

GEORGE C. MARSHALL



SOLDIER AND STATESMAN

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A GEORGE C. MARSHALL FOUNDATION PUBLICATION



George C. Marshall received a promotion to five-star (General of the Army) rank in December 1944.

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George Catlett Marshall

A Hero for All Times

GEORGE C. MARSHALL (1880–1959) was one of the most important figures of the twentieth century. He exerted much influence during World War II and the postwar years. United States presidents and members of Congress, as well as world leaders, listened to George Marshall because of his honesty, fairness, and trustworthiness. His personal qualities of selfless character, patriotism, leadership, integrity, and human compassion were admired by people who worked with him.

As U.S. Army Chief of Staff during World War II, General Marshall raised and prepared the ground and air forces to help the Allies fight the most destructive war in history against the Axis nations of Germany, Italy, and Japan. But Marshall hated war. When he served as Secretary of State after the war, he proposed to help the European countries rebuild their economies and provide a more peaceful lifestyle.

Marshall retired from the U.S. Army after World War II ended in 1945, but President Harry S. Truman called on him to serve his country as Special Ambassador to China (1945–46), as Secretary of State (1947–49), and as Secretary of Defense (1950–51). George Marshall also served as President of the American Red Cross (1949–50). In 1953 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in proposing, supporting, and gaining legislative approval of the European Recovery Program (the Marshall Plan) which was instrumental in rebuilding war-torn Europe.

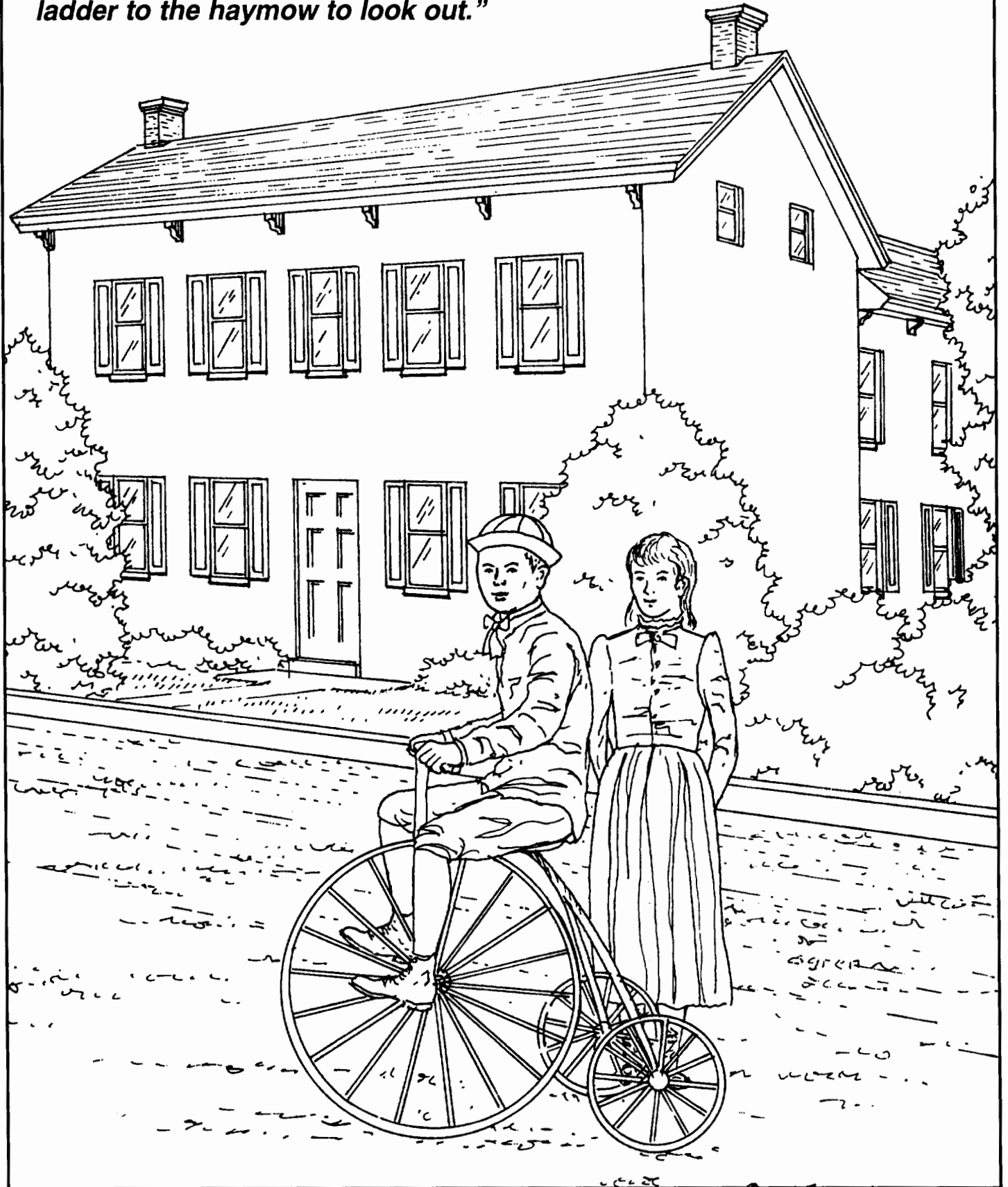
“There are few men whose qualities of mind and character have impressed me so deeply as those of General Marshall,” wrote Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. “He is a great American, but he is far more than that. . . . He has always fought victoriously against defeatism, discouragement and disillusion. Succeeding generations must not be allowed to forget his achievements and his example.”



George Catlett Marshall Chronology

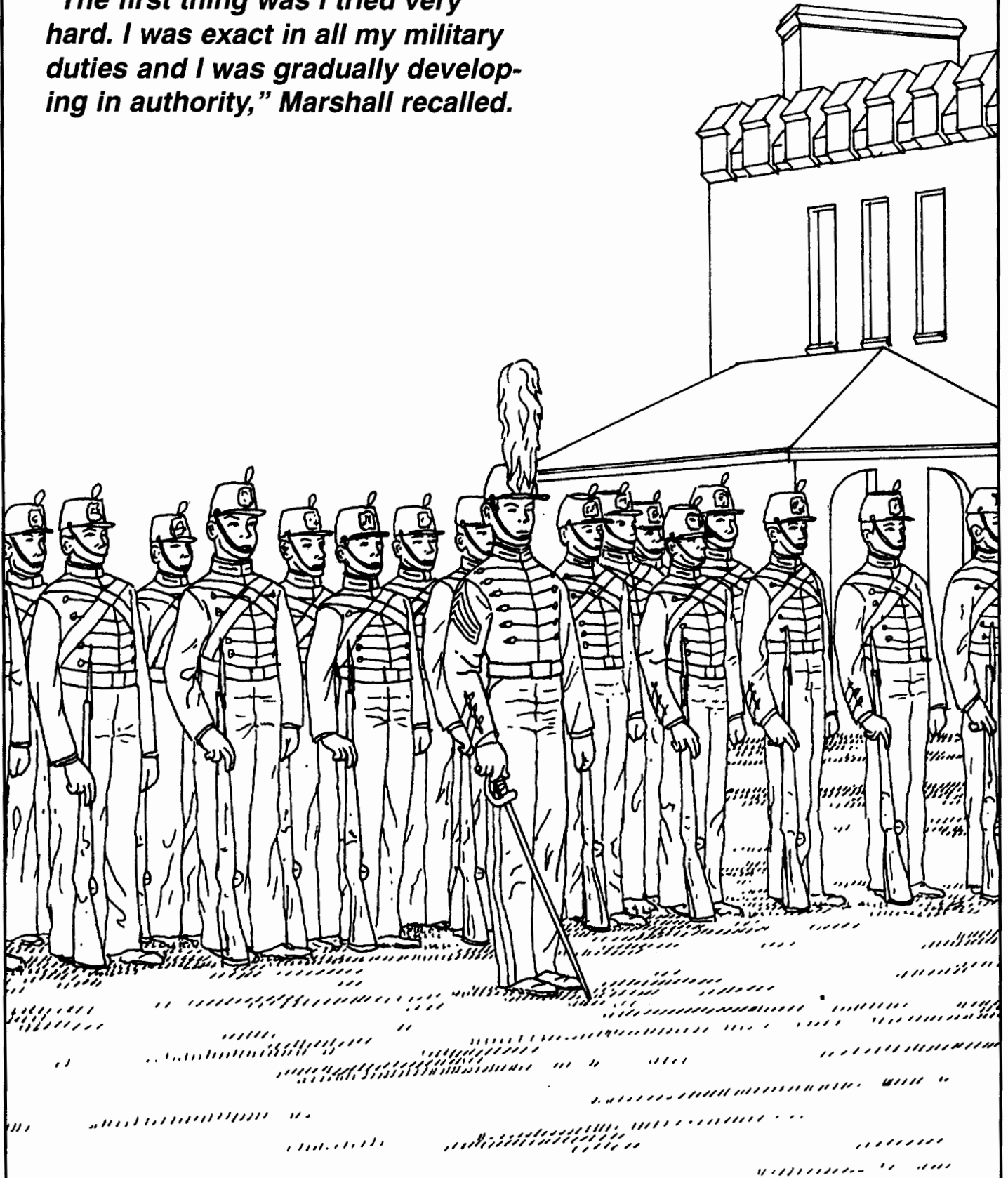
December 31, 1880	Born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania
September 1897–June 1901	Cadet, Virginia Military Institute (Lexington, Virginia)
September–December 1901	Commandant, Danville Military Institute (Danville, Virginia)
February 3, 1902	Commissioned second lieutenant
February 11, 1902	Married to Elizabeth Carter ("Lily") Coles
May 1902–November 1903	Duty in the Philippine Islands
December 1903–August 1906	Duty at Fort Reno, Oklahoma
August 1906–June 1910	Army Service Schools, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Student (1906–8); Instructor (1908–10)
March 1907	Promoted to first lieutenant
June 1911–September 1912	Inspector-Instructor, Massachusetts Volunteer Militia (Boston)
September 1912–June 1913	Duty with 4th Infantry (Fort Logan Roots, Arkansas; Fort Snelling, Minnesota; Texas City, Texas)
August 1913–May 1916	Duty in the Philippine Islands
July 1916	Promoted to captain
July 1916–July 1917	Aide-de-camp to J. Franklin Bell (San Francisco, California; Governors Island, New York)
July 1917–April 1919	Duty with the American Expeditionary Forces (World War I), France (Temporary promotions: major, August 1917; lieutenant colonel, January 1918; colonel, August 1918)
May 1919–June 1924	Aide-de-camp to John J. Pershing (France and Washington, D.C.)
July 1920	Promoted to major
August 1923	Promoted to lieutenant colonel
September 1924–May 1927	Duty with 15th Infantry (Tientsin, China)
July–October 1927	Instructor, Army War College (Washington, D.C.)
September 15, 1927	Death of Elizabeth C. ("Lily") Marshall
November 1927–June 1932	Assistant commandant, Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia
October 15, 1930	Married to Katherine Tupper Brown
June 1932–June 1933	Commanding Fort Screven, Georgia, and CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) District
June–October 1933	Commanding Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, and CCC District
September 1933	Promoted to colonel
October 1933–October 1936	Senior Instructor, Illinois National Guard (Chicago)
October 1936	Promoted to brigadier general
October 1936–June 1938	Vancouver Barracks, Washington, and CCC District
July–October 1938	Assistant chief of staff, War Plans Division, War Department (Washington, D.C.)
October 1938–June 1939	Deputy chief of staff, War Department (Washington, D.C.)
July 1–September 1, 1939	Acting chief of staff
September 1, 1939	Promoted to major general (Regular Army) and (4-star) general (temporary)
September 1939–November 1945	Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (Washington, D.C.)
December 1944	Promoted to General of the Army (temporary)
November 1945–January 1947	Special Ambassador to China
April 1946	Promoted to General of the Army (permanent)
January 1947–January 1949	Secretary of State
October 1949–November 1950	President of American Red Cross
September 1950–September 1951	Secretary of Defense
June 1953	Chairman, U.S. Delegation to Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II of Britain
December 10, 1953	Received Nobel Peace Prize, Oslo, Norway
October 16, 1959	Died at Walter Reed Army Hospital, Washington, D.C. (Buried in Arlington National Cemetery)

“My first very clear recollection is going out to our barn in which we kept a horse and a cow,” Marshall remembered, “and climbing up the ladder to the haymow to look out.”



George Catlett Marshall was born in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, on December 31, 1880. He had an older brother, named Stuart, and an older sister, named Marie.

“The first thing was I tried very hard. I was exact in all my military duties and I was gradually developing in authority,” Marshall recalled.



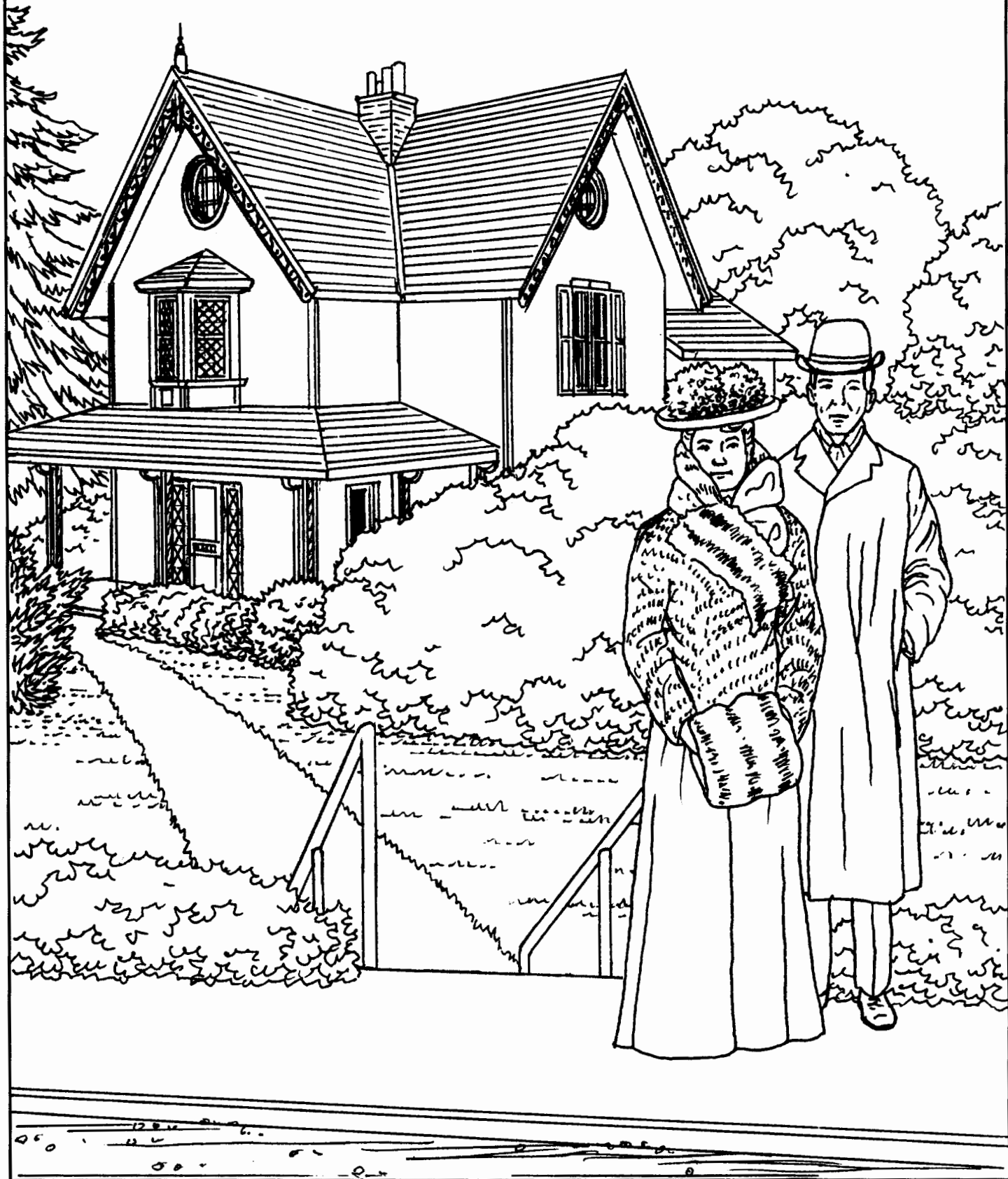
George C. Marshall was a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute, 1897–1901. Because he excelled in drill, discipline, and leadership, he was appointed the senior cadet officer, the First Captain of the entire Corps of Cadets.

