education was not as good as education of someone coming from a large city like New York, Boston, New Orleans or San Francisco (Unger, 2014).

George's higher education didn't expand his horizons very much but what it achieved was reinforcement of his reserved persona which would be typical for him in his adult life (Unger, 2014). Reaching his mid-teens, he was facing the usual middle-class prospect of learning a profession, but his options were limited thanks to his poor school record. As a rural child, active in fishing, hunting and camping, the idea of becoming a soldier was an interesting prospect to George (Unger, 2014).

There was already some military education experience in the family. George's older brother, Stuart, attended Virginia Military Institute before him but after graduating he decided to not pursue the career in military. His next work occupations were blast furnace assayer in the United Verde Copper Company, head chemist and later manager of the Dunbar Furnace Company and then manager of the American Manganese Manufacturing Company (Payne, 2015).

George Senior wanted to place his son at West Point, where he could receive free education at the expense of the government. But to enter this U.S. military academy, a recommendation from a local member of Congress was required. George Senior being a life-long Democrat had no ties with the district's Republican representative so in the end, George wasn't admitted to the prestigious academy (Cray, 2020). So, the next best option was the VMI – Virginia Military Institute, Lexington. However, his older brother Stuart did not want ill-educated George to attend his academy. He claimed that he would disgrace the family name. Hearing these remarks enraged George. He decided to join the VMI to spite his brother and prove him wrong. Later George said that this sibling rivalry has greatly fueled him to succeed at VMI and later in his career (Payne, 2015).

Luckily for George, it proved easy to get into the freshman class at VMI despite his poor school record because the institute required no entrance exam. He was accepted by the Superintendent Scott Shipp, a former Confederate general, on sight, because he knew and respected the Marshall ancestry (Unger, 2014).

## **1.2 Virginia Military Institute**

George stood out in his freshman class as a Yankee, being one of fourteen Northerners in a class of eighty-two. He was taunted for his accent which he attempted to modify to avoid being mocked. He also had to change some of his ingrained habits. The four years he spent at VMI helped him to change from a bumptious child to a dignified gentleman (Unger, 2014). As a freshman he was assigned a quarter share in a room located past the living areas of second and third year students. That meant that he had to go through a bully gauntlet every time he wanted to go to or from his room. The room itself was very barren and it had no running water which only meant more trips to the hydrants in the courtyard past the bullies (Payne, 2015).

The coursework at VMI was not very comprehensive, yet even then George wasn't very keen on learning. He disliked learning French and German and considered it a waste of time, at the time he didn't know how useful an ability to speak these two languages would be to him later. His instructors also didn't teach him how to express himself well orally or in writing, which he regretted. Later he said that what he learned the most at VMI was self-control and discipline (Unger, 2014).

Marshall had developed a passion for football in his third year. His stature was tall and light but that didn't stop him playing toe to toe with much heavier men. He found his way how to out play and outthink the bigger opponents. When the VMI team crushed the Washington and Lee university 39-0, he was on the team. The season was ended abruptly that year because of a typhoid break out and following furlough for the whole corps (Payne, 2015).

He continued playing football next year, defeating the rival Washington and Lee university 40-0 again. Perhaps the biggest football success came later that year the VMI team defeated 5-0 the Virginia Polytechnic Institute, which was another military college, renowned for its football team. Marshall was particularly proud of this because he was accepted as a proper southerner and his success at the football team was even noticed by the newspapers (Payne, 2015).

Marshall managed to find a wife while still attending VMI. The woman of his choice was Elizabeth Carter Coles. Six years older than Marshall, she came from an old Virginia family. Suffering from a heart condition, she lived with her mother in Lexington. Lily, as George called her, met him through his brother Stuart. He often had to violate the VMI rules by sneaking out at night to see her, risking being expelled if caught (Unger, 2014).

### **1.3 Graduating**

Unlike graduates of the state-run West Point, those coming from VMI were not automatically assigned to be officers in the army. In fact, in 1890, only 10 VMI graduates were officers in the regular army. Fortunately for Marshall, big changes in the army were taking place at the time (Unger, 2014).

After the Americans defeated the Spaniards in Philippines, the Filipino nationalists rose up in an insurrection against the Americans. This led to rapid increase in size of the army, more than doubling the previous manpower, thus sudden need for new officers was created (Unger, 2014). And so, even though being only a VMI graduate with no military connections, thanks to George Seniors string pulling Marshall got to the applicants list for an exam to become an officer. Marshall travelled to New York for three days of tests and then returned to his summer appointment as an instructor at Danville Military Institute to await the results (Cray, 2020).



Marshall had passed the test with excellent score, judged “well qualified for the position of a commissioned officer in the United States Army.” He then resigned from his employment at Danville and stayed at Uniontown, awaiting orders (Cray, 2020). He received them a few months later. Marshall was to be assigned to the Thirtieth Infantry Regiment stationed in the Philippines. Although Marshall was slightly disappointed with the placement, he was expecting to be placed in the artillery, which was considered more prestigious than regular infantry, but nevertheless he submitted his signed oath of office on February 3, 1902 (Unger, 2014).

## **1.4 Wedding**

Lily and George were married a week later in a simple ceremony in Lexington. The next day the couple travelled by train to Washington for what was supposed to be their one-day honeymoon before George was to embark for Philippines. Luckily for the pair, a sympathetic officer noted that George was freshly married and allowed him to delay his departure for five more days (Unger, 2014).

After the honeymoon, Lily returned to her mother in Lexington and George travelled west to Presidio, San Francisco. In mid-April he boarded a ship sailing to Manila to begin his journey as an officer in the U.S. Army (Payne, 2015).

## **1.5 Early life – Evaluation**

Even though Marshall began his career from a rather disadvantaged position to become a highly ranked officer in the army, being poorly educated and having no connections, he proved himself to be a talented individual at VMI already. The time at VMI was important as a starting point of his career. There Marshall earned important traits, especially his ability to use hard work to fuel his drive to success. Even though Marshall was lucky with his timing to start his officer career, just when the army was rapidly expanding, he still needed to put in great effort to stand out in his class. With big motivation, being challenged by his brother’s predictions of failure at VMI but also the need of a well-paying job to take care of his wife Lily, he managed to succeed in his studies, even catching the eye of the public with his football endeavors, paving the first but very important step out of many

in his upcoming military career. Overall, his early life can be presented as a good example of how it is possible to work the way up from a disadvantaged position and start a career aimed at the highest of positions. From the very beginning, Marshall was showing he possessed traits of a great man.

## 2. First officer experience

Compared to the United States, Philippines was a very primitive country by the time Marshall arrived there in 1902, with the capital Manila being an exception (Unger, 2014). Being a Spanish colony since the late sixteenth century, the imprint of that was obvious in form of the Spanish language or the Catholic Church. However, what the Spanish didn't develop properly was the schools, hospitals and good roads, all these were very scarce in Philippines at the time (Unger, 2014).

The Spanish-American conflict in Philippines was a by-product of the dispute over Cuba. The Americans, trying to push out the Spanish in 1898, were joined by the Filipinos led by Emilio Aguinaldo. Being successful, the McKinley administration had decided to retain the islands as a dependency (Unger, 2014). The Filipinos however were not content with being under a rule of another country and so in 1899, a major war for independence between the Filipinos led by Aguinaldo and the Americans broke out. Because of the big differences in manpower, the Filipinos had to wage the war in a guerrilla style. The war was costly – more than 4000 American soldiers and 34 000 Filipinos had lost their lives before it ended in 1901 with Aguinaldo's capture (Cray, 2020).

