



Wise Counsel

George C. Marshall was an extraordinary leader. He transformed the US Army from a poorly armed and trained organization to one of the most powerful military services in history as the Chief of Staff from 1939 to 1945. He successfully balanced the demands of wars waged in five different theaters, not to mention simultaneously and successfully dealing with the egos of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur, and George Patton. In 1947 he introduced the European Recovery Plan, subsequently to be known as the Marshall Plan, which led to the restoration, rebuilding, and full recovery of the European continent. He was twice named as *Time Magazine's* Man of the Year, and in 1952 he became the first soldier to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Marshall's accomplishments have faded into the background but they have had a long-lasting impact.

Marshall, when asked, pointed to these principles when recounting why he felt he had been successful:

1. **Teaching.** Marshall focused his students at the Army Infantry School on fighting and learning what it would take to win "the next war."
2. **Candor.** In his first meeting with Roosevelt, Marshall told the president he disagreed with him about his plan to build war planes without asking Congress for money to maintain them. People in the room thought he'd committed professional suicide. Six months later, the president selected Marshall to be the Chief of Staff of the Army.
3. **Selflessness.** Leading the invasion of Europe was the most sought-after assignment by those who could possibly be considered for it. Marshall expected he would be chosen but Roosevelt said he would only choose him if he specifically asked for it. Marshall, too duty-bound to ever ask for such an assignment, simply told Roosevelt, "I will serve wherever you order me, Mr. President. Feel free to act in the best interest of the country." The command of the invasion went to Dwight D. Eisenhower.
4. **Vision.** Knowing that a military victory was only a step toward lasting peace, Marshall chose to stay on active duty after the war concluded, and worked tirelessly to persuade

the Congress to fund the economic recovery of Europe. He left his mark on the world by making it a better place.