***“My idea of a cadet on the field is one of quick action, speed, and a relentless fighting determination to stop the other fellow or to go forward,”
Marshall wrote in 1928.***



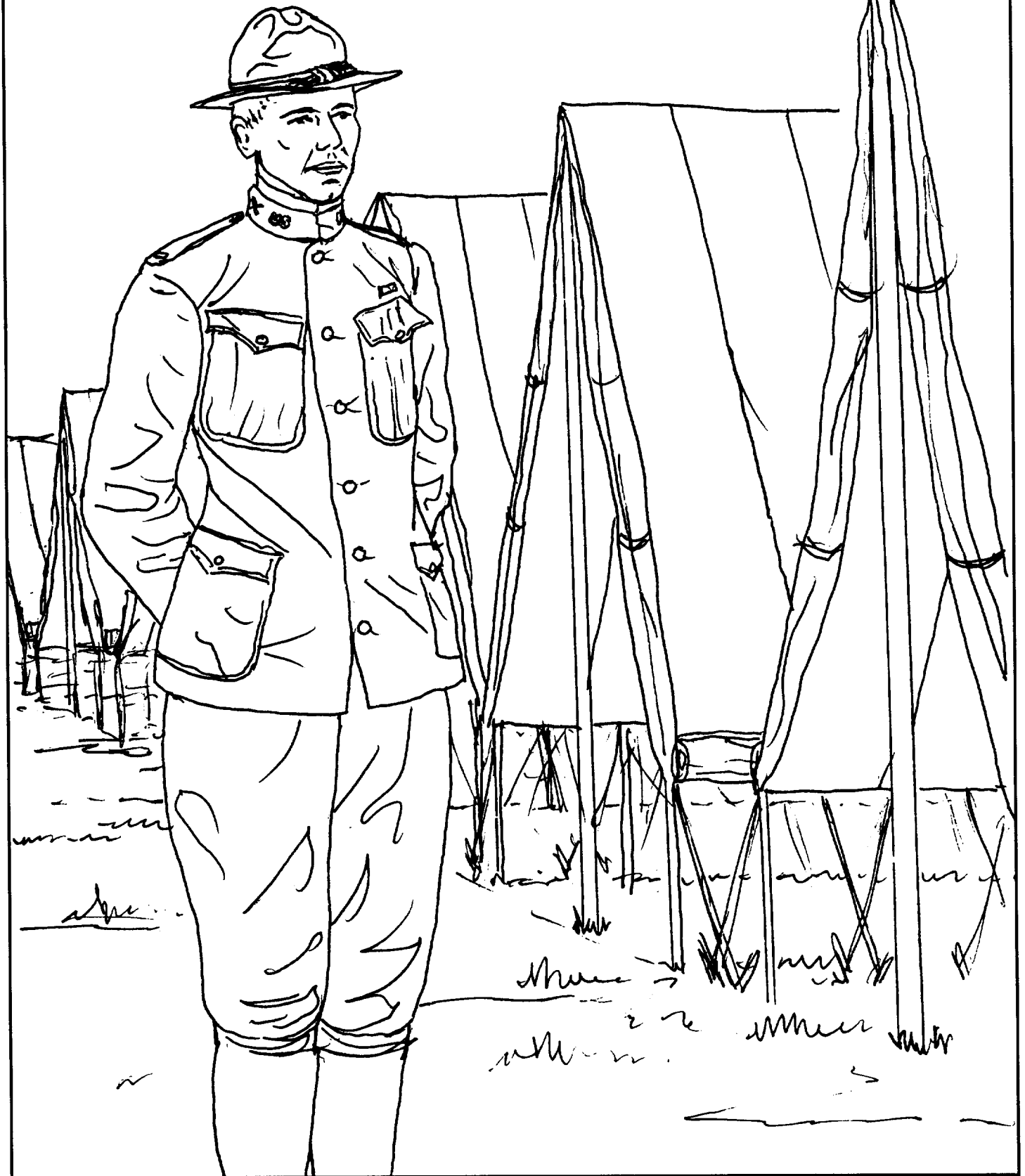
While a cadet at the Virginia Military Institute, George Marshall (holding football) played left tackle on the football team. The coach is standing in the left background.

“She was the finest amateur pianist I ever heard,” Marshall recalled of Lily. “I heard her playing and that brought about my meeting with her.”



George C. Marshall and Elizabeth (“Lily”) Coles were married in Lexington, Virginia, on February 11, 1902. In mid-March, Second Lieutenant Marshall departed for his new post in the Philippine Islands.

**"I finally got into the habit of study," Marshall recalled,
"and learned how to learn."**



First Lieutenant George C. Marshall was stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where he was a student in the Army Service Schools from 1906 to 1908. He graduated at the top of his class and continued there as a teacher from 1908 to 1910.

“The weather seems to have been uniformly wretched,” Marshall wrote to his stepson in 1944. “That always appears to be the case in war, at least it was my experience in France; cold or rain and mud, high winds, or extreme heat and dust.”



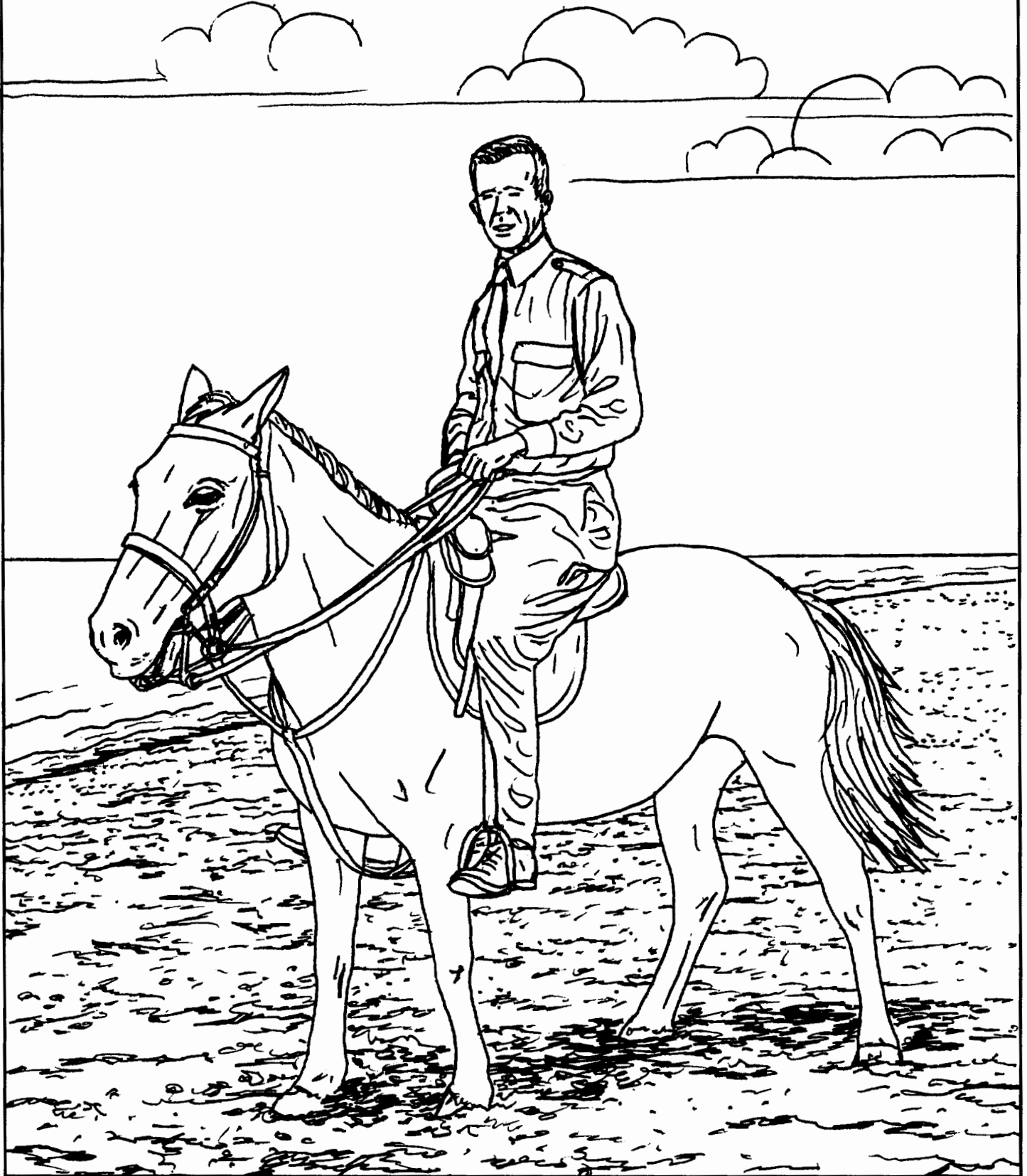
In April 1917 the United States entered World War I against Germany, and George Marshall was among the first convoy of troops to arrive in France. He eventually was assigned to General John J. Pershing's General Headquarters where he helped plan the major U.S. offensives that helped to bring the war to an end in 1918. On a visit to the front line, Marshall views the battlefield from a trench.

“Decorations are one of our greatest morale boosters for the people who are doing the actual fighting,” wrote Marshall.



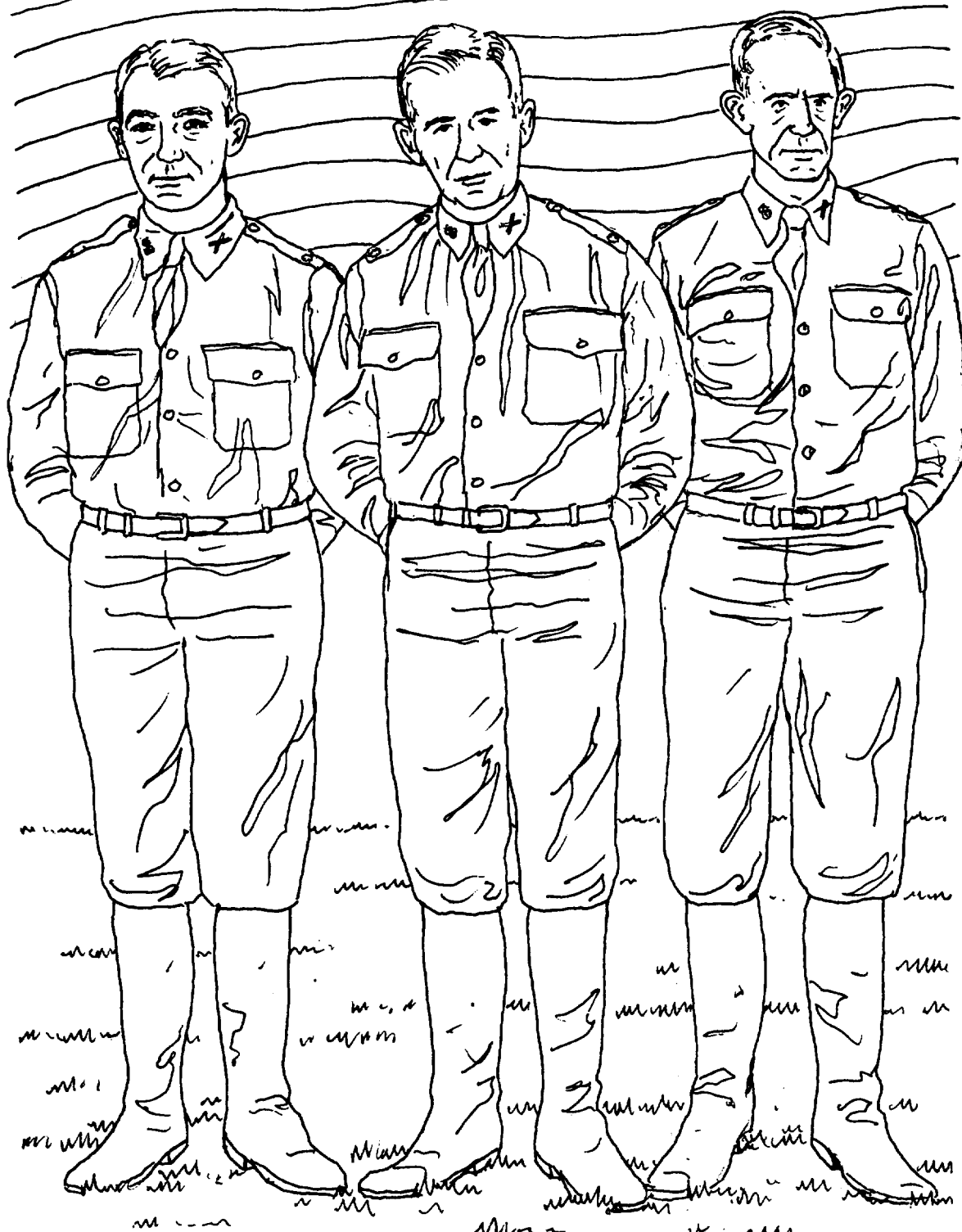
General John J. Pershing recognized George C. Marshall's abilities during World War I, and in 1919 he asked Marshall to serve as one of his postwar aides or personal advisers. This position offered Marshall tremendous opportunities to learn how the U.S. Army and government worked, and he served as aide-de-camp to General Pershing from 1919 to 1924. Marshall (left) watches as General Pershing awards the Distinguished Service Cross to a soldier in France in 1919.

“I am doing a great deal of riding and tennis this summer,” Marshall wrote in 1925. “My ponies have turned out beautifully. Some days we ride entirely across country, and there are lots of ditches and mud dikes for excitement.”



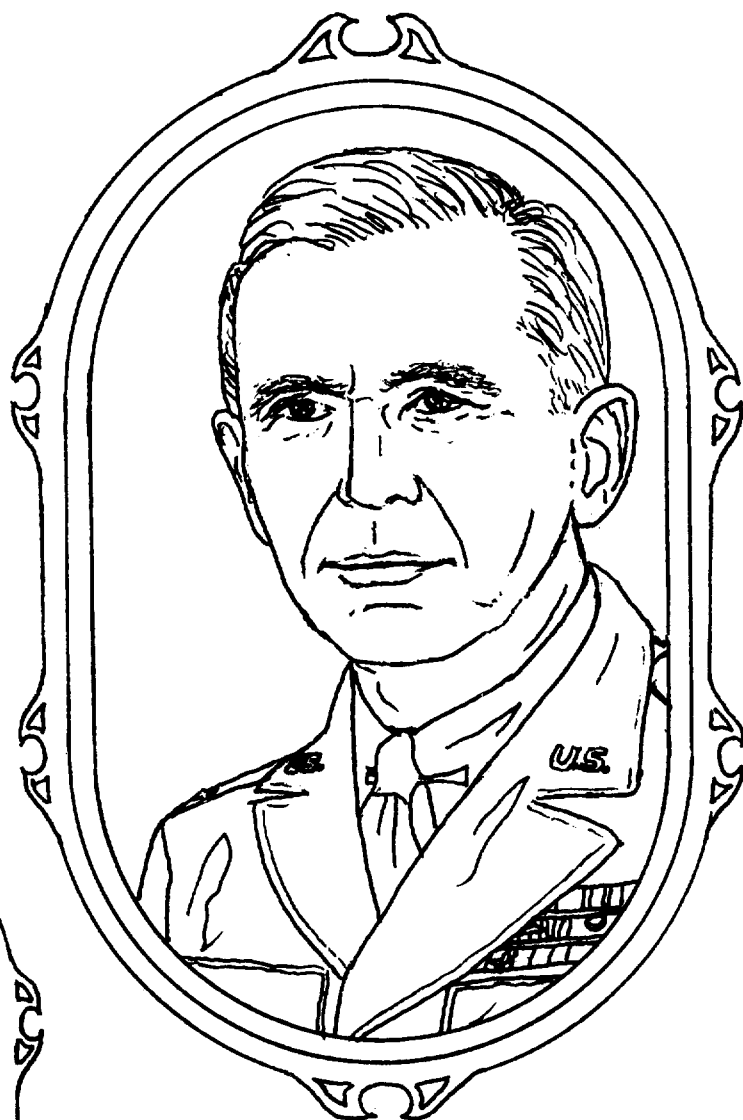
In 1924 George C. Marshall requested and received assignment to the Fifteenth Infantry Regiment stationed in Tientsin, China. Morale among the troops was high, and Marshall learned to speak Chinese. Here he rides a Mongolian pony at Nan Ta Ssu.

“The change to Benning was magical, with its atmosphere of youthful vigor . . . and its balm of fresh air,” Marshall wrote in 1932. “I’m not a city boy.”



In 1927 Marshall returned to Washington, D.C., to be an instructor at the Army War College. Within a few months his wife Lily died, and he moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, to assume his new duties as head of instruction at the Infantry School. Marshall improved the courses taught, and 200 generals of the U.S. Army during World War II were either students or instructors at Fort Benning while Marshall was there from 1927 to 1932. Joseph W. Stilwell (left) and Omar N. Bradley (right) were among the instructors.

“A trait that has remained with him from his boyhood days—he loves to give surprises, but he does not like to receive surprises himself,” Katherine Marshall wrote in her memoir Together. “Each birthday some unusual thing is sprung on me, I never know what, but something that has required thought and ingenuity to make the day wonderful.”

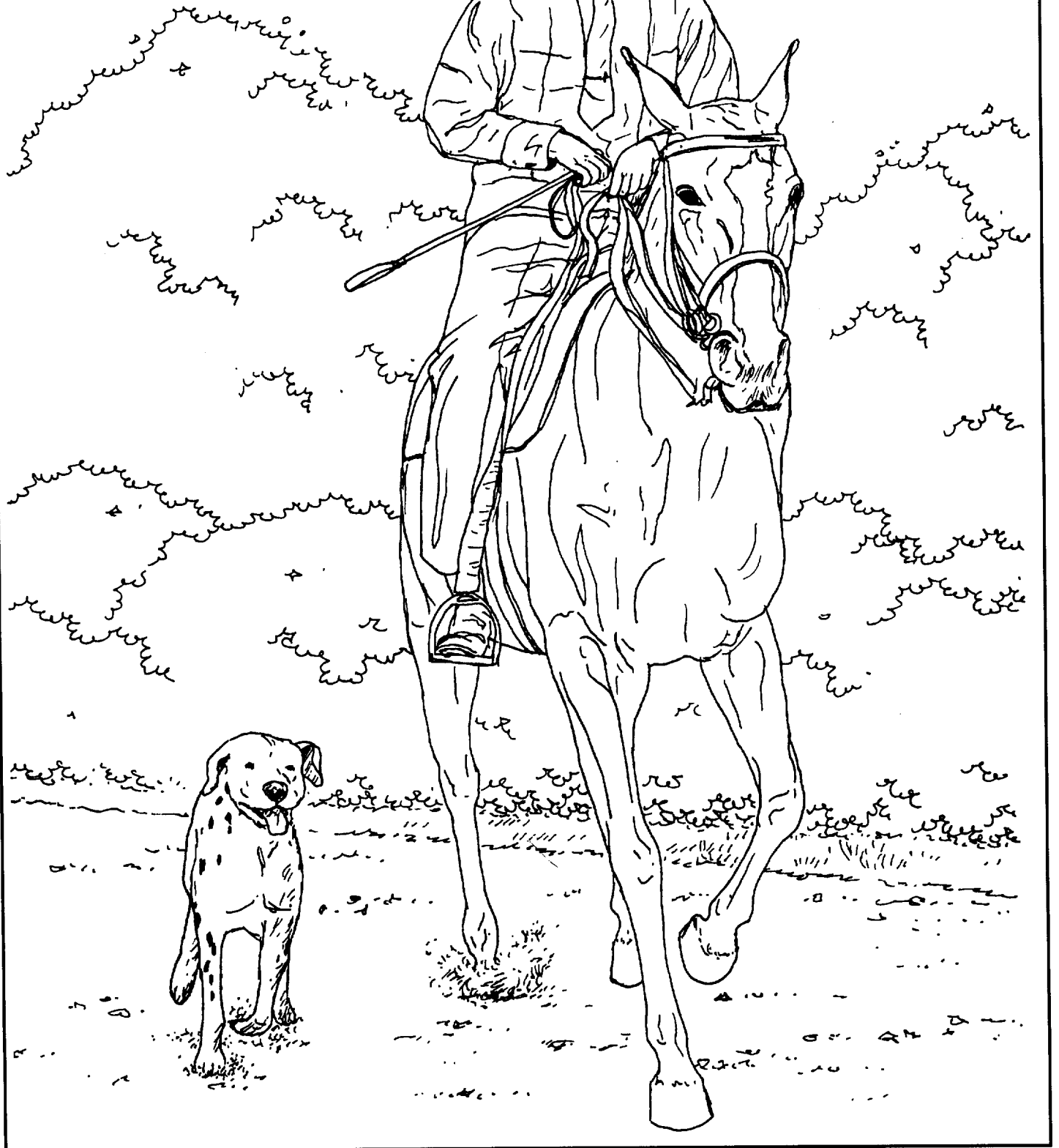


George C. Marshall was promoted to brigadier general in 1936.