By the time Marshall arrived, most of the northern islands had been secured by the Americans and the amount of soldiers present was rapidly decreasing. He spent a few days in Manila and took up his assignment at the island of Mindoro, located south of Manila, with the Thirtieth Infantry (Cray, 2020). Other than a few bandits and leftover guerilla fighters the island was already peaceful. The assigned task was not very important, but Marshall was aware why, later he commented on this part of his career: "there isn't anything much lower than a second lieutenant and I was about the most junior second lieutenant in the Army at the time" (Unger, 2014). He was posted in Calapan, the capital of the island, which wasn't much more than an overgrown village of roughly 5600 inhabitants. He was placed in charge of a small American garrison consisting of roughly 50 men, replacing a superior officer who was temporarily missing. His duty mostly involved creating a program for the men, keeping the garrison in good shape and condition. Marshall also helped fighting a cholera epidemic which was raging throughout the island at the time by setting up rules commanding thorough hand washing and water boiling (Unger, 2014).

Later in September, the original head of the garrison Capt. Henry Eames returned and took over the leadership and soon after the whole company was transferred to Manila (Cray, 2020).

This allowed Marshall to relax for the first time after taking on his first officer assignment. It was around this time when he would start practicing most favorite leisure activity – horse riding. He borrowed horses from the U.S. Cavalry for daily rides (Unger, 2014).

After a short period, where was stationed to guard a dangerous military prison on Malahi Island in 1903, Marshall and the Thirtieth Infantry were transferred back to the United States. He shipped to California and from there he travelled to his new assignment – Fort Reno on the Canadian River (Cray, 2020). Even though back in America, Marshall would still need to wait another few months to meet again with his wife Lily, he wasn't given any leave time to visit her in Virginia (Unger, 2014).

Their reunion was delayed even more after Marshall was assigned to map a vast area of southwestern Texas, a rugged, empty region full of deserts and mountains. Later he claimed that this was one of the most rigorous tasks he was ever given in the army. He and his small platoon of soldiers would struggle with low amounts of food and water (Unger, 2014). Marshall has done an amazing job of mapping the area. The chief engineer officer had proclaimed Marshall's map to be the best and only complete one out of several maps assigned to other officers. To reward Marshall for his work he had been granted four months of leave (Cray, 2020).

He used this time to go back to Virginia to spend time with Lily and her relatives. Even though he was happy about the reunion, he was also very frustrated because of lack of progress in his almost 5 years long military career, still being a second lieutenant. Stuck in position with no option for promotion, he was looking for a way out of this situation (Unger, 2014).

The chance to reach a higher rank came in a form of an invite to a two-year course at the Infantry and Cavalry school at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. At the end of a year full of difficult studies Marshall came out first in the class and he was asked to stay and attend the Army Staff College the next year. His good results were noticed by General Bell, earning his favor (Unger, 2014).

In the second year Marshall finally reached the long-desired promotion. After five days of tough exams, he received his silver bar as first lieutenant. Finally managing to move up in the ranks of army after many years of service was very important and satisfying to Marshall. His response to the promotion really pictured how ambitious he was but also how frustrated the lack of progress was for him (Unger, 2014).

Marshall spent the next two years working as an instructor. He was good at teaching and enjoyed it, these times in his career he considered satisfying. He took part in hunting trips, which combined his favorite horse riding with spending time with fellow officers. Using his wife's heart condition as an excuse, he was able to avoid the frequent dances which took place at the officers' club. For Lily this part of George's career was also very enjoyable, he could spend plenty of time with her (Unger, 2014). At the end of his four years at Leavenworth, first as a student and later as an instructor, in the late summer of 1910, Marshall and his wife took a vacation and travelled across Europe, visiting England, France, Italy and Austria (Payne, 2015).

Proving himself to be a great instructor, Marshall received more assignments with state guard units, including Massachusetts and New York ones. Working with these groups he learned a very important skill – organizing the movement of large masses of troops (Unger, 2014).

After serving in his home country for 7 years, Marshall applied for foreign service again in 1913. In his list of preferences, he included Hawaii, Alaska and China. He specifically asked to not be deployed to Philippines again but anyways he was assigned to a post in Manila in the summer. On July 5, he and Lily boarded a ship to join the Thirteenth Infantry (Cray, 2020). Even despite her heart condition, he assured her that the living conditions in Manila would not have any bad influences on her health. This would come true, and their living quality was better and more pleasurable than what Marshall experienced on his last Philippines assignment (Unger, 2014).

During this assignment Marshall had the opportunity to be introduced to the difficult problems of amphibious landings. Even though on much smaller scale, this practice proved to be especially useful when planning the landing in Normandy thirty years later (Unger, 2014).

Marshall was doing work above his rank, driven by his will to succeed in his military career, trying to fulfill every single detail of his assignment. This constant stress of demanding work was starting to show on his health. In both 1912 and 1913 he suffered from two instances of what was diagnosed as “acute dilation of the heart”. He was hospitalized for ten days in Manila and then forced to take four months of sick and regular leave to allow his health to come back. This health scare taught Marshall that he needs to relax more. He and Lily used this opportunity to travel, and they visited Japan, Manchuria and Korea (Unger, 2014).

## **2.1 First officer experience - Evaluation**

Starting his military career in Philippines was not easy for Marshall. The easiest way to progress through military ranks was to successfully command troops in battle, but by the time Marshall arrived at Philippines, the battling was over, at least in the area Marshall was stationed in. Nevertheless, he successfully went on to gain his first officer experience, managing a small troop of soldiers. After returning to America, he yet again proved his brilliance, masterfully fulfilling his assigned task in Texas. Up to this point, although Marshall had done a good job being an officer, he still had not progressed up the ranks at all.

The resulting frustration was a much-needed fuel that propelled Marshall forwards, he put in every possible effort to get his career moving. This was a signature trait of his throughout his military career. He proved this was the case when he accepted the invite to the course at Fort Leavenworth and topped the class, catching the eye of some high ranked officers in the army. The decision to undergo the course was an important decision in his career and made Marshall stand out, compared to other officers who denied the invitation to the course. It also opened his way into instructing, which was his first door into the matter of troop training. Marshall’s hard working attitude was a core attribute which elevated him, but it also had a negative side. As Marshall invested all his energy into his career, he didn’t pay any attention to his health and overworked himself until some serious health scares alerted him. Upon realizing this, Marshall reacted well. Instead of mindlessly overworking himself into health issues, he implemented more relaxation into his regime, showing that he was able to balance his hard-working attitude with reasonable relaxation time.

Overall, Marshall's first officer work was excellent. From the get-go, even though his early assignments were not very important tasks, he fulfilled them in a brilliant way, proving he really was an outstanding officer. The most important characteristics he developed in this time was his hunger for progress, which was essential in his career and also the interest in teaching and developing troop training.

### **3. The First World War**

The war in Europe had been under way for almost two years at the time when George and Lily returned from their travel. Two groups of nations had formed. The Central powers – Germany and Austria-Hungary fighting against the Allies – France, Russia and Great Britain. Eventually, other world powers such as Italy, Japan or Turkey were drawn into the conflict as well. Since all these powerful nations owned colonies all around the world, local conflicts were being fought everywhere, making it a proper world war. The World War I was another opportunity for Marshall to advance in his military career (Unger, 2014).

