
The Round Tablette

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Welcome to the February session of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table.

Tonight's speaker is Edward Farley Aldrich, author of *The Partnership*. He will discuss the great collaborative success of George Marshall and Henry Stimson in the buildup and mobilizing of the military structure to gain victory.

Two hundred years into the future, historians will look back on the first half of the twentieth century and contemplate the rhetorical dichotomy: Does history make the man or does the man make the history. Although this conundrum can never be truly solved, when looking at two pivotal American leaders of the Second World War, Henry Stimson and George Marshall, one pauses over their intellect, power, and insight for humanity's future.

History can make strange bedfellows. Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin making a pact at the beginning of the war, even though they were on opposite sides of political spectrum. Even people who are on the same side in a conflict, like Stimson and Marshall came from different worlds. The man who brought them together President Franklin Roosevelt led the United States through its two great crisis' of the twentieth century, the Great Depression and World War II, and while Roosevelt did not live to see the conclusion of the latter, he put two men in place to help bring about victory. Often seen by the Republican opposition as the devil incarnate, FDR often circumvented US neutrality laws to aid the Allied efforts and when war came he used whatever means necessary to achieve victory, including reaching across the political aisle.

FDR might have been able to maneuver around or "sweet talk" Capitol Hill, Cabinet members, and newspaper reporters, there was one man who would have none of it, General George Catlett Marshall. A Virginia Military Institute graduate, Marshall lead a platoon and a company during the Philippine Insurrection and was an Aide-de-camp to former Chief of staff J. Franklin Bell. One of the first American soldiers ashore in France in World War I, he served on the 1st Division staff, personally scouted the Cantigny battlefield

and was later awarded the Citation Star (Silver Star) for bravery in his pre-battle scouting. General John Pershing came to respect Marshall, who had publicly corrected the general, and made Marshall G-3 (Operations) for the AEF. during the Great War and helped plan the Meuse-Argonne and other offensives. He was Army Chief of Staff Pershing's Aide-de-camp in 1919-1924 and taught at the War College. He served in China for 3 years, learning to speak basic Mandarin, then became Assistant Commandant of the Infantry School and worked on changes to command and staff procedures. He then commanded the 8th Infantry Regiment, the 5th Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division, and supervised 35 Civilian Conservation Corps camps. In 1938, he joined the War Plans Division and then became Assistant Chief of Staff. He took the oath as Army Chief of Staff on 1 September 1939.

Marshall juggled the whims of a mercurial president, a stingy and isolationist Congress, and an Army in serious need of an across-the-board upgrade. Marshall proved that he was not afraid to tell the President unpleasant facts about the state of the Army even while the President blithely promised Great Britain guns, ammunition, and even airplanes that the US could not afford to part with. Keeping his post as Army Chief of Staff throughout the war, even sacrificing his desire to command the invasion of Europe and abstaining from party politics Marshall became one of the most respected man of the twentieth century.

Frustrated with the isolationist Democrat Harry Woodring, his Secretary of War from 1936 to 1940, who either dawdled or refused to comply with efforts to circumvent Congress and supply Great Britain with war materiel, FDR looked to the internationalist wing of the Republican Party for a replacement and found a protégé of his older cousin Theodore. Henry L. Stimson seemed like the perfect candidate for Secretary of War. Stimson was much like the elder Roosevelt with a calling toward public service and the strenuous life. A product of a wealthy New York family, who went to all the "right" schools – Phillips Academy, Yale, and Harvard Law, Stimson was a well-known Wall Street lawyer who became more involved in public service in 1906 when TR appointed him a US Attorney. At age fifty, he enlisted as an infantryman and fought in the Great War, mustering out with the rank of Colonel of artillery, and was promoted brigadier general in the organized reserve corps in 1922. A former Governor General of

If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns – contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

the Philippines, he served as Secretary of State during the Hoover Administration. Like FDR, he recognized the dangers of the Nazi Reich and the Japanese Empire. He accepted FDR's offer of the position of Secretary of War and served until September of 1945.

Stimson and Marshall may have come from different backgrounds but they knew the importance of having a good working relationship. They had adjoining offices and the door between them was kept open to maintain a unity of purpose. They realized this war, for the United States, was a war of vast distances. It was a **world** war fought in almost every nook and cranny of the land masses and on nearly all bays, estuaries, gulfs, seas, and oceans. Thus, we fought in every climatic zone in the world, from the Arctic to the equatorial jungles, from mountains to deserts, from crowded waterways to lonely oceanic deeps. No matter where we projected power, we had to send the forces far away and keep them continuously supplied with everything from beans and bullets to toilet paper. Stimson and Marshall rose to the challenge of this assignment and achieved victory.

The essence of democratic government is compromise. During World War II, compromise became American policy involving most every facet of American society: Army and Navy; business and unions; Republicans and Democrats; and even American generals and admirals with their British counterparts. All this was done with an eye on the ultimate goal to defeat the Axis. By adding Republicans to his cabinet and supporting apolitical military leaders, FDR bypassed the mistakes that plagued the Wilson Administration at the end of World War I, with its token Republicans, and succeeded in not only winning the Second World War, but also formed the foundation for the bipartisan foreign policy of the early Cold War.

FURTHER READINGS:

Edward Farley Aldrich, *The Partnership: George Marshall, Henry Stimson, and the Extraordinary Collaboration that won World War II*. (Lanham, MD: Stackpole Books, 2022).

Mark Stoler. *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Jonathan Jordan, *American Warlords* (New York: NAL Caliber, 2015).

Nigel Hamilton, *The Mantle of Command* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt Publishing Company, 2015).

Joseph Persico, *Roosevelt's Centurions* (New York: Random House, 2013).

Stephen Taaffe, *Marshall and His Generals* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2011).

Announcements:

Twin Cities Civil War Round Table – 21 Feb. 2023, *The Underground Railroad* – www.tccwrt.com - info@tccwrt.com

Minnesota Military Museum, Camp Ripley, 15000 Hwy 115, Little Falls, MN 56345 - 320-616-6050 - <http://www.mnmilitarymuseum.org/>

Minnesota Air Guard Museum - 612-713-2523 - www.mnangmuseum.org

8th AF Historical Society of MN, KC Hall Bloomington, 2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 1130 - <https://www.8thmn.org>.

Friends of Ft. Snelling - www.fortsnelling.org

World Without Genocide - 651-695-7621 -

<http://www.worldwithoutgenocide.org/>

Fagen Fighters WWII Museum, Granite Falls, MN - Air show – TBA - 320-564-6644 -

<http://www.fagenfighterswwiimuseum.org>.

Wings of the North Airshow - Eden Prairie – 22-23 July 2023 - Flying Cloud Airport - 952-746-6100 - www.wotn.org

Alliance Française 612-332-0436 - www.afmsp.org

Selim Center for Lifelong Learning, UST, <https://www.stthomas.edu/selimcenter/>

Western Naval Historical Association

info@wnha.net

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - 651-338-2717 -

crazyjerry45@hotmail.com

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - 651-455-6942 -

www.cafmn.org

We need volunteers to drive our veterans to and from meetings. Please contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

Round Table Schedule 2023

14 Mar. Navies of World War II

28 Mar. Patton & Victory in North Africa

11 Apr. New Guinea – Air War

9 May 8th Air Force in Europe

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We would greatly appreciate your supporting the HCDWW2RT.



Marshall at SWPA field HQ, with Generals MacArthur and Krueger, Dec. 1942



LTG Devers and Stimson, touring Cassino battlefield, July 1944