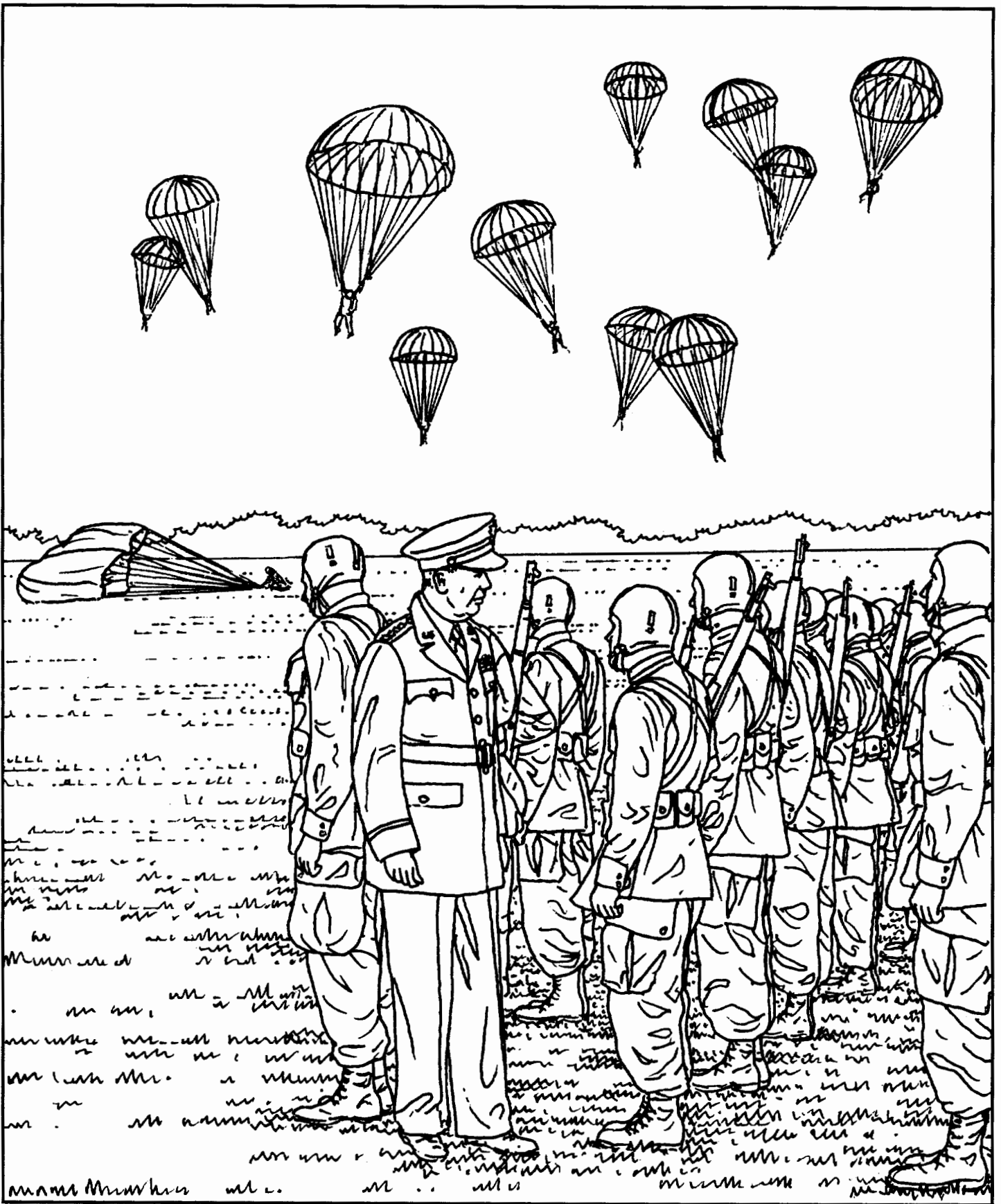


In 1930 George Marshall married Katherine Tupper Brown, a widow with three children.

“Riding has done me a world of good,” Marshall wrote, “and I am able to keep things in focus and shed almost all worries.”

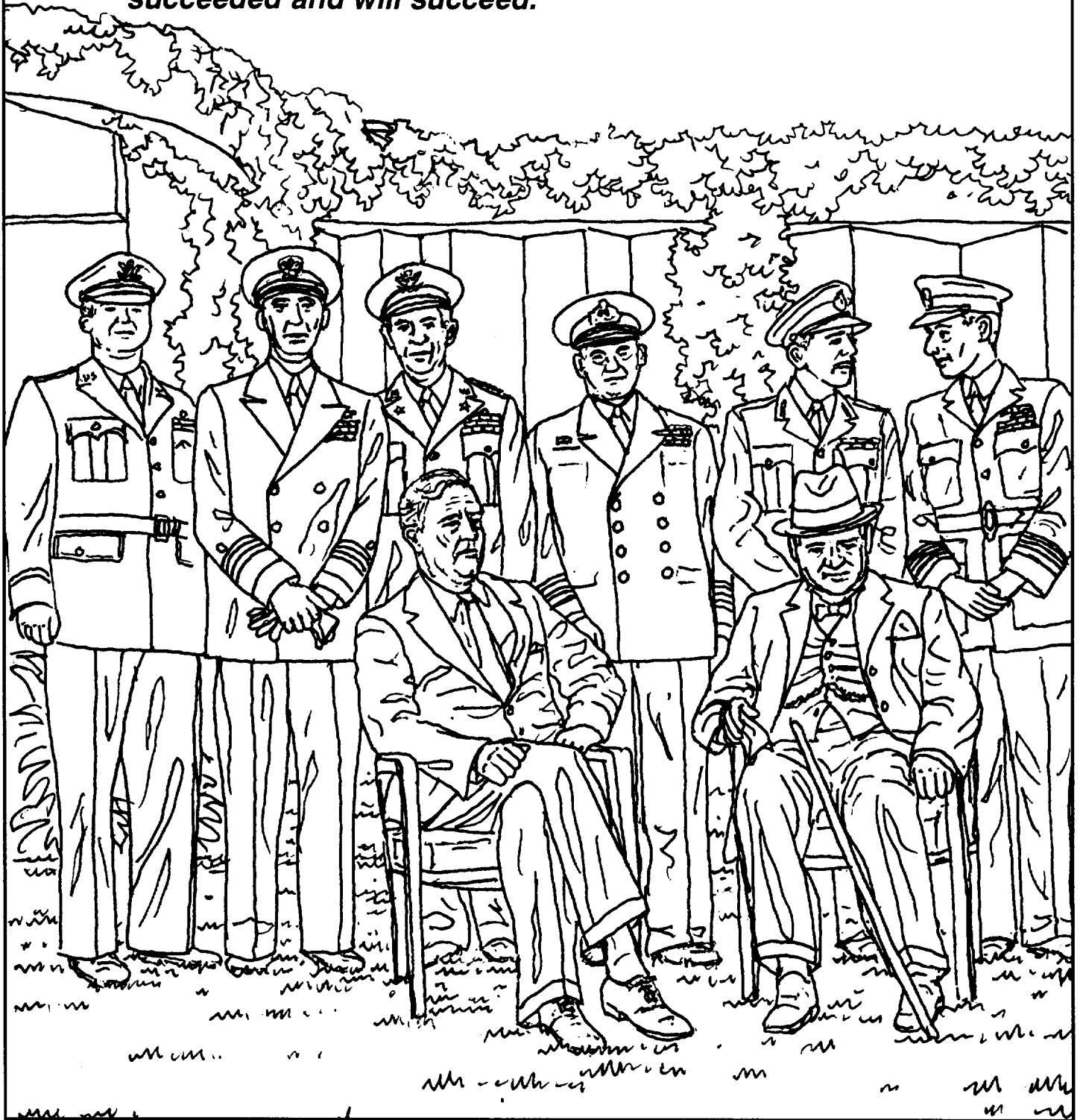


General Marshall enjoys a relaxing horseback ride with his dog "Fleet." He also liked to fish, read, and plant flower and vegetable gardens.

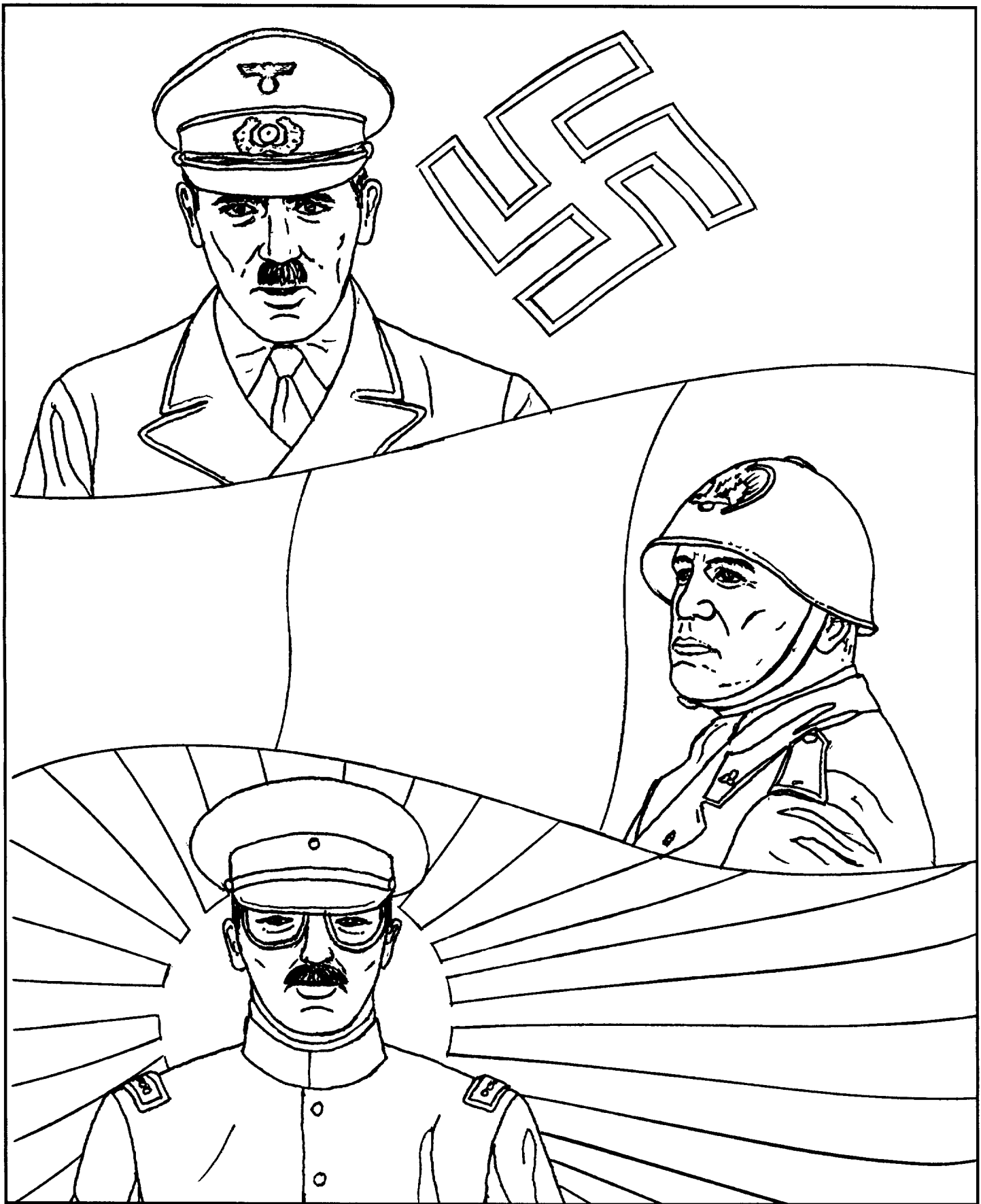


George C. Marshall became U.S. Army Chief of Staff on September 1, 1939, the day that the German Army invaded Poland. The United States entered World War II when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. As Chief of Staff, General Marshall was responsible for organizing, training, and supplying over 8,000,000 troops during World War II. During one of his many trips to visit training camps, General Marshall inspects a Parachute Infantry unit in 1942.

"I am devoutly thankful for . . . the very splendid help I have had from you in all of our common tasks," President Roosevelt wrote to General Marshall in January 1944. "It has meant a teamwork which has succeeded and will succeed."



General Marshall (standing, third from left) became a trusted adviser to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and he attended conferences with Allied leaders such as British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Here the American and British chiefs of staff stand behind President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at Casablanca, Morocco, in January 1943. (Standing, left to right: Lieutenant General Henry H. Arnold, Admiral Ernest J. King, General George C. Marshall, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, General Sir Alan Brooke, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal.)

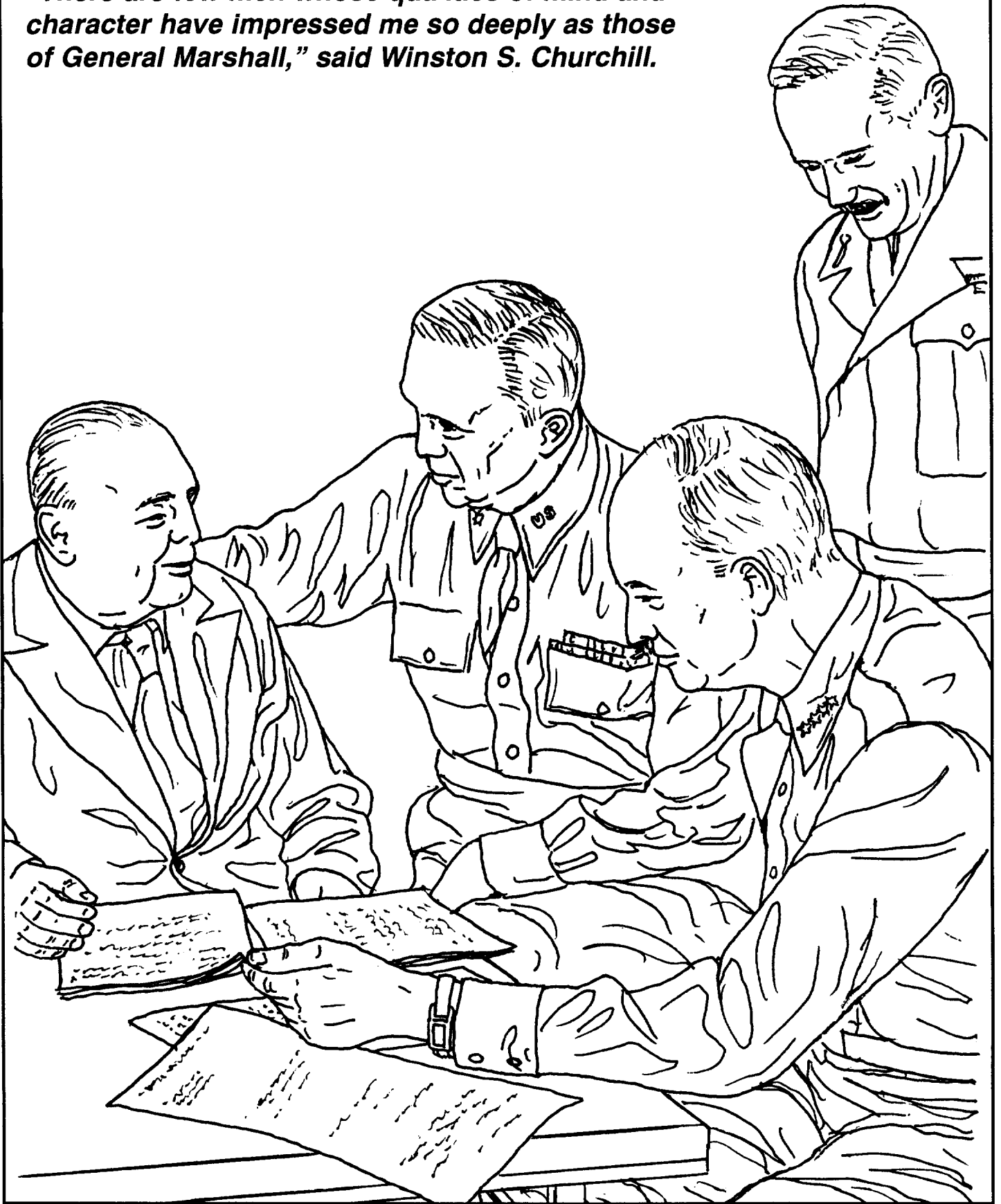


AXIS LEADERS. Adolf Hitler (top), founder of the Nazi party, was the leader ("Der Führer") of Germany. Benito Mussolini (middle), founder of Italian fascism, was the leader ("Il Duce") of Italy. Hirohito (bottom) was the Emperor of Japan. The three leaders signed the Tripartite Pact in September 1940, recognizing each other's sphere of influence and agreeing to come to each other's aid.