The war in Europe had a substantial impact on the American army. Even though all around the world it was fought in the usual manner, the most important theatre in Europe was different. On the western front, a line had split the continent, spanning from the English Channel all the way down to the Swiss border. Both sides had dug into trenches, which provided relative safety to soldiers. But the casualties were immense thanks to offensives both sides would launch in attempt to take over the enemy trenches. The men, after great amount of artillery bombardment directed at the enemy, would charge over the no man's land towards the enemy trenches under heavy machine-gun fire from fortified enemy positions. If lucky, advancing a few hundred meters while suffering heavy casualties, such was the nature of the war. The observing Americans knew, that their army wasn't prepared for this kind of a conflict (Unger, 2014).

At the beginning of the war, the intention of the Americans was to stay neutral in the conflict but gradually, as the strongest nation remaining neutral, was drawn into the conflict by its financial stakes in the victory of the Allies. The Germans also used their submarines to attack unarmed American cargo ships and transatlantic passenger lines (Cray, 2014).

The National Defense Act was passed in June of 1916, authorizing an army of 175 000 men and increasing the National Guard to 450 000 men – these were allowed to be drafted into the army in war time. A special Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) was also created to produce army officers out of qualified civilians. Marshall was one of the people who benefited from this program (Unger, 2014).

Marshall was sent to San Francisco, where he was assigned to a new officer-training camp in Monterey by his patron General Bell. This is when he finally received a promotion to captain after fourteen years in the army. After the Monterey camp closed, Marshall assisted with opening of another officer training camp, this time near Salt Lake City. By then, the Germans assumed the war would end before the Americans could prepare and move their army into Europe, so they resumed their submarine attacks on the neutral ships and so, on April 6, 1917 the United States declared war on Germany (Liddell Hart, 2007).

### **3.1 United States enter the war**

The sudden war declaration changed everything for the army and also for Marshall. Together with General Bell, Marshall was moved to the east coast. Bell was assigned to be in command of the army's Eastern Department while Marshall was in control of two officer training camps near Plattsburgh in New York. What Marshall was interested in though wasn't training officers, but rather it was active duty in France (Unger, 2014).

In May 1917, the congress had passed the Selective Service Act, which would, over the course of the war, draft almost twenty-four million men but for months after the United States joined the war, the army was still small, only counting about 190 000 men (Unger, 2014).

Missing a chance to accompany General Pershing to France, Marshall was still stuck in New York. Letting his superiors know that he would like to take part in the fighting in Europe, Marshall was eventually released to serve in France as a division's operations officer. Only receiving a 36-hour notice, he sent Lily back home to Lexington, collected his gear in New York and on June 14 he boarded a ship going for France (Unger, 2014).



When arriving to France, Marshall was greeted by very cold faced French, shattered by the recent horrific casualties at Somme and disappointed by the state of the arriving American troops, who were supposed to be their saviors. The French wanted to push Americans to start training the trench warfare early and include the American units into their own command structure, where the inexperienced troops could follow and learn the French veterans. They also expected the American soldiers to fall under French command (Unger, 2014). General Pershing refused all of that. He wanted the Americans to fight under American officers (Unger, 2014).

### **3.2 Marshall and Pershing**

Anxious to allow the American army to influence the war and help the Allies, Pershing was growing impatient with the delays that training of troops was causing. He would often drive out to Gondrecourt, where some training was taking place. Pershing would not like what he saw. Exercises were too slow and weren't executed properly. For these failings, he blamed General Sibert and on one occasion he harshly disparaged him in front of his subordinates (Unger, 2014). Being loyal to his direct superior, Marshall was upset by Pershing's behavior towards Sibert. As Pershing was leaving, Marshall confronted him personally, putting his hand on his arm, forcing him to listen. He reported, why the training wasn't running properly, listing extenuating circumstances for the deficiencies, noting that some of them were results of failings at the headquarters. Pershing listened to Marshall defending his superior and unit and shaking off the captain at the end, he walked off muttering (Unger, 2014).

Everyone who witnessed this exchange between Marshall and Pershing were horrified by the way he approached the General. Sibert himself, who Marshall attempted to defend, deplored the action. Everybody thought that Marshall's career as an officer was over and that he would be fired at once. However, in the end this incident would work to Marshall's advantage. Pershing never tried to punish Marshall for this offense, on the contrary Marshall gained Pershing's respect. Despite Marshall's heroic defense of his superior, Pershing ended up replacing Sibert as commander of the First Division. When he visited the division later, he often took Captain Marshall aside and would ask him about the state of the training (Unger, 2014).

### 3.3 Winning the war

In December of 1917, a big turnover had happened on the eastern front. The Russians, under a new Bolshevik leadership which raised from the Russian revolution, decided to withdraw from the war, which allowed the Germans to move the troops over to the western front. Reinforced, in spring of 1917 the Germans went on an offensive, hoping to reach victory in the war. Pushing the Allies far back, almost back to Paris (Unger, 2014).

At this point, the Allies decided to choose a single commander to lead all the forces, although with limited power of the Americans. This role would fall on the French general Ferdinand Foch. Under a united leadership, the Allies would finally gain the upper hand over the Germans (Liddell Hart, 2007). This would be a valuable lesson about command unity which Marshall would not forget in later years (Unger, 2014).

In the final months of the war, the American forces helped stopping the German offensive by a counterattack by the First Division at Cantigny in the Somme district. Marshall participated greatly in the staff planning for the assault. He also experienced some action himself, when he was doing a preliminary night reconnaissance to learn the area. He found himself under fire from German machineguns, having to crawl hundreds of yards back to safety. This tiny bit of action just underlined Marshall's interest in taking part in combat with troops (Cray, 2020).

Unfortunately, the wish to take part in combat in France would not be fulfilled. His planning work was good and too important for the army for him to be released to lead troops into combat. A little relief came when he was transferred to Pershing's headquarters at Chaumont and became the chief of the Operations Division of the U. S. First Army. At this point, the German offensive was halted, ending the chances of their victory (Unger, 2014).

Marshall helped to plan major American offensives against the Saint-Mihiel salient during the next four months and in September, he took part in planning of the Allied grand offensive in the Meuse-Argonne sector. These battles would help break the German will to fight (Unger, 2014).

Through the neutral Swiss, The German government sent a telegram to Washington, requesting steps to be taken for restoration of peace, based on the Fourteen Points announced by President Wilson earlier. On November 11, 1918, for America and for Marshall, the war ended (Unger, 2014).

Looking back at the Great War from Marshall's professional perspective, it had been a mixed experience. It was clear that he could have learned a lot more about training and personnel problems of a large army. But on the other hand, compared to other officers, he had picked up important skills and experience such as how to organize, manage and sustain large bodies of troops (Unger, 2014). He had to deal with difficult allies and Marshall's job was to work out all the details of operations and most importantly preparing the orders in a clear manner, so the commanders of the subordinate units would understand them easily. Marshall performed this task exceptionally well (Unger, 2014).

From the rank perspective, he did not progress as much as many of his colleagues, who led troops into battle, had progressed. Even though he wanted to get into action and was more than once recommended by his friends for field service, he was denied every time. Marshall was too good and too important in the position he was in. Unfortunately for him, it was almost impossible to climb up a rank in his position, compared to an officer leading troops into battle. Coming out of the war a temporary colonel, Marshall was reverted to major as his peacetime rank in 1919 (Unger, 2014).

### **3.4 The First World War – Evaluation**

This period in Marshall's career was a transition between picking up experience and learning at lower ranks and starting to occupy important positions in the army. His connection with General Bell proved to be worthy as it allowed Marshall to progress up in rank and secure a spot where he could use his teaching skills to train officers needed for the expanding army. This still wasn't satisfying for ambitious Marshall as his wish was to take part in battles. In general, Marshall was able to capture the eye of many high ranked men, present himself as a capable officer and establish good connections. Sometimes, he took this practice very far, for example in the incident with Patton, Marshall risked his career in order to inform the angry General about the situation. This incident in particular was a good

example of Marshall's diplomatic and persuasive skills development. He was able to deliver information where it needed to be delivered in a convincing manner. These qualities made him stand out as a talented officer.

Overall, in the First World War, Marshall did not add any impressive combat successes to his portfolio, which was his goal as a promotion hungry officer. From this point of view, this part of Marshall's career could be considered as unsuccessful as he did not manage to fulfill his goal but from the overview of the greater picture, Marshall performed well as he successfully collected very valuable experience and made himself known to officers ranked higher than him.

## 4. Between the wars

Marshall was a part of the force that remained in Europe after the Armistice to fulfil occupation duties and to be ready in case the peace negotiations failed. Another task was to create a final report on the performance and achievements of the American Expeditionary Forces during the Great War (Cray, 2020).

In April of 1919 Marshall, requested by Pershing, became one of his official aides, serving as his adviser. This was a prestigious spot, being connected to a person currently celebrated as the America's great war hero, who would be made the General of the Armies in 1919 and in 1921 he would become Chief of Staff. This assignment would pay off to Marshall with valuable professional dividends, making up for the lacking career progress caused by missing combat action (Unger, 2014).

Now with the war over, the old army career issue had returned. With no danger in sight, there was little need of soldiers and sailors, who were high in cost of maintenance. Luckily thanks to Marshall's connections with Pershing, he was still needed. He followed him to Washington, where Pershing would serve for the next five years. Marshall settled in an apartment hotel with Lily. During this time, Pershing became close with George and Lily, a warm friend and a mentor (Unger, 2014).

Summarizing the results of the war, it became clear that even though America helped win the war, the performance was not ideal. Even though the country could boast the world's most productive economy, it wasn't able to gear up in time, produce tanks, planes, ships and guns required to wage the war and had to borrow this gear from The French and British (Unger, 2014).

These shortcomings were addressed not too long after the end of the war. Col. John McAuley Palmer, one of Marshall's old students from Leavenworth, was sent to Washington by Pershing to contribute his expertise on this matter. His idea was based on a small core military, which would be always ready to take action at any moment and also a National Guard, which would be converted into a large army in times of need such as any war similar to the Great War. This approach was what Pershing would prefer as well (Unger, 2014). When in July 1921 Pershing became the army Chief of Staff replacing Peyton C. March and

moved to Fort Myer in Virginia, Marshall remained his aide and moved house to live nearby Pershing (Cray, 2020).

Another important moment in Marshall's career was in 1924 when Pershing retired from the army. Marshall was now tired of staff positions and assisting higher ranked officers. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in August but any further progress would be depending on command of troops but there was no option for such assignments at the time. To solve this, he decided to apply for oversea posting again and in April 1924, he was sent to serve in the Fifteenth Infantry in Tientsin, China (Unger, 2014).

For economic reasons, only a small unit was placed in China to protect Americans and their property there. Marshall, together with Lily joined this American community. His job was not difficult, officially he was only a regimental executive officer, although until Col. William Naylor arrived, he oversaw the whole Fifteen Infantry.

Alongside doing desk work, keeping an eye on the Chinese warlords and watching for any anti-American movements among the Chinese, Marshall could again spend time recreating. He bought a Mongolian pony which he took for rides and to the Tientsin racetrack. He also played squash and tennis at the American country club to further improve his physical shape. He also took upon himself to learn Chinese. Despite not being proficient at learning languages early in his life at VMI, he made a good progress learning Chinese at the regimental language school (Cray, 2020).

The time he spent in China did not make him an expert on the country, although it did provide him with at least basic knowledge of the local order which would come in handy in his mission after the World War II. As his assignment in China was about to end, he would once again have to deal with the issue of peacetime army life – lack of opportunities. He decided to accept an offer to become an instructor at the Army War College in Washington (Unger, 2014).

Marshall and Lily sailed back to the US in May of 1927. Her health was deteriorating and their travel from San Francisco across the country to the East coast worsened her health even further. They spent two weeks in Lexington and then moved to Washington. When Lily's health deteriorated even more, she had tests done in the Walter Reed Hospital. The

diagnosis was that her heart condition was worsened by a thyroid malady, and it required an operation but first she had to wait and rest until she regained some strength back. The surgery was difficult but successful. She stayed in the hospital for three more weeks, visited regularly by Marshall. Just a week before she was supposed to be released, as she was writing a letter to her mother, she suddenly died. This devastated Marshall, she was a pillar in his life, always supporting him in his difficult career (Unger, 2014).

The army quickly came to help the grieving officer. Marshall was offered multiple assignment choices of jobs. He chose the post of assistant commandant at the Infantry School at Fort Benning in Georgia where he would lead the Academic Department, controlling the curriculum (Unger, 2014).

The next four and a half years Marshall spent at Benning provided him with emotional refuge. While the work helped with keeping up his mental health, his physical health deteriorated, developing a thyroid condition which caused an irregular pulse and coronary arrhythmia (Unger, 2014). Marshall's work at Benning would leave an important mark on the Infantry school. His idea was to simplify and make the infantry more flexible. He preached that the army orders were always too detailed and complicated, resulting in slowing down of movements and response time. Orders were supposed to be brief and clear. Marshall intended to counter the trench warfare style of World War I with more mobile war of movement. This would be exactly how the next great war was fought (Unger, 2014).

In fall of 1929, Marshall's ordeal after the death of his wife came to an end. While dining with friends in a town adjacent to Benning, he met Katherine Tupper Brown, a rich widow, mother of three children. She was one year younger than Marshall, forty-seven at the time. Katherine did not expect to get married again but meeting with Marshall changed her plans. In the summer of 1930 Marshall spent five weeks with Katherine and her children at their cottage on Fire Island, located on Long Island's south side. Marshall got to know the children there and found out they were compatible. Katherine and George were married on October 15, 1930. The ceremony was kept simple, with only few family members and closest friends attending. The local papers reported General Pershing was to be the best man which attracted a big crowd interested in seeing the famous General (Cray, 2020).

As Marshall's four and a half years at Benning ended in 1932, the world was drowning in the Great Depression. While the United States had elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt to be their new president, in Europe, Adolf Hitler seized power in Germany and started to arm the nation, trying to pitch it against the rest of the world to overturn the balance established by the Versailles Treaty with his totalitarian and racist regime (Liddell Hart, 2007).

Marshall's next assignment was at Fort Screven, commanding the 8th Infantry Regiment in Georgia. He was promoted to full colonel in 1933. After Screven he was transferred to Fort Moultrie. In this time, he was also working in a program called the Civilian Conservation Corps – the CCC. The goal of CCC was to provide work opportunities and income to young unemployed men between the ages of 18 and 25 (National Park Service, n. d.). They would live in military style camps in the wilderness, building roads, bridges, greatly improving the country's rural infrastructure and for harvest of natural resources. The program would run until 1939, where the young men would be enlisted instead. This would provide Marshall with a great deal of experience working with men with no military training (Unger, 2014).