ALLIED "BIG THREE" LEADERS. Franklin D. Roosevelt (top) served as President of the United States from 1933 until his death in April 1945. Winston S. Churchill (middle) served as Prime Minister of Great Britain during most of World War II. Joseph Stalin (bottom) was the leader of the Soviet Union. When German troops invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, these three leaders had a common enemy. After the war, tension between the West and the Soviet bloc resulted in the Cold War.

“There are few men whose qualities of mind and character have impressed me so deeply as those of General Marshall,” said Winston S. Churchill.

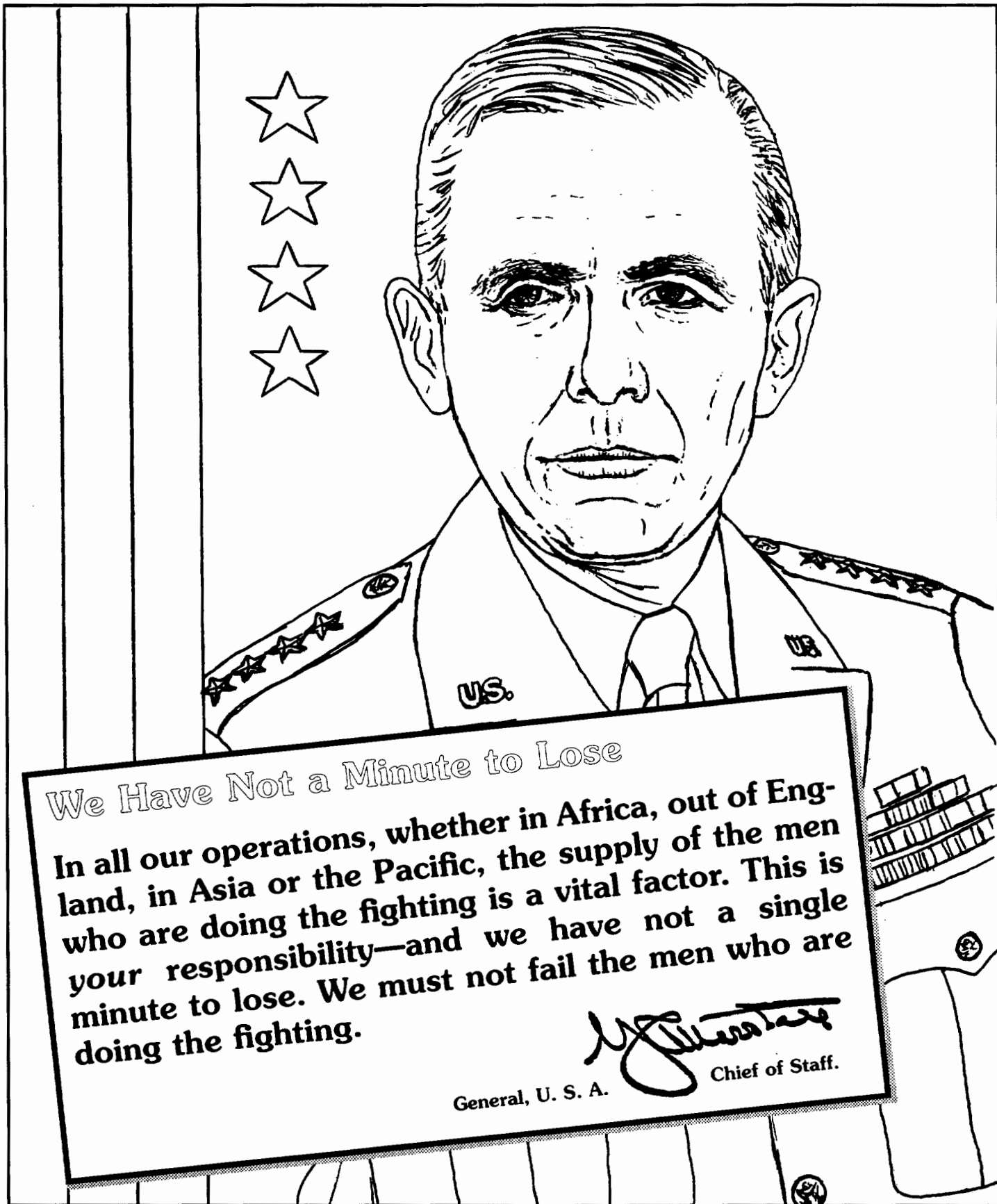


Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill meets with General George C. Marshall, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and British General Bernard Montgomery (standing) in Algiers in June 1943 to discuss operations for the Mediterranean.

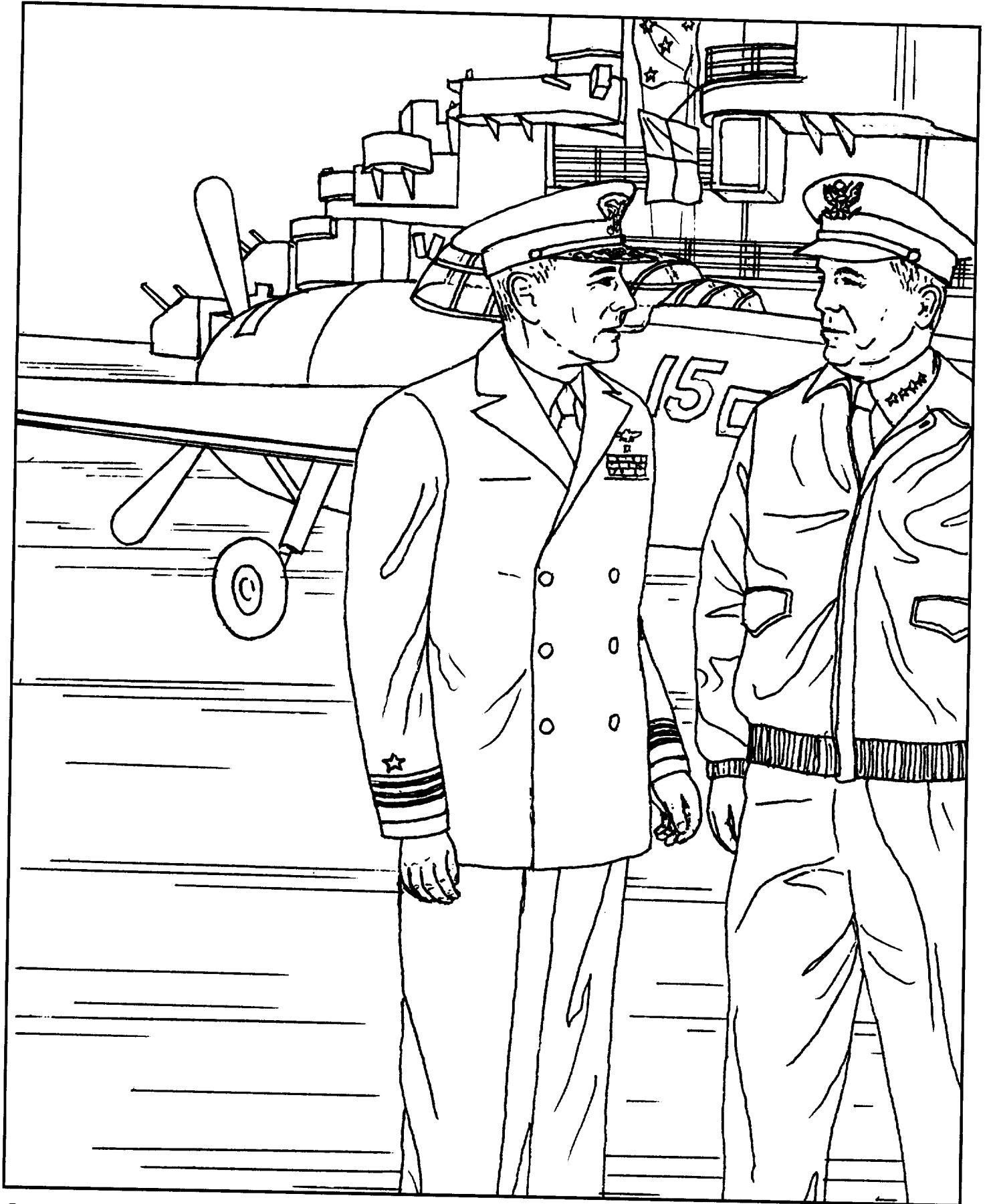
“We must provide some outlet for the patriotic desires of our women,” Marshall wrote in 1941.



General Marshall supported the formation of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in May 1942, which allowed women to perform noncombat duties. Marshall was present in July 1943 when Director Oveta Culp Hobby took the oath of office as a colonel in the Women's Army Corps.



General Marshall appears on this World War II poster, which encourages factory workers to increase production of war supplies. Posters were a popular way to advertise the importance of working on the home front to speed an end to the war by supplying the soldiers with needed materials. During the Second World War many women worked in factories and businesses, and children contributed to the war effort by collecting scrap metal, planting victory gardens, and buying stamps for war bonds.

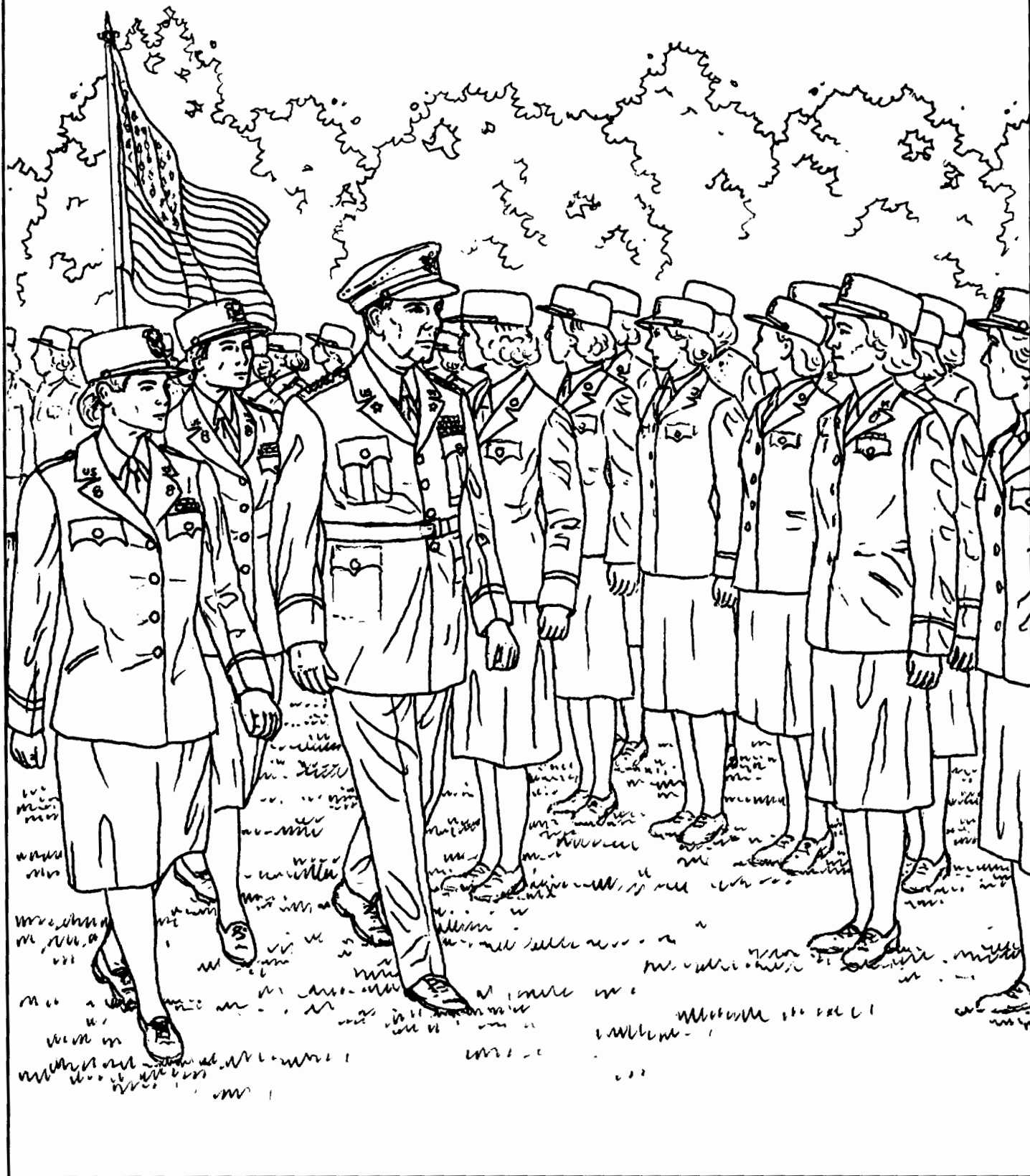


General George C. Marshall (right) toured the new aircraft carrier *Lexington* with Admiral Ernest J. King during a cruise from Boston, Massachusetts, to Norfolk, Virginia, in July 1943. It was important that the two chiefs, General Marshall as head of the U.S. Army and Admiral King as head of the U.S. Navy, work together and cooperate in order to win the war.

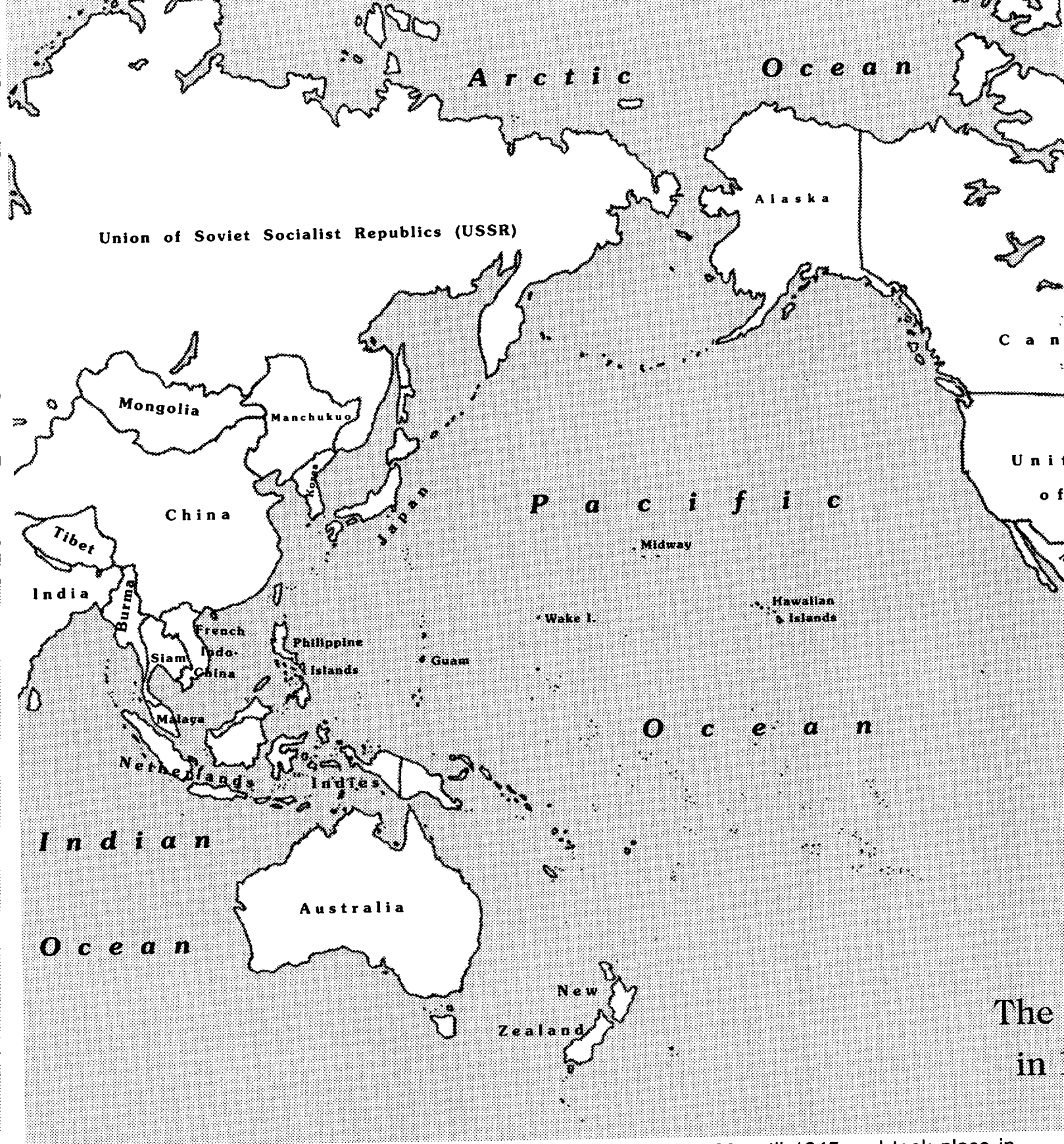


Before returning to the United States after attending meetings in Cairo, Egypt, and Teheran, Iran, General Marshall traveled to the Pacific area to meet with General Douglas MacArthur in December 1943. He visited camps and hospitals and talked with the soldiers in addition to meeting with the commanders. General Marshall (middle) talks with (left to right) Lieutenant General George C. Kenney, Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, and General MacArthur during his visit to an island off the southeast coast of New Guinea.

"There are a great many jobs connected with the Army's war program which women can handle better than men," Marshall wrote to Director Oveta Culp Hobby in December 1942.



General George C. Marshall inspects a Women's Army Corps Training Center at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, in April 1944.

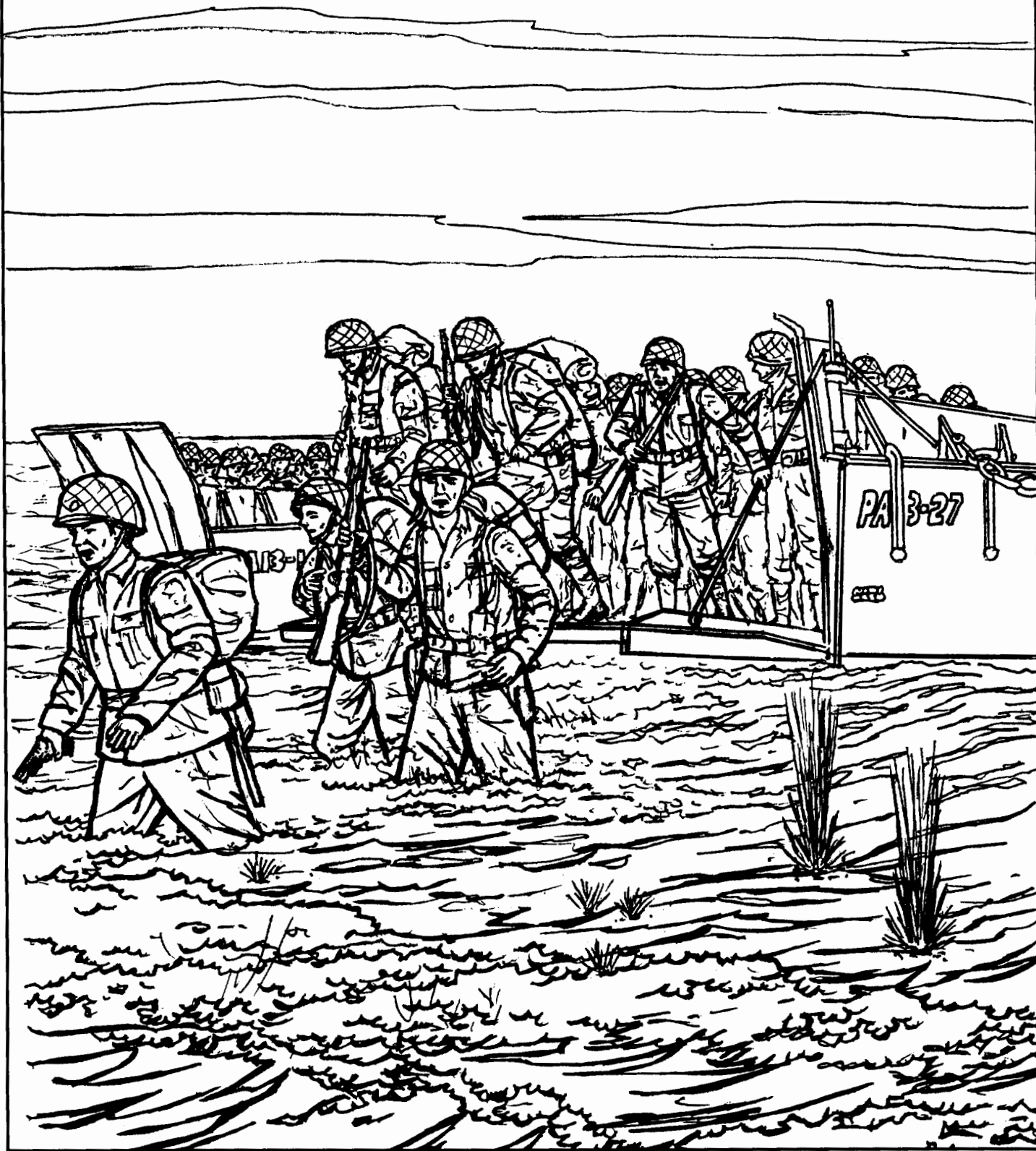


The Second World War was a global war. Fighting lasted from 1939 until 1945 and took place in Europe, North and East Africa, the North Atlantic, Asia, and the Pacific Ocean. In September 1939 Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany because both had agreed to help Poland in the event of attack. In June 1940 France surrendered to Germany. German planes bombed Great Britain, but the British did not surrender. In June 1941 German troops invaded the Soviet Union. Meanwhile the Japanese had invaded China. On December 7, 1941, Japanese planes attacked Pearl



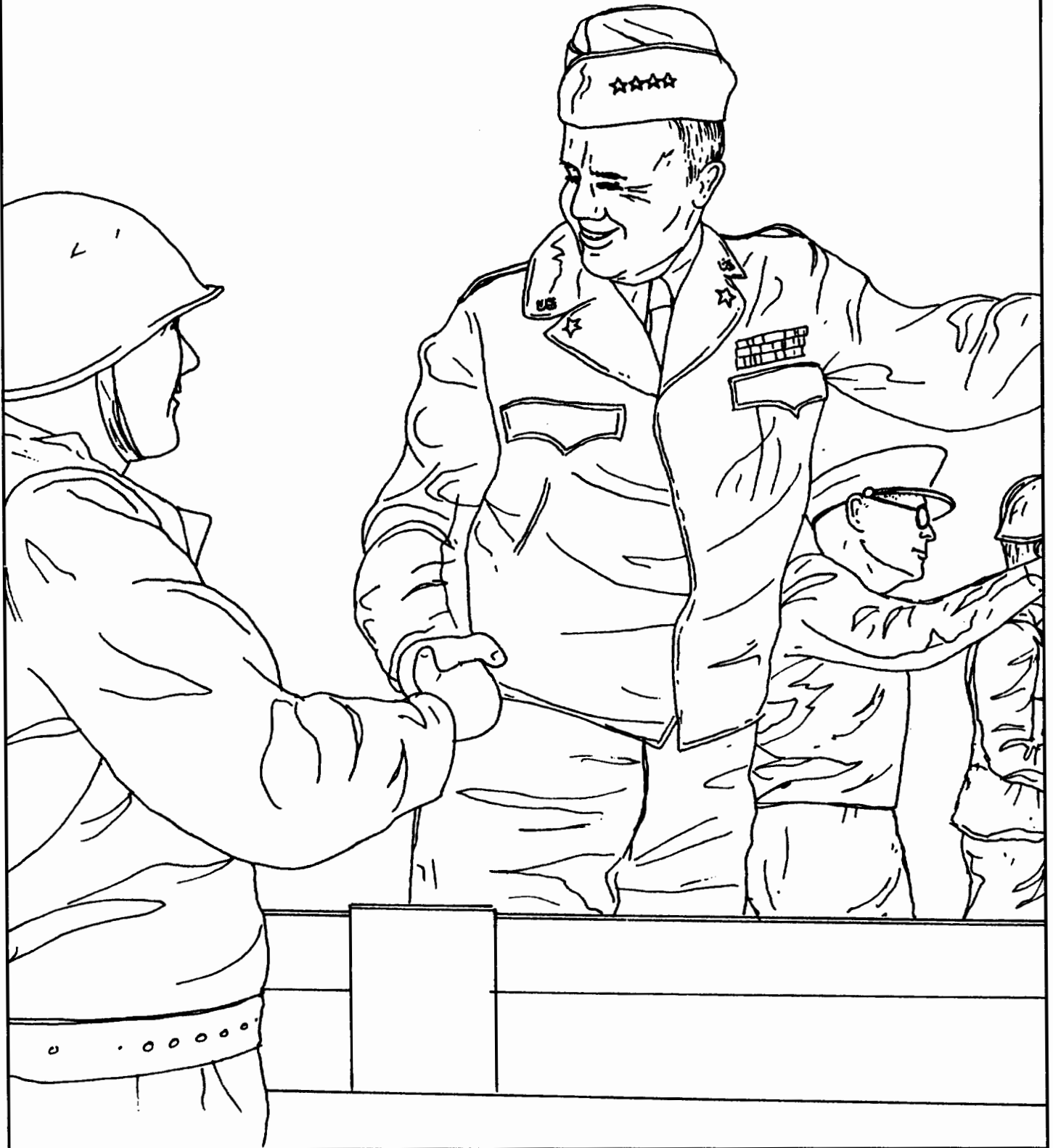
Harbor, a U.S. base in Hawaii. The United States then entered the war on the side of the Allies. In June 1944 the Allies invaded the northwestern coast of France and began pushing the Germans eastward. In May 1945 Germany surrendered, and the war in Europe ended. (The Italians had surrendered in September 1943.) The war continued against Japan in Asia and the Pacific until August 1945. On August 6, a U.S. plane dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan; on August 9 an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki; on August 14, 1945, Japan agreed to surrender.

"I feel I could not sleep at night with you out of the country," President Roosevelt said to Marshall.



On D-Day, June 6, 1944, Allied troops landed on the coast of Normandy, France. General Dwight D. Eisenhower had been chosen as commander of the invasion because General Marshall was too valuable to the total war effort for him to leave Washington, D.C. President Roosevelt felt that Marshall would better serve his country by remaining at the Pentagon to oversee the global war effort.

“Morale is a state of mind,” Marshall said. “It is steadfastness and courage and hope. It is confidence and zeal and loyalty.”

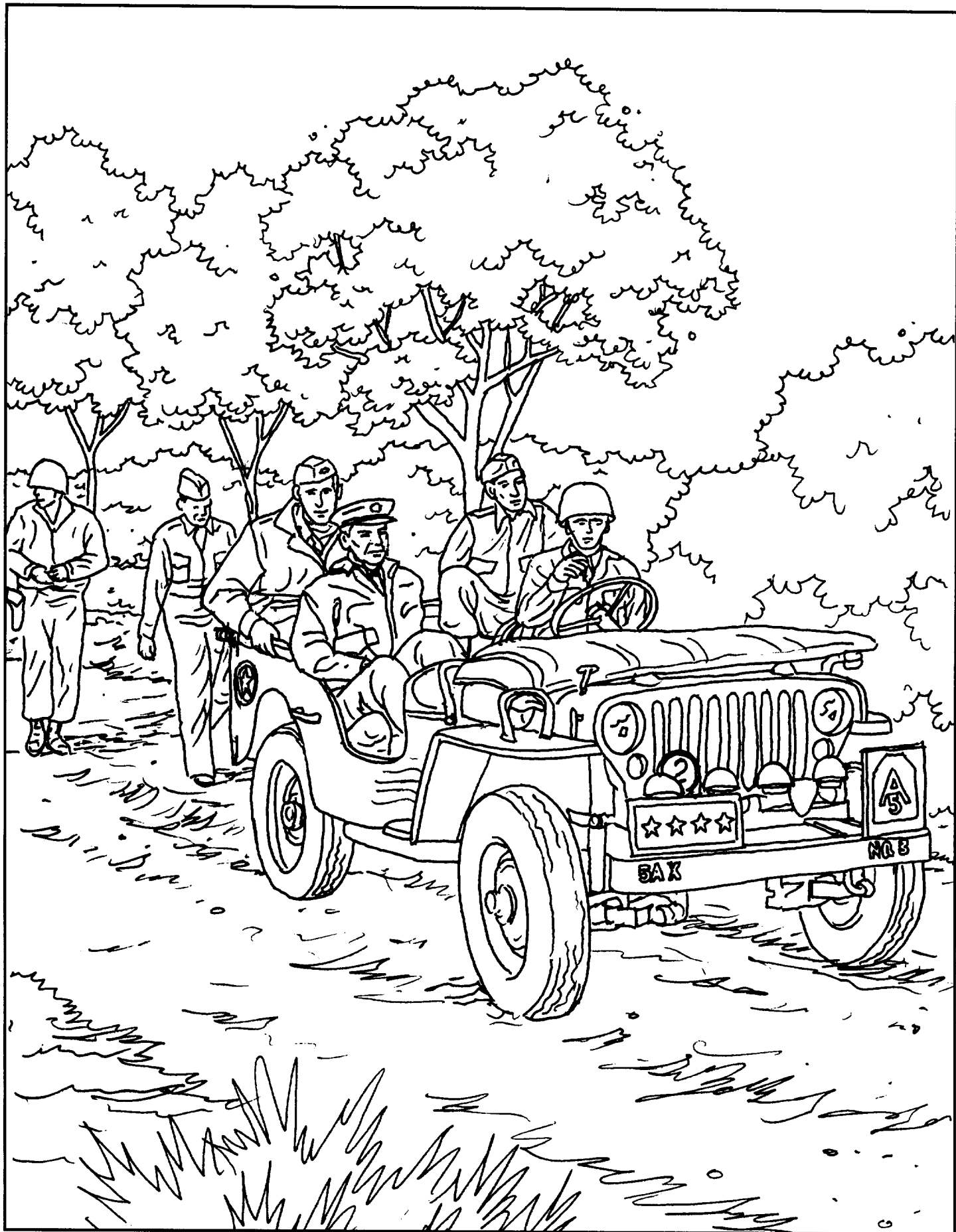


General Marshall cared deeply about the soldiers' well-being and their morale. On June 12, 1944, Marshall eagerly toured the Normandy area; and during his inspection of American troops in France, he stops to talk with a soldier. General Eisenhower is standing in the background.

“War is the most terrible tragedy of the human race and it should not be prolonged an hour longer than is absolutely necessary,” said Marshall in 1944.



Generals Marshall and Eisenhower and Admiral Ernest J. King stand in an amphibious DUKW (‘duck’) as they tour Allied beachheads in northern France on June 12, 1944.



General Marshall inspects command posts in Italy in June 1944, as Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark (sitting behind Marshall in the jeep) guides the tour.

“We are in the terrible business of straightening out this demoralized world so that you and your friends and millions of boys and girls like you may think more of kindness than of death and hatreds and may live useful lives in a peaceful world,” General Marshall wrote to a youngster in 1944.

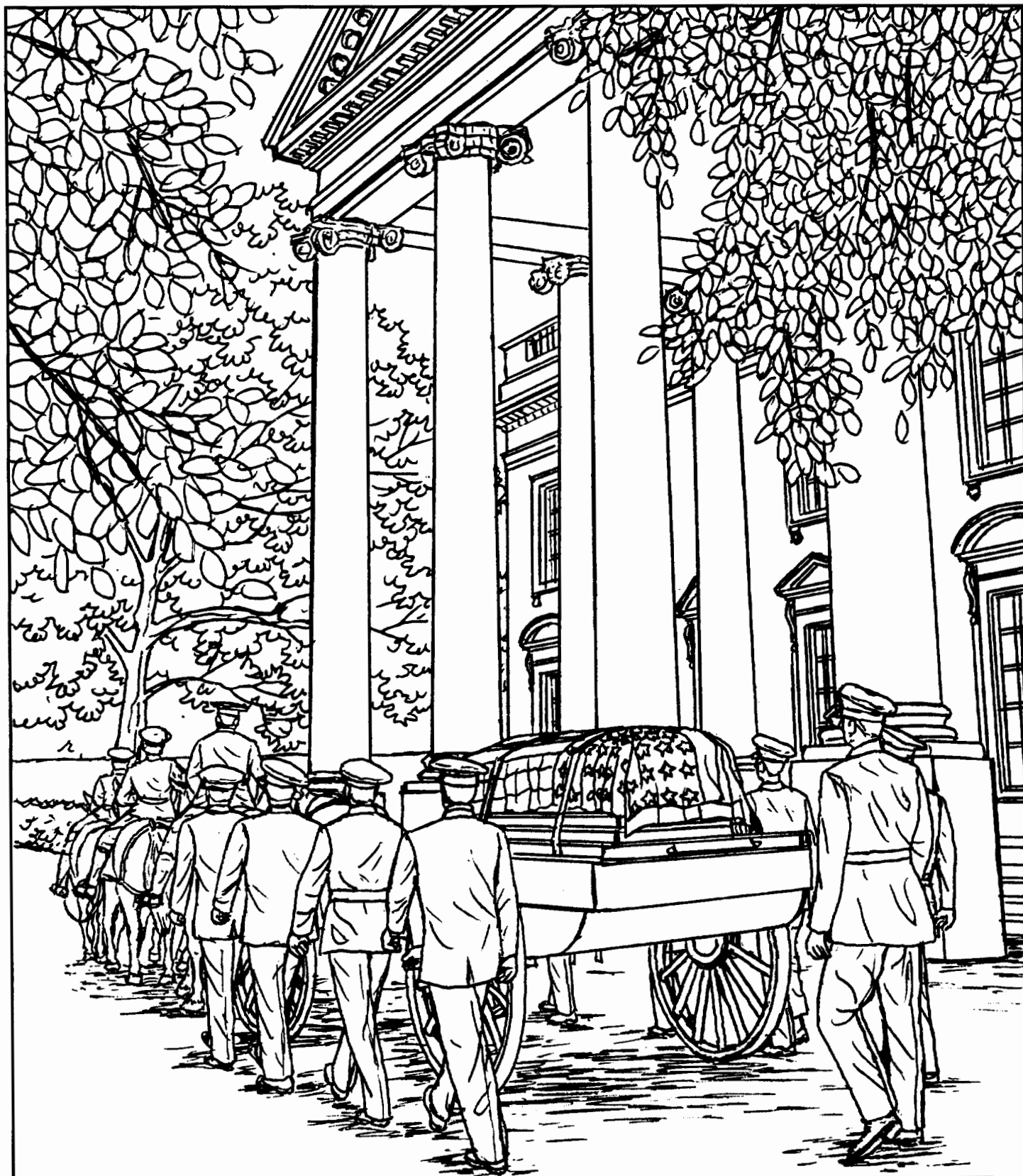


French children welcome General Marshall with a bouquet of flowers during his visit to France in October 1944. General Marshall liked children and he always took time to talk with them.

“The most important factor of all is character, which involves integrity, unselfish and devoted purpose, a sturdiness of bearing when everything goes wrong and all are critical, and a willingness to sacrifice self in the interest of the common good,” Marshall wrote to a school class in 1944.