Unexpectedly, Marshall received orders to transfer to Chicago as a senior instructor for the Illinois National Guard, which would be a step backwards in his military career. The person behind this was Douglas MacArthur, an officer and an opposite to Marshall. A West Point graduate with combat experience in France, for which he quickly rose in rank. It is not clear if MacArthur intended to hurt Marshall's career but being part of opposing groups in the army, the two men certainly weren't friends. Marshall tried to protest the new posting, but it was rejected (Unger, 2014).

Despite all the difficulties, in August 1936 Marshall was finally promoted to brigadier general, an important step, necessary for any further progress. He was also transferred to the Vancouver barracks in Washington, to command the Fifth Brigade of the Third Division (Cray, 2020). Welcomed by the barracks band and a guard of honor, began two years which Katherine later described as the best two years of their life. Marshall's health also improved during this time, after he had a surgery done in San Francisco. It would be important for him to be known as a healthy man because a potential career promotion could be denied if he was deemed unhealthy (Unger, 1940).



## **4.1 Between the wars– Evaluation**

The period between the wars was a hard trial for Marshall. In his personal life, he suffered the toughest of hits in form of the death of his wife. To cover this personal struggle, he dove head on into very important work. This was a very hard test, but Marshall managed to handle it outstandingly well. He mourned his wife's death while simultaneously fulfilling his duties as a soldier.

The work he had done in this period of his career was the beginning of his influence onto the World War II. Marshall had done a great job applying his experience earned in World War I into the development of the Infantry school while simultaneously gathering more important experience by working with young men in the CCC program. This was a strong foundation that later helped Marshall fulfill his task of preparing the army.

## **5. Preparations for the World War II**

When Marshall returned to Washington for his next post, the War Plans Division, in 1938, the US Army was at an important point. Air power was never considered important. Even though Marshall himself wasn't a follower of the victory by airpower doctrine, he endorsed expansion and investment into the air force (Unger, 2014). He didn't stay at the War Plans Division for long, leaving to become the Deputy Chief of Staff. As his career progress was escalating, so was the American fear of another major war.

Following months of tension between Germany and Czechoslovakia, the Nazi government demanded autonomy for Sudeten Germans. France was bound to help the Czechs in case of danger and in turn Britain was committed to back France but neither of them were prepared to defend Czechoslovakia, politically or militarily. Czechs with no allies were forced to accept the terms of The Munich agreement (Liddell Hart, 2007). Following this, the British and French pledged to help Poland, in case of a German attack. Watching the events unfold from overseas, the Americans were alarmed by the developments in Europe (Unger, 2014).

Marshall learnt a valuable lesson here, seeing how the weakness of France and Britain was caused by their military unpreparedness. Both the nations neglected their militaries for a long time and were seriously lacking compared to the Germans, especially in airpower. He realized it was necessary for the Americans to improve their airpower but also, immediately ship planes to the British and French (Unger, 2014).

### **5.1 Chief of Staff**

At this point, Marshall was in the run for Chief of Staff of the United States Army. He was competing against at least five officers with a rank senior to him. The most significant out of them was Maj. Gen. Hugh Drum, former chief of staff of the First Corps in France. Marshall had behind him some influential people such as Pershing, who had even written a letter to the president in support of Marshall. His strongest supporter was Harry Hopkins, advisor of the president whose opinion Roosevelt greatly valued (Britannica, n. d.). At the end of 1938, Marshall and Hopkins met to discuss the army's proposal for their budget, one that better balanced than the president's airpower heavy plan. Hopkins took their budget

proposal to the president and persuaded him to change from his unbalanced plan. Marshall and Hopkins became very close friends in the process (Unger, 2014).

On April 23, Roosevelt summoned Marshall to the White House where he offered him the post of chief of staff. The two men talked at the presidential desk for half an hour, Marshall proposed some of his ideas on how to defend the country in case of a war (Unger, 2014).

Marshall's first mission after his promotion was a goodwill visit to Brazil. At the time, Brazil was feared to become a "fifth column" for the Axis powers with their large German and Italian communities. This danger was overblown, but Marshall still visited Brazil anyways. The mission was a success, Marshall attended receptions, watched parades, talked to government officials and high-ranking officers and discussed possible military cooperation between Brazil and the United States (Unger, 2014).

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Marshall was woken up by a call informing him about the invasion at 3 a.m., later that day he was promoted to the permanent rank of major general and, he was officially sworn in as Chief of Staff of the United States Army (Cray, 2015). Immediately after the short ceremony he was summoned to the White House to discuss the events in Europe. On September 3, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Marshall had reached the highest possible rank in the army at the same exact moment the World War II had started (Unger, 2014).

## **5.2 Waking up the giant**

His biggest task and challenge now were to prepare the American army for an upcoming global war. Marshall set off to prepare plans to expand the army greatly, but the president would deny his ambitious plans. Roosevelt wasn't against the expansion but he couldn't allow for big army expansion because of the strong isolationist movement present in the United States (Unger, 1940). Isolationist were people who strongly opposed the idea of the United States being involved in foreign affairs and wars (Britannica, n.d.).

Marshall knew he needed to awaken the country and warn it about the dangers which were caused by the country's lackluster military power. On September 28 the Soviet Union,

having signed a nonaggression pact with Germany earlier, invaded Poland from the east. After this, the war fell silent in the Europe for the next six months, except for some minor incidents (Liddell Hart, 2007).

Meanwhile Marshall kept pushing for more funds and upgrades for the army. At the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in December he harshly criticized American schools for the failure to teach military history. By estimating that the army's ability to fight was less than 25 percent, he captured big amounts of attention from the public (Unger, 2014).

Marshall was persistent in his push for upgrades, asking the Congress to fund new tanks, the new Garand rifles or heavy artillery. He wanted to get equipment for about a million men, with immediate goal of equipping the regular army which was 227 000 men strong at the time and the 235 000 strong National Guard. He received funding for just a fraction of what he asked for (Stoler, 2021).

The war in Europe resumed in April of 1940 when Germany invaded unprepared Danes who surrendered immediately. The Germans continued pushing north, invading Norway. Norway was defended with the help of Royal Air Force and Royal Navy but after few weeks of fighting most of the country was occupied by the Germans. These events caused the Chamberlain government in Britain to fall. Replacing them came the determined Winston Churchill, leading a coalition government (Liddell Hart, 2007).

The Germans followed up their victory in Norway by attacking to the west, rolling over the French, Dutch and Belgian armies. British Expeditionary Force in France was surrounded into a tight spot at Dunkirk, from where they were famously evacuated back to Britain, although they had to leave most of their valuable equipment behind. On June 22 the French had surrendered, signing the agreement with Germans at Compiègne (Liddell Hart, 2007).

The lightning-fast victories of Germans in Europe shocked the Americans. These events helped Marshall's mission as the Congress loosened the defense purse strings, increasing the budget by 1,2 billion beyond of what was asked for. A month later another 1,7 billion dollars was assigned to expand the army to 375 000 men. However, majority of

the public didn't want the United States to get included directly into the war in Europe (Unger, 2014).

Marshall was afraid that the United States lacked trained officers, instructors. On September 16, 1940, the Selective Service Act was enacted, drafting men between the age of twenty-one and thirty-six to register to local draft boards. There they would be examined, and their military status was assigned to them based on health, age, skills and experience (Unger, 1940).

### **5.3 Aid to Britain**

A big talking point for Marshall was the aid to Britain. He was all for supporting the enemies of Germany, but the issue was that the Americans weren't even capable of producing enough tanks, planes and weapons for themselves, let alone for the British, who were in dire need of equipment after having to abandon theirs at Dunkirk. Roosevelt wanted to donate equipment to the British while Marshall opposed him in favor of gearing up the American army instead (Unger, 2014). In the end they met middle way and some equipment, including the new B-17 Flying Fortress Bombers were shipped to Britain. This proved to be a good move as when deployed in combat, the bombers revealed serious issues which were then fixed (Unger, 2014).

At the end of 1940, the situation in Europe improved slightly. The British RAF managed to win the Battle of Britain, which forced the Germans to abandon their plans of invasion. This strengthened the American belief in the British and led to further talks about cooperation between the nations. While the United States and Britain were talking, Germany had, to surprise of Stalin, invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941. (Liddell Hart, 2007).

### **5.4 The mobilization**

Marshall was the author behind the American mobilization. He changed the old divisions system from World War I with a new one, which suited the mobile war better. He remembered how unprepared the soldiers of AEF were in France and so he insisted on large-scale military maneuvers. Also, most deficiencies in equipment, which would come up

thanks to the maneuvers, would be fixed and new lessons about countering the German blitzkrieg used in Europe were applied to the training (Unger, 2014).

Marshall said about the General Headquarters Maneuvers in Texas and Louisiana: “I want the mistakes [made] down in Louisiana, not over Europe, and the only way to do this thing is to try it out, and if it doesn’t work what we need to make it work” (Unger, 1940). At least 400 000 men took part in the maneuvers and the result was a much improved in performance from both the men and the officers. Marshall had noted some officers whose performance especially stood out. Amongst these were Dwight David Eisenhower or George Smith Patton who later became key military officers in the war (Cray, 2015).

One of Marshall’s important achievements in the preparation times was his support of the draft, which was not going very smoothly. He brought this problem up in the War Department’s annual report to Congress and warned them that if the draft wasn’t successful, it would render many divisions ineffective. The persona Marshall had built up to this point came in handy. He was viewed as a trustworthy, truth telling man, who wasn’t connected to any political parties. He reminded the senators and representatives of Germany’s recent victories and claimed that a strong military was the best policy (Unger, 2014).

As the United States were shipping more and more equipment to Britain, their ships would be attacked and sunk by German U-boats. The U.S. Navy was tasked by defending the convoys in the Atlantic which would inevitably end up in scraps between the American and German navy (Liddell Hart, 2007).

## **5.5 Preparations for the World War II – Evaluation**

At this point, Marshall could finally be satisfied because he managed to fulfill his goals of reaching the highest posts in the army but there was a monumental task ahead of him. Luckily, Marshall was the correct man in position to solve it. As a fresh Chief of Staff, he wasted no time and immediately got to work.

Marshall performed exceptionally well as he prepared the plans for the great expansion of the army. He used his earlier experience to build the plans for the army

expansion, but more importantly he functioned as a public figure and was responsible introducing the public into the concept. Marshall was a key figure in the mobilization, and he delivered an excellent effort, applying his experience and observations from the past in order to prepare a functional and mobile army lead by competent officers.

With the strong anti-war isolationist movement in the United States, his speech ability to convince the public of the importance of building up a strong army was crucial. He possessed the specific skillset that was required for this task. This was one of the most important pieces of work Marshall had done to influence the World War II.

## 6. World War II

With Japan joining the Axis powers of Germany and Italy, Marshall was started to prepare the economic plan for a war that now seemed unavoidable, also urged by the president. He compiled a team of officers for this job, led by General Albert Wedemeyer. This document, labeled the Victory program, had some short comings, such as overestimating the current industrial power, but nevertheless it was approved by Marshall, who needed it as a backing for the upcoming economical needs of the military (Unger, 2014).

It was obvious that Japan would start making moves in Asia sooner or later but Marshall thought stringing out the negotiations as long as possible would allow the Americans to improve their positions in Pacific enough to deter an attack (Unger, 2014). On November 27, 1941, the negotiations with Japan were terminated, even though it wasn't known where, it was very likely that the Japanese were about to attack. A message signed by Marshall was sent out to commanders in the Philippines, San Francisco and Hawaii, to take precautionary actions against a possible attack (Cray, 2015).

What the Americans didn't know was that at this point, the Japanese Operation Z task force consisting of 6 aircraft carriers, two battle ships and other military vessels, was already on its way to Hawaii. On December 7, 1941, two waves of planes were launched towards the island base and caught the army completely unprepared. While the American carrier force was fortunately at sea, the Japanese still managed to destroy multiple battleships and almost two hundred American planes on the ground (Liddell Hart, 2007).

The attack on Pearl Harbor was completely unanticipated by everyone, including Marshall. Even though the possibility was there, the American leadership was almost certain the Japanese would attack south, at Singapore or Philippines. Following the destruction of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese followed up with successful campaign through China and South Asia (Liddell Hart, 2007).

To counter the danger raising in the Pacific, the Allies established a command called the ABDA, American, British, Dutch and Australian. Marshall proposed that the ABDA coalition was to be commanded by one commander. Reasoning with his experience in France



in World War I, when Foch was assigned to lead the Allies. None of the present wanted someone else to be in command of their forces but in the end Marshall and Roosevelt convinced everyone to agree and so for the rest of the war, there would be one general or admiral – the Supreme Commander in charge in each theater (Unger, 2014).

## **6.1 Invasion into Europe**

Marshall's first proposal was to send an early force to land in France in fall of 1942 nicknamed operation Sledgehammer. This would help alleviate pressure from the Soviet Union. The true invasion was planned to come mid-1943. Both stages would use Britain as a base, where the troops would build up and prepare. The British were initially happy with these plans but in the end, they were denied because it simply wasn't possible to prepare in time such an early invasion (nicknamed Sledgehammer) against fortified German positions on the French coast (Unger, 2014).

Marshall fought hard for the Sledgehammer, trying to convince Churchill that without it, the Soviet Union would fall but Churchill hated the idea and thought it would only be an unnecessary massacre of Allied, mostly British, forces. Rather than France he pushed for an invasion in North Africa, nicknamed operation Gymnast and later operation Torch (Payne, 2015). Marshall would threaten Churchill that if the British would not go with Sledgehammer, the United States would fully commit into the Pacific war instead. In the end even Roosevelt directed that operation Torch would be executed at the earliest possible date (Unger, 2014).

## **6.2 Operations in North Africa and the Mediterranean**

The initial landings in North Africa were successful but fighting the experienced Axis troops led by Erwin Rommel proved to be very difficult. The air force and the artillery were good, but the regular infantry ran into issues. After hard battles, the Allied forces overwhelmed the Axis thanks to their sheer number of men and equipment and captured the remaining Axis soldiers in Tunisia (Liddell Hart, 2007).

In the Casablanca conference, the Allies yet again argued for what was to be their next move. Marshall, while still hoping for a landing in France in 1943, was overwhelmed by the British and so the next step was agreed to be to invade Sicily and Italy. At this point Marshall knew that the landing could not be possible earlier than 1944. While Churchill thought the push through Italy would be easy, Marshall was very skeptical of this (Unger, 2014).