In February 1945 the Allied Big Three—Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Premier Joseph Stalin—met in Yalta, a city in the Crimea of Soviet Russia. The German Army was close to surrendering. Standing behind the leaders are Marshal of the Royal Air Force Charles Portal, General of the Army George C. Marshall, and Fleet Admiral William D. Leahy.

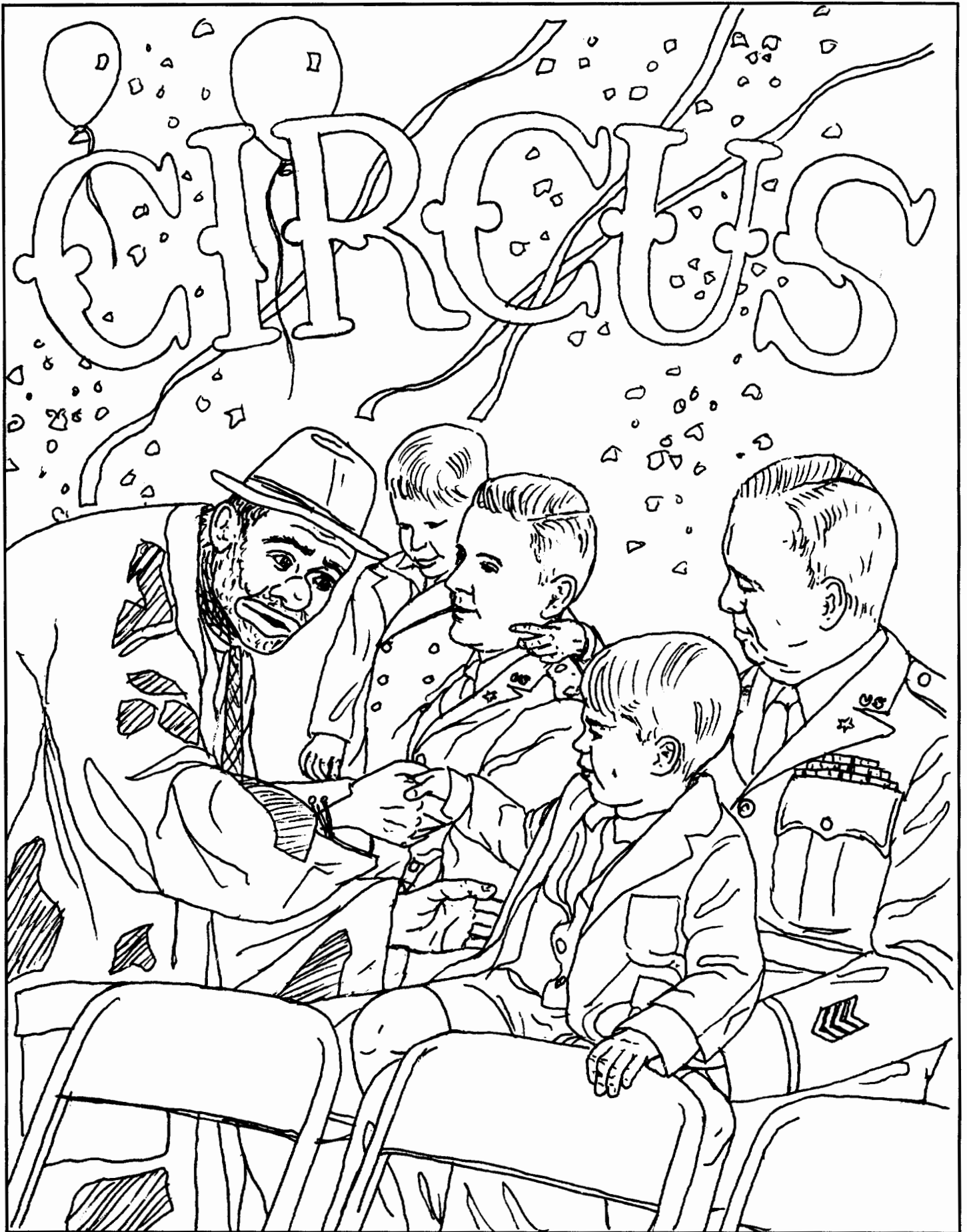


On April 12, 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt died in Warm Springs, Georgia. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt requested that George C. Marshall take charge of the funeral arrangements. The President's body traveled by train to Washington, D.C., and then by horse-drawn caisson to the White House. Following the burial service at Hyde Park, New York, Eleanor Roosevelt wrote to Marshall: "I want to tell you tonight how deeply I appreciate your kindest thoughtfulness in all the arrangements made. My husband would have been grateful & I know it was all as he would have wished it. He always spoke of his trust in you & of his affection for you."

“In a war unparalleled in magnitude and horror, millions of Americans gave their country outstanding service,” President Truman said. “General of the Army George C. Marshall gave it victory.”

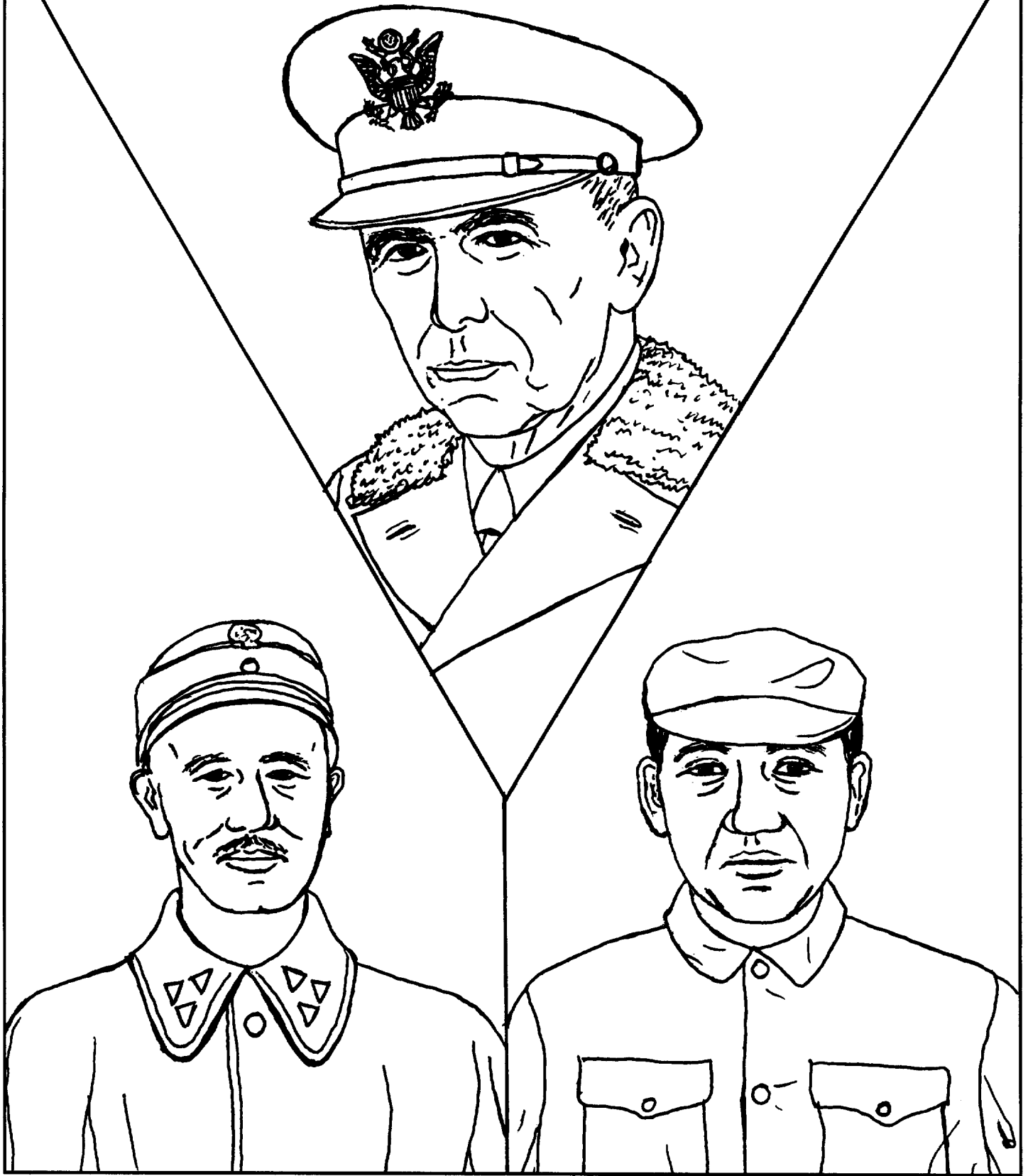


Harry S. Truman succeeded Franklin Roosevelt as President of the United States. In May 1945 Germany surrendered and the war in Europe ended, but the fighting continued in the Pacific until the Japanese surrendered in August. The Second World War had finally ended. General of the Army George C. Marshall retired as Chief of Staff in November 1945. To honor and to thank Marshall for his outstanding service, President Harry S. Truman awarded him an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal during a ceremony at the Pentagon.



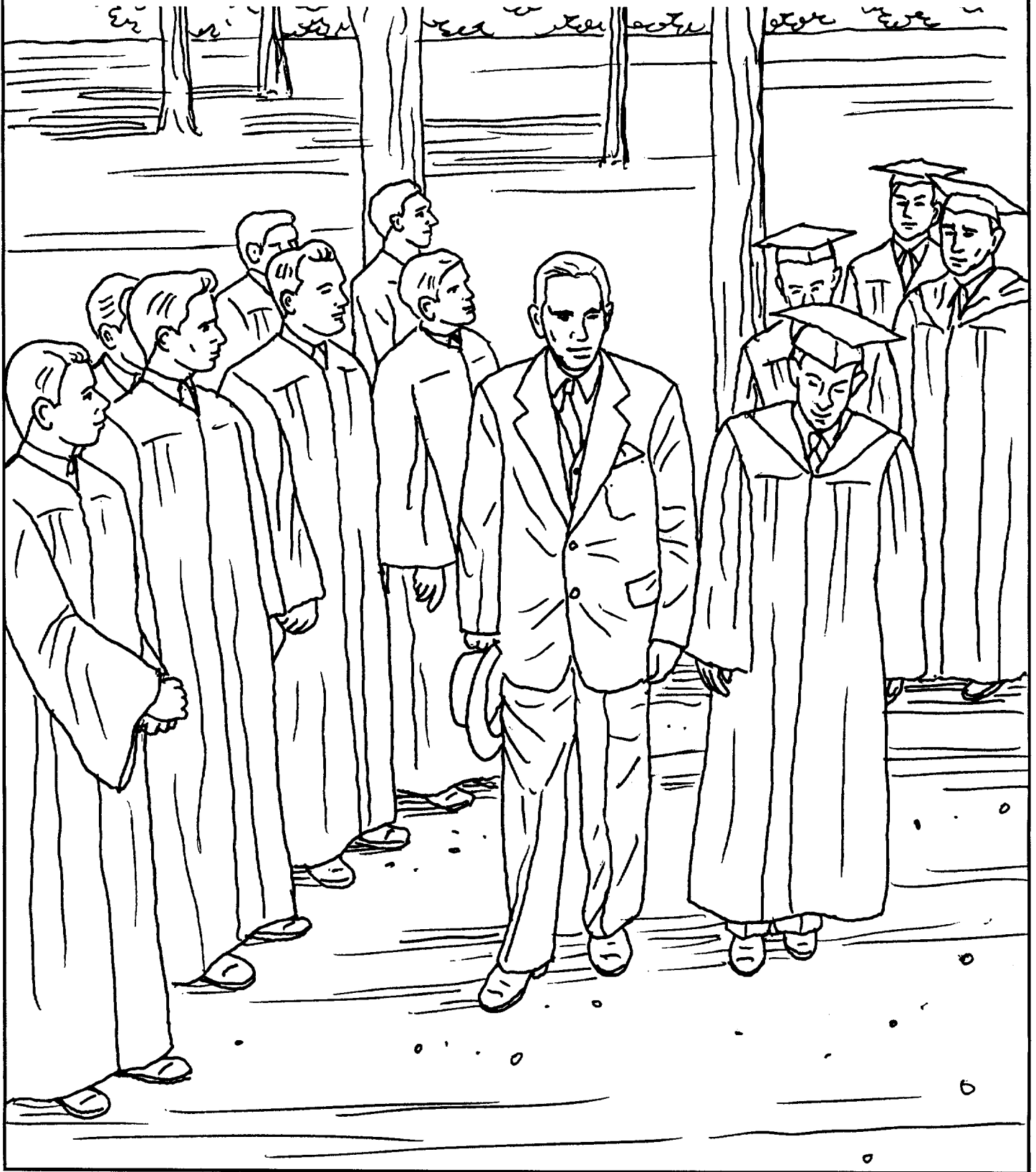
George C. Marshall enjoys the circus with his step-grandson and Lieutenant Colonel H. Merrill Pasco and his son. The clown "Weary Willie" Kelly shakes the hand of Jimmy Winn.

"My battle out here is never ending," Marshall wrote to Dwight D. Eisenhower in September 1946, "with both ends playing against the middle—which is me."

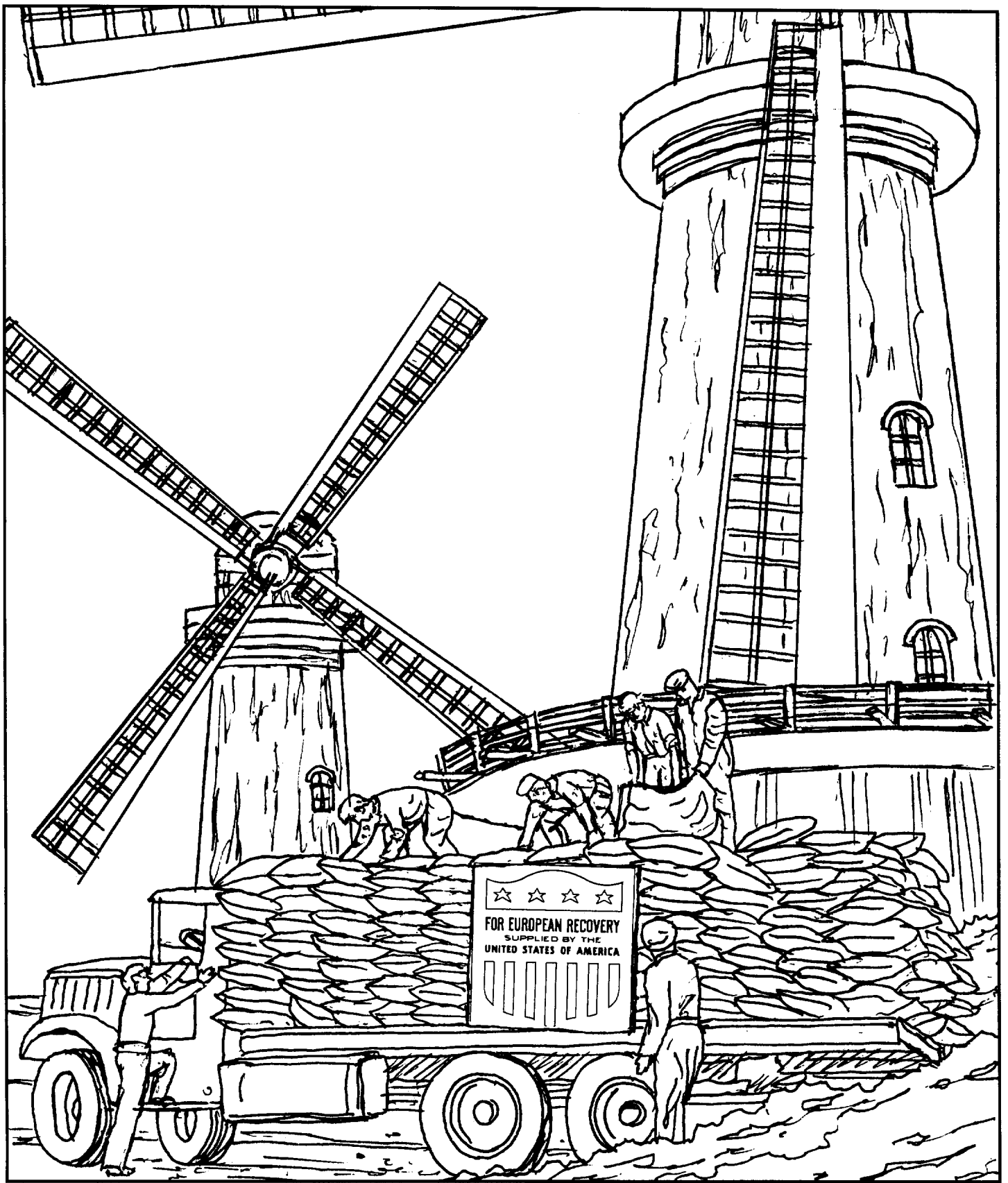


In November 1945 President Truman called on George C. Marshall to head a special mission to China, the President's special representative with the rank of Ambassador. Marshall's efforts to mediate a settlement between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government and Mao Tse-tung's Communists proved impossible, and he was unable to prevent a civil war in China.

“Our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos.”



Secretary of State George C. Marshall received an honorary degree from Harvard University on June 5, 1947. Marshall delivered a speech in which he called for economic assistance for European countries to aid their recovery from damages resulting from World War II. This idea ultimately led to what was officially known as the European Recovery Program, which was usually called the Marshall Plan.



The Marshall Plan provided economic assistance to European countries from 1948 to 1952, resulting in increased production and trade for Europe. During the four years, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$13 billion for European recovery, which supplied materials and technical advice to start industry operating again. The Marshall Plan worked as a pump primer to generate production many times the value of the materials. The United States sent machinery, wheat, coal, and other products. Here a shipment of wheat is delivered to the Netherlands.