Even though he avoided interfering with the operations at Sicily and Italy, he accepted the logic behind the Mediterranean campaign and its inevitability. Having large amounts of inactive troops in North Africa idling was not acceptable for him so he welcomed the opportunity to deploy them into action (Cray, 2020).

Just like Marshall predicted, the Italy campaign proved to be a long and difficult one, after the Germans moved in experienced units from the eastern front. The fighting would go on for long, only ending together with the German surrender in 1945 (Liddell Hart, 2007).

The next advance of the Allies was discussing at the Tehran Conference, where Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill met personally for the first time. The British wanted to start a Balkan campaign, but it was denied by the Soviets, who were pushing for opening a western front in France, the Americans backed the Soviets (Liddell Hart, 2007). It was also here where Stalin pressured Roosevelt into choosing, who would be the commander of the invasion forces (Unger, 2014). Roosevelt summoned Marshall and asked him which post Marshall would prefer, army chief of staff or supreme commander in France. Marshall gave up the choice to Roosevelt, who decided to keep him in Washington at the Pentagon, while Eisenhower would lead the forces in France (Unger, 2014).

### **6.3 Back to the United States**

Returning to the United States, Marshall got to work, helping to win the war. He recognized a weakness in the replacement policy. Marshall recommended to Eisenhower to place a single officer in charge of the replacement system in France. This officer would manage those replacements needed by fighting divisions would not stagnate in depots but would be quickly assigned. He also insisted on the quality of the replacements, the men needed to be well trained to take over the roles (Cray, 2020).

Marshall had also managed to make use of one large unused pool of work power – the nation's women. In May 1942 a group of women activist proposed an idea to create Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, which would provide replacement for male soldiers in noncombat positions with trained women. Unlike many of his peers, Marshall enthusiastically supported this idea and helped to make it authorized through Congress. He personally selected Oveta Culp Hobby to be the first head of the corps. Throughout the war at least 150 000 women had served in WAAC, freeing the men for combat (Unger, 2014).

For the planning of the Overlord operation, Marshall's duty was limited to the planning phase. He also helped Eisenhower to find and choose fitting battle commanders for the operation (Unger, 2014).

The 6th of June 1944, the day Marshall worked on for years had finally arrived and American, British, Canadian and Polish troops stormed onto the shores of Normandy, beginning the push to Berlin (Liddell Hart, 2007). For the rest of the war in Europe and in Pacific Marshall remained on the sidelines in Washington, organizing and allowing his generals to fight off the Axis (Unger, 2014).

## **6.4 Pearl Harbor investigation**

In the summer of 1944, Marshall's role in the failure, that was the destruction of Pearl Harbor, came under scrutiny. Initially, General Short and Admiral Kimmel were found guilty of dereliction of duty and were removed from their positions (Cray, 2020). But the investigations continued and after the war and labeled as a secondary cause of the failure was War Departments' failure to keep Short updated on the negotiations between the US and Japan. Marshall had failed to inform Short in the weeks before the attack that the negotiations were severely strained and likely to end, allowing Short to prepare for a possible attack early (Unger, 2014).

Marshall came out heavily bruised out of this investigation and seriously considered resignation, but Henry L. Stimson had ordered an additional study of the circumstances, which would clear Marshall of all the responsibilities of Short's failure. This would revive Marshall's spirits, no longer wanting to resign (Unger, 2014).

## 6.5 World War II - Evaluation

The entry into World War II was a low point of Marshall's career. He did not expect the surprise attack by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. Luckily for Marshall and the United States, their aircraft fleet was by luck out on the sea, allowing them to escape destruction and fight back in the Pacific. Although Marshall was cleared of blame at the end, this still left a bad mark on his until now perfect resume.

Marshall took part in the planning of the Allied landing in Europe, although his work was counter-productive in a way, as he wanted an early landing in France, opposed to the African campaign that took place in the end. He was convinced his plan was the correct one, although it seemed difficult and costly. This can be seen as a negative influence onto the war, as Marshall diverted the attention from Churchill's plan, which was ultimately executed and led to victory, to possibly push his own personal work.

As the war progressed through Africa and Italy, Marshall made use of his diplomatic skills and functioned as an extended hand of Roosevelt, serving as the voice of the United States and an elongated arm of Roosevelt in negotiations between the Allies. Later after being recalled back to the United States, he continued supporting the war effort greatly by introducing improvements back at home.

Just like in the First World War, from one side of the view, Marshall was not successful as his very ambitious plan of early invasion wasn't deemed good. From the opposite view however, Marshall can be commended for performing his diplomatic duties excellently throughout the war. When given the option of taking the lead in France, Marshall knew, there were more experienced combat officers than him. He sacrificed prestige that would come with leading the invasion to ensure success of the Allies.

## **7. After the Second World War**

Marshall wanted to retire from his post after the defeat of Germany, but the president asked him to stay until the defeat of Japan. With Eisenhower lined up to replace him, he finally resigned as chief of staff in November 1945. He did not, however, get a lot of time to rest, because in December, he received a call from the president, asking him to replace resigned Patrick Hurley as the U.S. ambassador to China. His goals were to stop hostilities, especially in the north of China and to unify China by democratic methods. This mission was not successful as both sides, the Nationalists and the Communists rejected his proposals (Cray, 2020).

After returning from China in 1947, he was appointed by president Truman Secretary of State (Payne, 2015). Now, after the war, The United States emerged in the world destroyed by the war as a superpower. Their only rival was the Soviet Union, who after the war had great impact on the vast area of eastern Europe which they freed from the Axis powers and so the Cold War began (Unger, 2014).

Initially, Marshall thought that it was possible to negotiate with the Stalin. But as negotiations went on, his view shifted more and more, realizing it wasn't the case and something else had to be done about the expanding Soviet sphere of influence (Unger, 2014).

## **8. Marshall plan**

The very idea of financial help to Europe was already present at the beginning of Truman's administration. One of the first pioneers was Dean Acheson. He tried to introduce the idea of the growing crisis to the public, have them believe in the idea of sending financial help to Europe. William L. Clayton and George F. Kennan also worked on constructing the plan. They proposed a six-to-seven-billion-dollar, three-year plan which intended the Europeans to shape the details themselves. Marshall organized meetings between these men. He also gave speeches supporting the idea Harvard University (Holm, 2016).

The Europeans didn't waste any time and The Committee of European Economic Cooperation (CEEC), consisting of sixteen nations, and started drafting a program that would meet the American criteria in Paris. The Soviets were invited to take part. Some European countries were initially involved but got bullied out by the Soviets (Unger, 2014).

Once finished, the CEEC plan was delivered to Washington. It was a four year, 22 billion plan, working with limited integration of the economies of European countries, being a sort of a forecast of the European Union. Now Marshall's role was to take it to the Congress and pass it through. The twenty-two billion sum was too high, so it was modified to 17 billion (Holm, 2015).

Marshall testified in front of a joint House and Senate committee, urging to pass a much-needed small rescue measure quickly, and to authorize the whole plan. Truman himself appeared in front of the committee to support the plan. After a scare in form of a Communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in 1948, both the emergency part and eventually the whole plan passed. It was around this time that Truman started calling it the Marshall Plan (Unger, 2014).