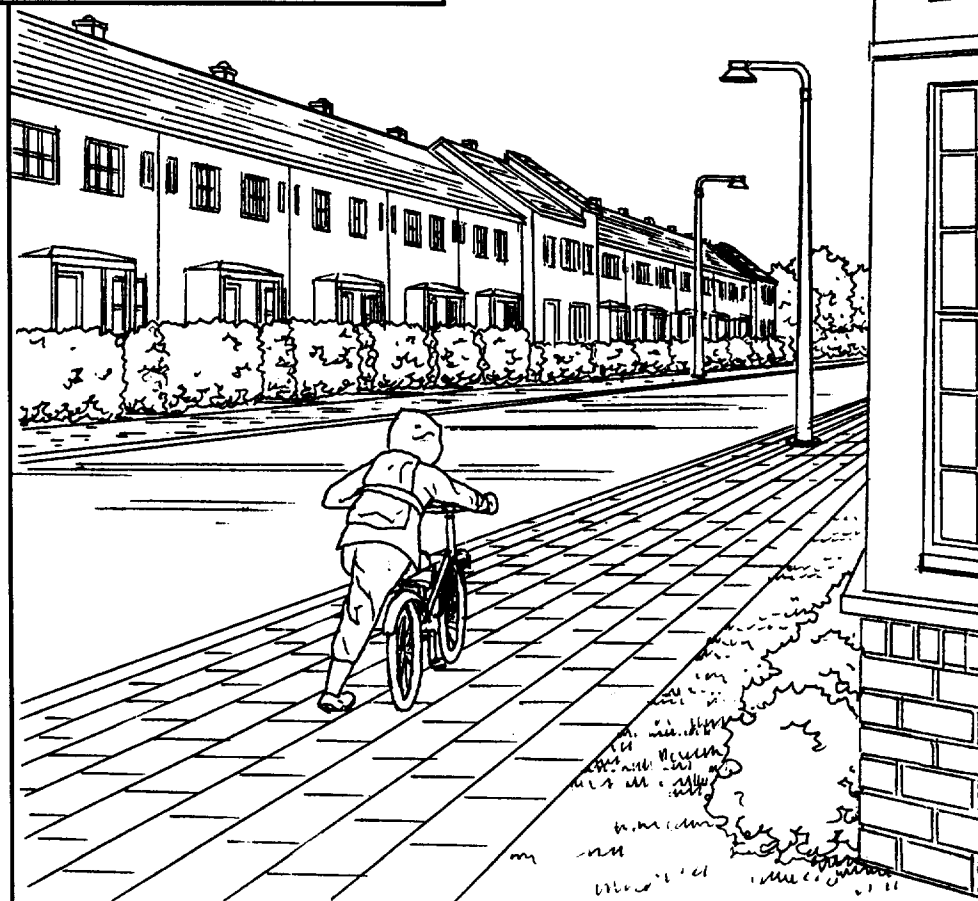
"It is a generous and fine action," said Marshall to the boys. "And it is a basis of friendship and good will and trust that is so important to our people and to the world and to peace."



Cub Scouts meet with Secretary of State George C. Marshall to tell him about their "Junior Marshall Plan." The boys raised money to help feed starving children in Europe.



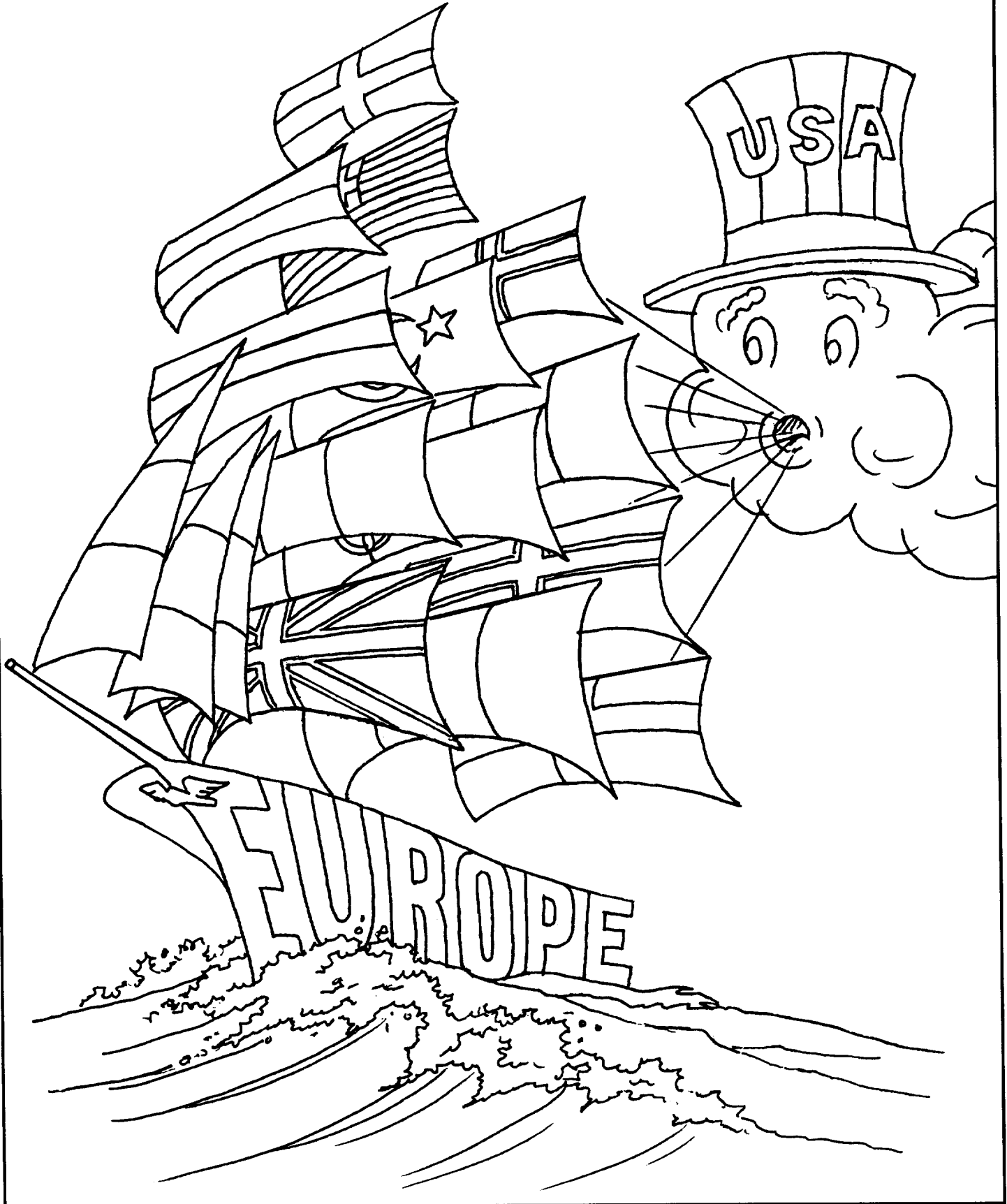
Homes throughout Europe, which had been damaged and destroyed during World War II, were rebuilt with the help of the Marshall Plan. Food and jobs became more plentiful, along with peace.





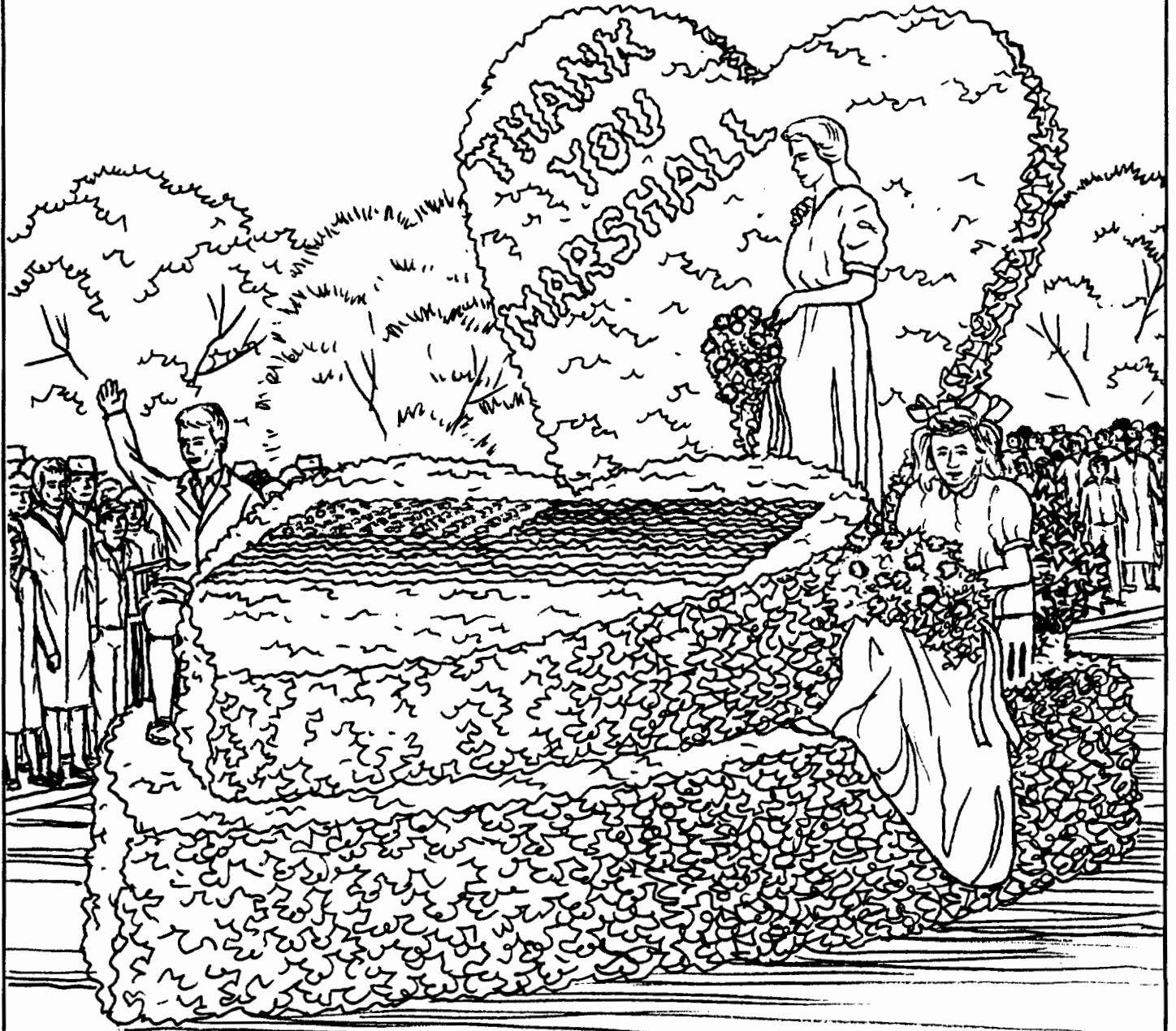
The Marshall Plan countries included Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin characterized the Marshall Plan as "A lifeline to sinking men. It seemed to bring hope where there was none. The generosity of it was beyond belief."

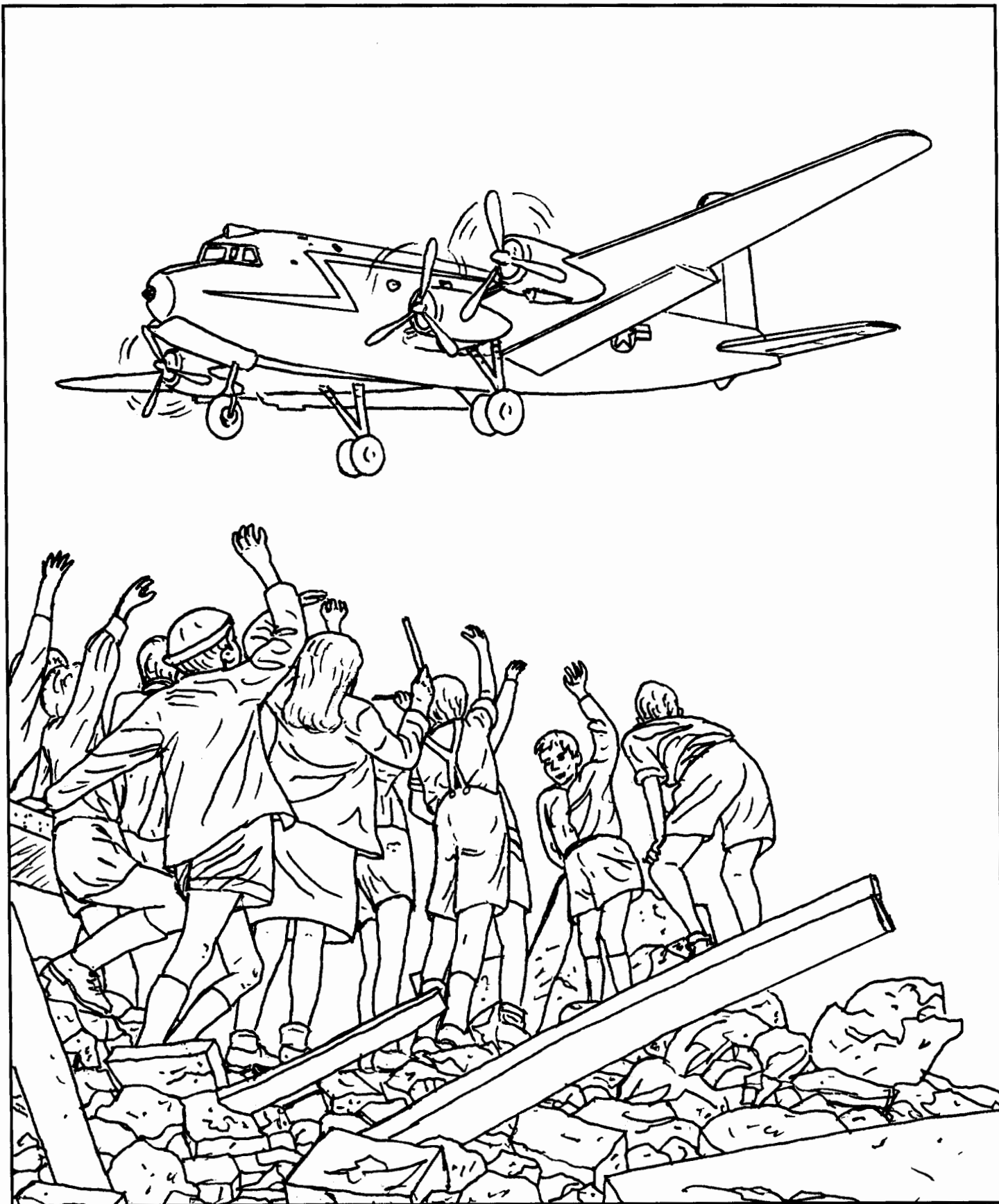


This poster portrays the Marshall Plan countries of Europe as sails on a ship.

"I salute General George Catlett Marshall as one of the outstanding men of the Twentieth Century and one whom we and the free world will always remember with respect, admiration, and affection," wrote Harry S. Truman in 1964.

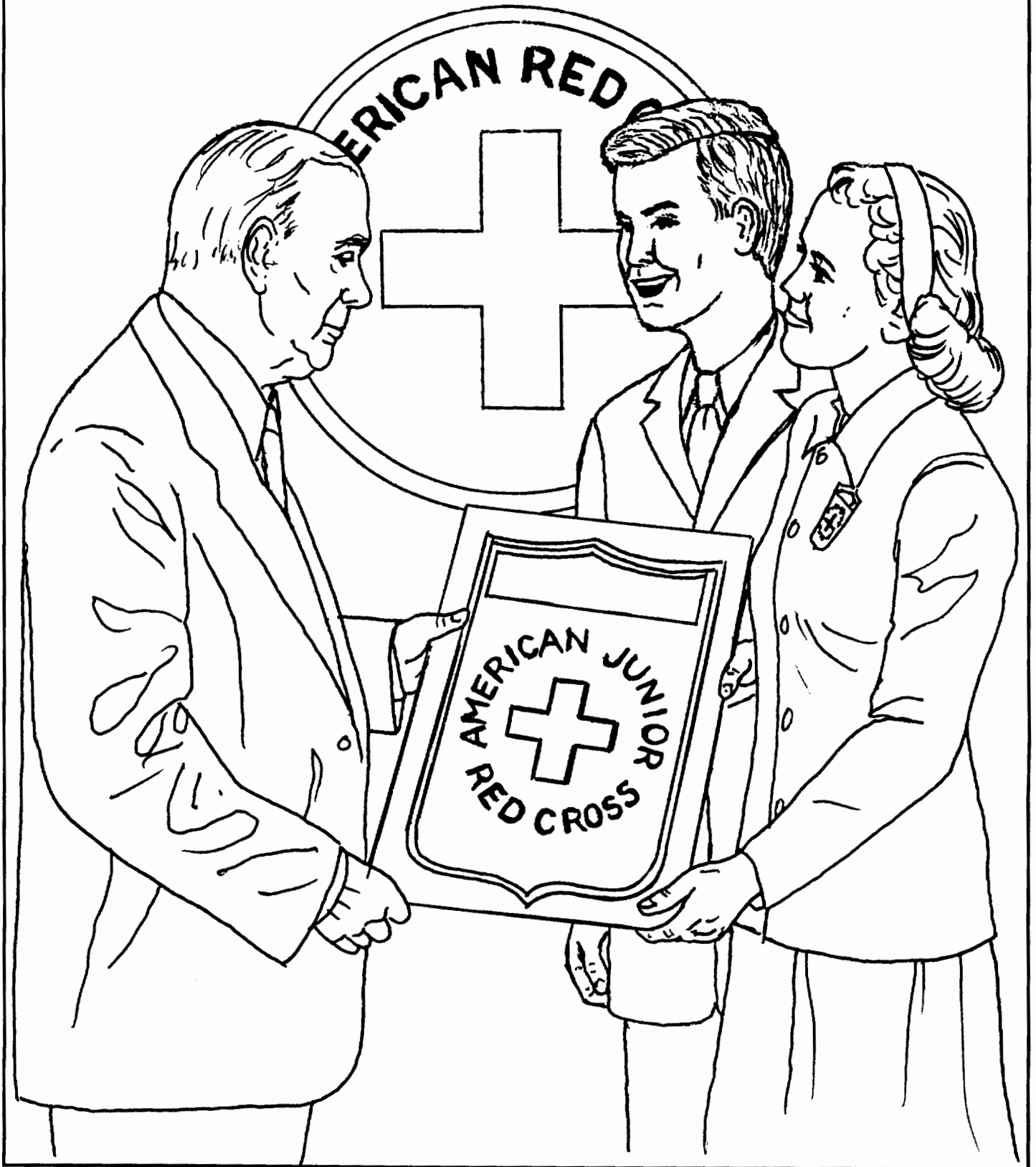


A community in the Netherlands thanks George C. Marshall for Marshall Plan aid during a parade.