In early January, Marshall once again contributed to the final passage of Marshall plan. His speech to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was very effective. He presented the careful studies of Europe's needs and American resources available for them. He promised it would be made sure that no money goes to waste. He assured the senators that the Congress would be updated in detail about the progress of the program. By mid-January,

the presentations of the Marshall Plan to Congress were done but they needed to convince the American voters as well because it was a presidential election year (Unger, 2014).

Marshall campaigned around America, focusing especially on the places where the most opposition was expected. He had speeches in the Chicago area, in front of the Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Association of Manufacturers, Iowa corn farmers or Southern cotton and tobacco planters. He emphasized the dangers of Communism spreading through damaged European countries. He also tempted them with the economical gains for America coming from a prospering European market (Unger, 2014)

Passed by Congress in April of 1948, the Marshall plan allowed for 13,3 billion dollars to be provided to Europe, split into yearly parts. Thanks to the plan, European inflation was put in check, it helped to modernize economic accounting systems and allowed Europe to put in place the foundation for a unified Europe. More importantly, by reinforcing the democratic governments with the financial injection, the threat of Communist Western Europe was stopped (Holm, 2016).

Marshall resigned from the Secretary of State post on January 7, 1949, due to health issues. Later, he was assigned the Secretary of Defense by president Truman in 1950 (Cray, 2020), his main concerns being the Korean War. Korea was split into two parts, North backed by the Soviet Union and South supported by the Americans (History, n. d.). This was one of the first clashes of the Cold War. The Cold war was a proxy war – the United States and Soviet Union, having nuclear warheads pointed at each other supported opposite sides of conflicts all around the world to spread their influence (National Geographic, 2022).

George Marshall retired from public service in September of 1951. He and Katherine would spend time in their home in Leesburg, Virginia. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1953 "for proposing and supervising the plan for the economic recovery of Europe"(The Nobel Prize, n. d.). After multiple strokes, George Catlett Marshal died on October 16, 1959.

## **8.1 Marshall Plan – Evaluation**

Marshall played an important role in the development of the economic aid from the United States to Europe. Yet again he applied his excellent speech skills to sell the idea of the plan not only to the American public, but more importantly to the European countries for which the aid was targeted.

His great promotion of the plan was key to the success of it as on the surface it would seem unlikely that the public would approve of shipping large financial support elsewhere right after an exhausting conflict. His speeches which Marshall targeted at key groups were very effective and played a major role.

The success of the Marshall plan had a massive influence onto the political landscape of Europe. Had the plan not been accepted and carried out, the door would be left open for the Communists to take over the war destroyed Europe, therefore Marshall's task of promoting the plan was crucial for European democracy. Ultimately, Marshall managed this task well and successfully completed it.



## Conclusion

The aim of this bachelor thesis is to show how important a son of a coal dealer, George Catlett Marshall, was in the scheme of victory of democracy in the Second World War and then in the destroyed Europe.

Despite having poor basic education, Marshall, challenged by his brother belittling talk, entered the VMI decided to succeed. It was here where he became a disciplined, success driven soldier, which would he be known for his whole career.

Earning his first officer experience far away from his homeland in the islands of Philippines, Marshall successfully led a small unit of 50 men. Already there and then the type of his assignment, organizing and improving the quality of the soldiers rather than leading them in battle, would predict, how exactly would Marshall prove himself as one of the greatest.

Passing a difficult two-year course, Marshall was doing everything he could to reach a personal goal of his – to progress up the ranks of the army. He picked up another crucially important skill while working as an instructor, he learned how to organize movement of large masses of troops and later back in the Philippines, he was involved in planning amphibious landings, giving him great knowledge for the Normandy invasion.

Hungry for proving his worth, Marshall was sent to Europe, but he never got to take part in combat but instead he had the big responsibility of planning operations. It was also during this time when Marshall got close to General Pershing, an important acquaintance.

After the war he stayed with Pershing, which propelled Marshall's career upwards. After the death of his wife, Marshall started to do work which had great influence on the Second World War. He worked on improving the infantry, making it faster and more flexible through simplifying the orders. He taught how to fight a mobile war, which was exactly how the Second World War was fought. As the war was knocking on the door, Marshall gave great support to the airmen and helped the air force, who proved to be a necessary part of the arsenal, grow and expand.

On the same day as the Second World War started, Marshall reached his goal and became the Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Now it was up to him to build up the lacking American army and he did not disappoint. Fighting against the isolationists, he

pushed for massive improvements for the army that were necessary to win the war. Marshall prepared the American public to understand that US involvement in the war was necessary. He was the constructor of the draft.

Throughout the Second World War, together with Roosevelt, thanks to his diplomatic and strategic skills Marshall was the voice of the United States in the discussions and plannings of the Allies.

After winning the war, Marshall continued influencing the important political battles. He wasn't the author of the Marshall Plan, but rather he was a father of the idea. He chose the right people to prepare the base and then he convinced the Congress, using his persona and the public to allow the Marshall Plan to be accepted and applied. Without his efforts, it is likely that the Marshall Plan would not have been approved, resulting in terrible political consequences for Europe, with the Soviet Union growing its sphere of influence much further than it did.

Without ever leading men into battle, George Catlett Marshall solidified himself as one of the most important soldiers of the Second World War. He built and directed the war winning American army. Winston Churchill described him the best: Organizer of Victory.

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## Annotation

<b>Jméno a příjmení</b>	Vojtěch Neuwirth
<b>Katedra nebo ústav</b>	Ústav cizích jazyků
<b>Vedoucí práce</b>	Mgr. Ph.D. Jiří Flajšar
<b>Rok obhajoby</b>	2023

<b>Název práce</b>	Vliv George Marshalla na druhou světovou válku a poválečnou Evropu
<b>Název v angličtině</b>	Influence of George Marshall on the World War II and post-war Europe
<b>Anotace práce</b>	Cílem této práce je popsat, jak George Marshall propracoval z nevýhodné pozice až na vrchol armády a jak motivoval a připravil americký národ k vítězství ve válce. Tato práce se zaměřuje na důležité momenty, ve kterých Marshall nabyl zkušenosti a jak je později použil k tomu, aby pomohl Spojeným státům a demokracii porazit Nacistické Německo a později zastavit šíření komunismu skrz Evropu.
<b>Klíčová slova</b>	George Marshall, Marshallův Plán, první světová válka, druhá světová válka, demokracie, komunismus, vliv, armáda
<b>Anotace v angličtině</b>	The aim of this thesis is to reveal how George Catlett Marshall worked his way up the difficult ladder of the United States military ranks, starting from a disadvantaged position and how he motivated the nation to get prepared for an inevitable war that needed to be won. The thesis focuses on important moments, where he gained experience and how he later used it to help the United States and democracy win against the Axis powers and later against the Communism spreading in Europe.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině</b>	George Marshall, Marshall Plan, World War I, World War II, democracy, communism, influence, army
<b>Přílohy vázané k práci</b>	0
<b>Rozsah práce</b>	45 stran
<b>Jazyk práce</b>	Anglický jazyk

## Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá Americkým vojákem a státníkem George Catlett Marshalllem a tím, jak se vypracoval až na samotný vrchol armády a následně díky svým schopnostem a zkušenostem vystavěl americkou armádu a připravil ji k vítězství v druhé světové válce. Marshall také velmi silně ovlivnil poválečnou Evropu. Použil svou silnou osobnost k vytvoření plánu finanční pomoci, kterým upevnil a posílil demokratické vlády ve válkou zničených zemích Evropy a tímto zabránil rozsahu komunismu.