BERLIN AIRLIFT. After the war, Germany was divided into four occupation zones: the United States, France, Britain, and Soviet Union each controlled a zone. The capital city of Berlin, which was located within the Soviet zone of Germany, was likewise divided into four zones. In 1948 the Soviet Union blocked rail and road traffic to and from West Berlin, thereby isolating the city. U.S. cargo planes flew supplies to West Berlin for about a year.

“There is a poetic rightness in the fact that a man who has won greatness as a soldier and a diplomat is now taking over the world’s chief enterprise of mercy,” wrote Secretary of Labor Maurice Tobin.

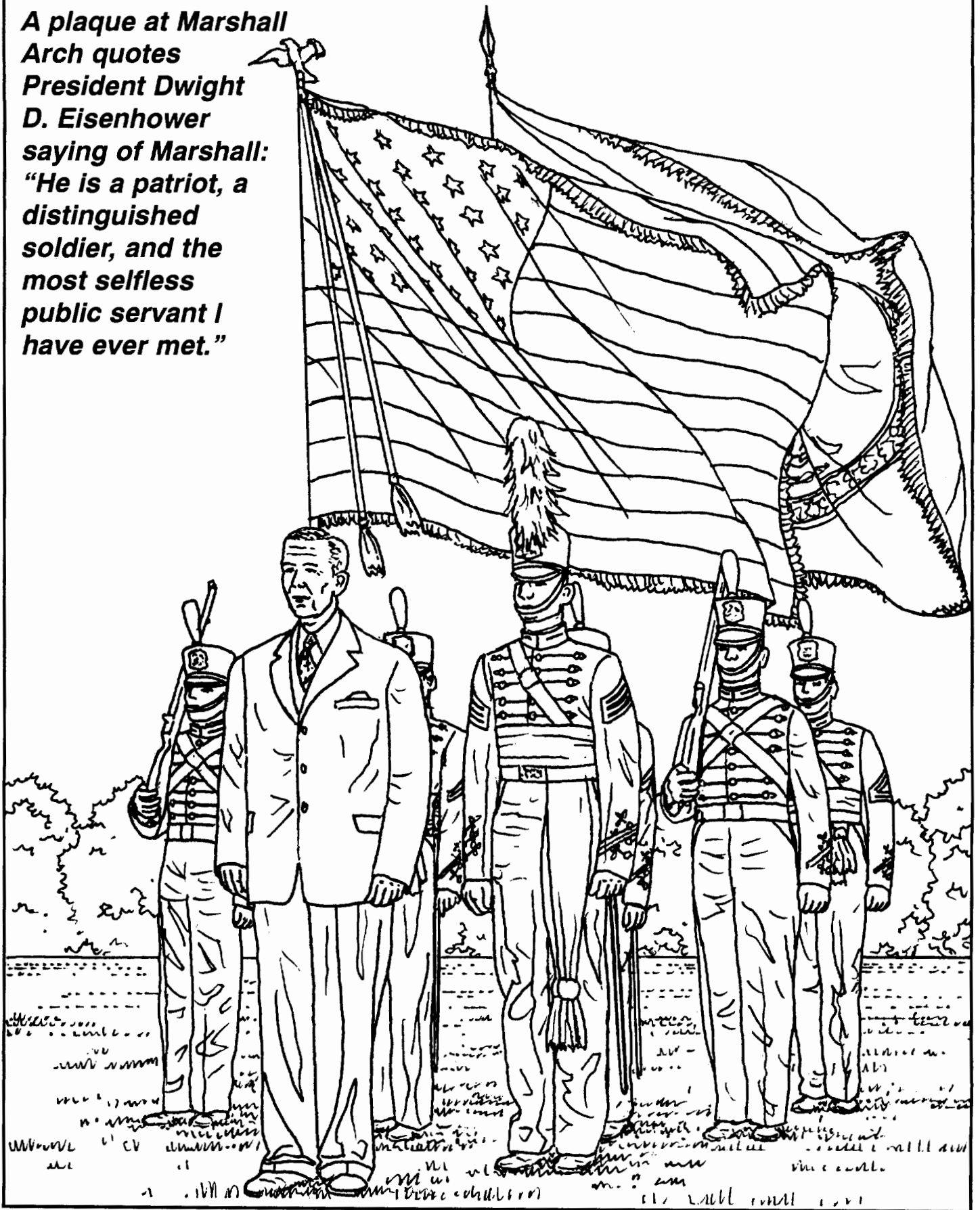


George C. Marshall served as President of the American Red Cross from October 1949 through November 1950. He traveled extensively, and he especially enjoyed his visits with members of the American Junior Red Cross.

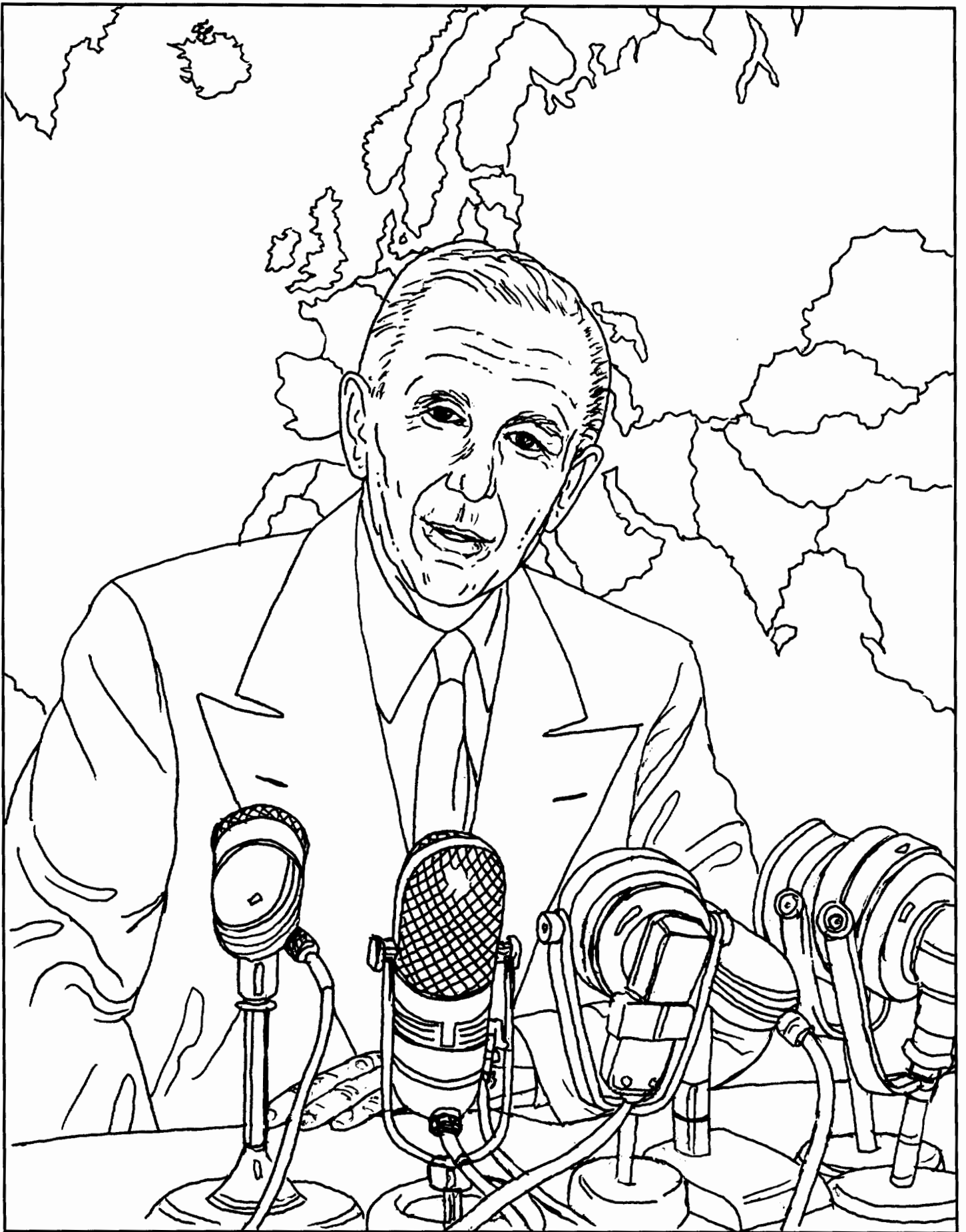


Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall tours front-line command posts in Korea in June 1951, accompanied by General Matthew B. Ridgway and Lieutenant General James A. Van Fleet. When North Korean troops invaded South Korea in June 1950, the United Nations Security Council voted to assist South Korea. The U.N. military force was composed of troops from various countries, but the majority of troops were supplied by the United States. Fighting continued until an armistice was signed in July 1953.

A plaque at Marshall Arch quotes President Dwight D. Eisenhower saying of Marshall: "He is a patriot, a distinguished soldier, and the most selfless public servant I have ever met."

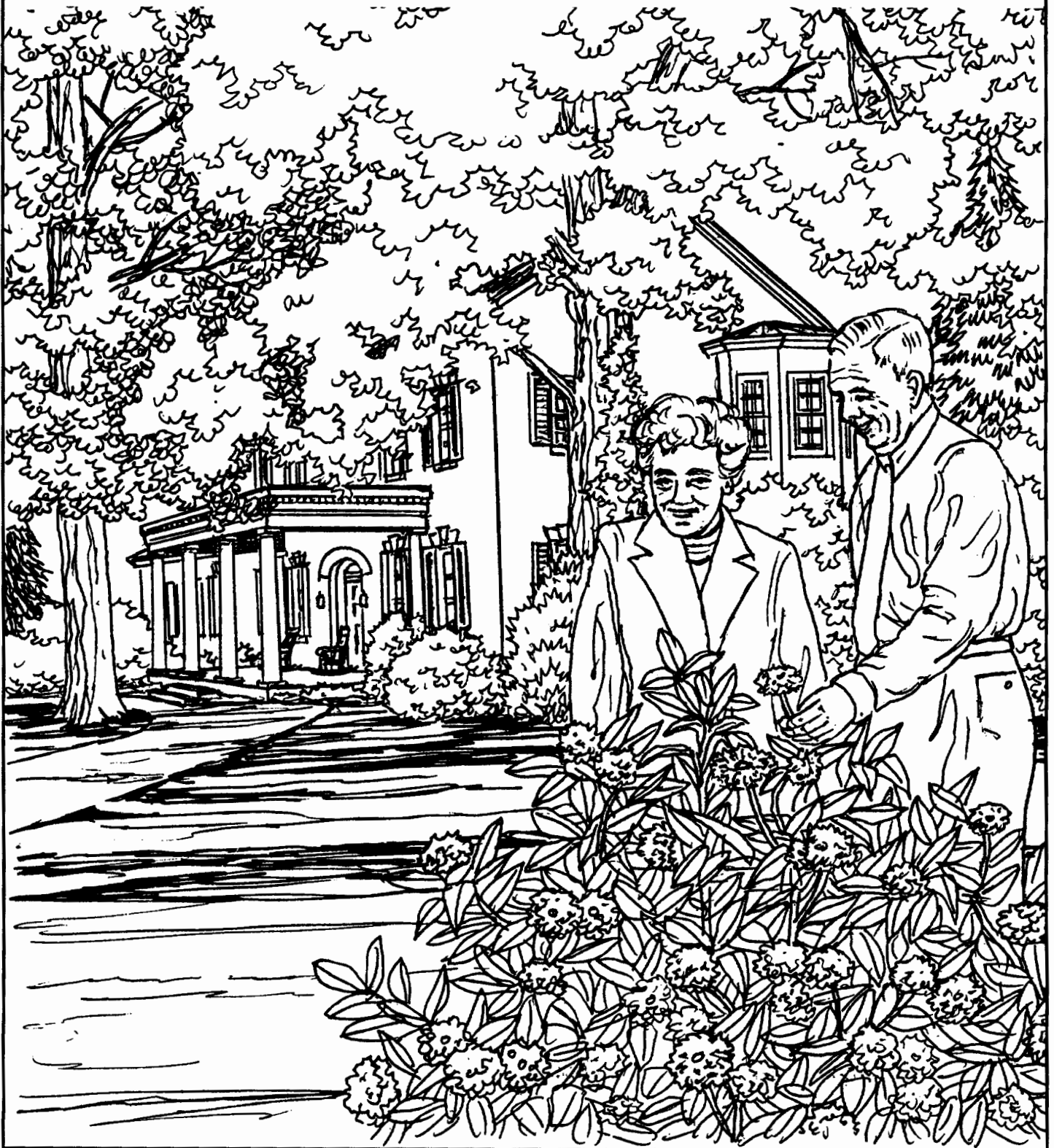


During his 50th Class Reunion, George C. Marshall was honored at a regimental review of the Virginia Military Institute Corps of Cadets during the dedication of Marshall Arch in the barracks on May 15, 1951.



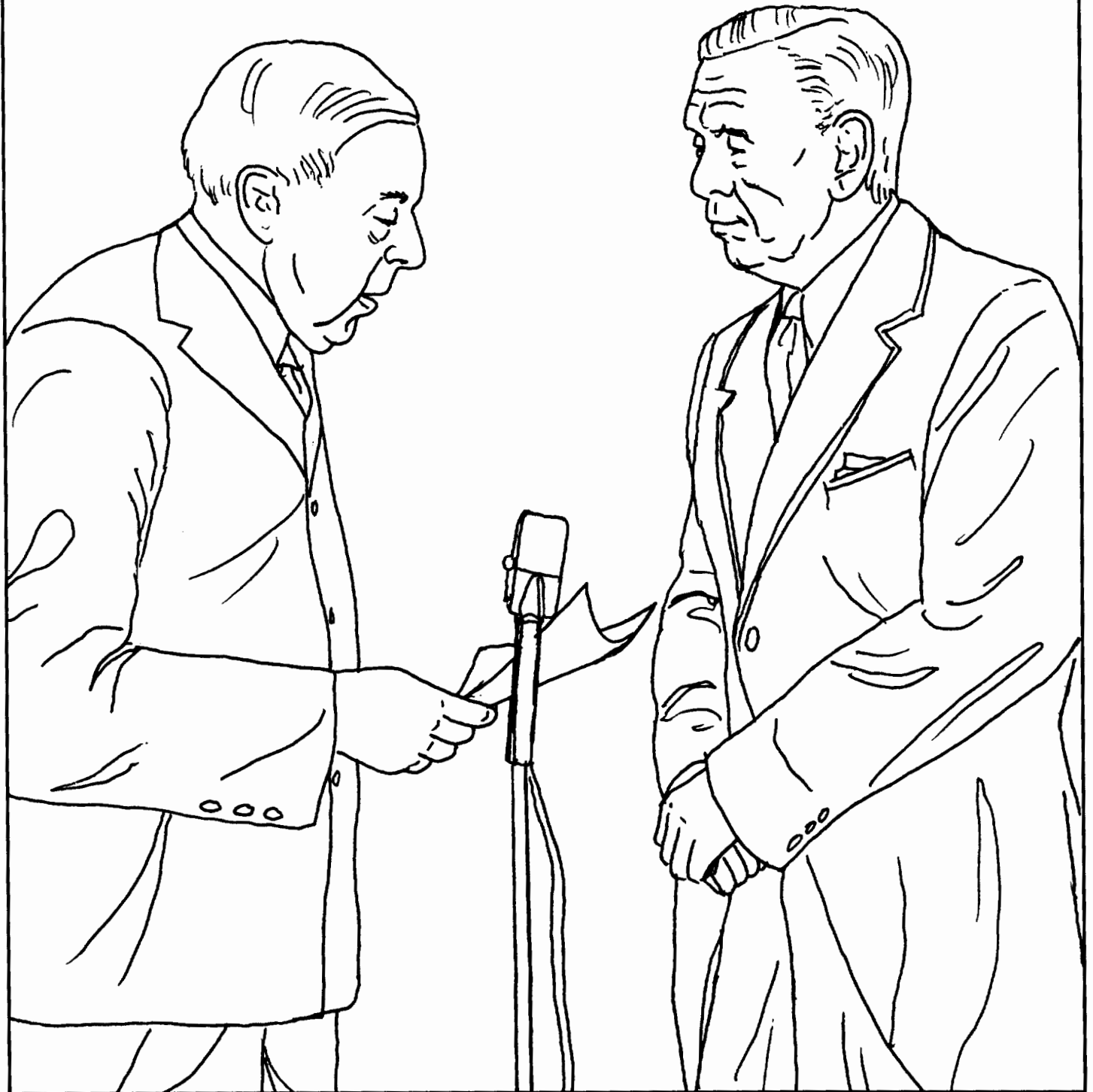
Secretary of Defense George C. Marshall speaks concerning truce negotiations in Korea during a press conference at the Pentagon in July 1951.

“The business of seeds and flowers tantalizes me because I have been an amateur gardener, both flower and vegetable, since a boy of ten,” Marshall wrote in March 1942. “There is nothing I would so much prefer to do this spring as to turn my mind to the wholesome business of gardening rather than the terrible problems and tragedies of war.”

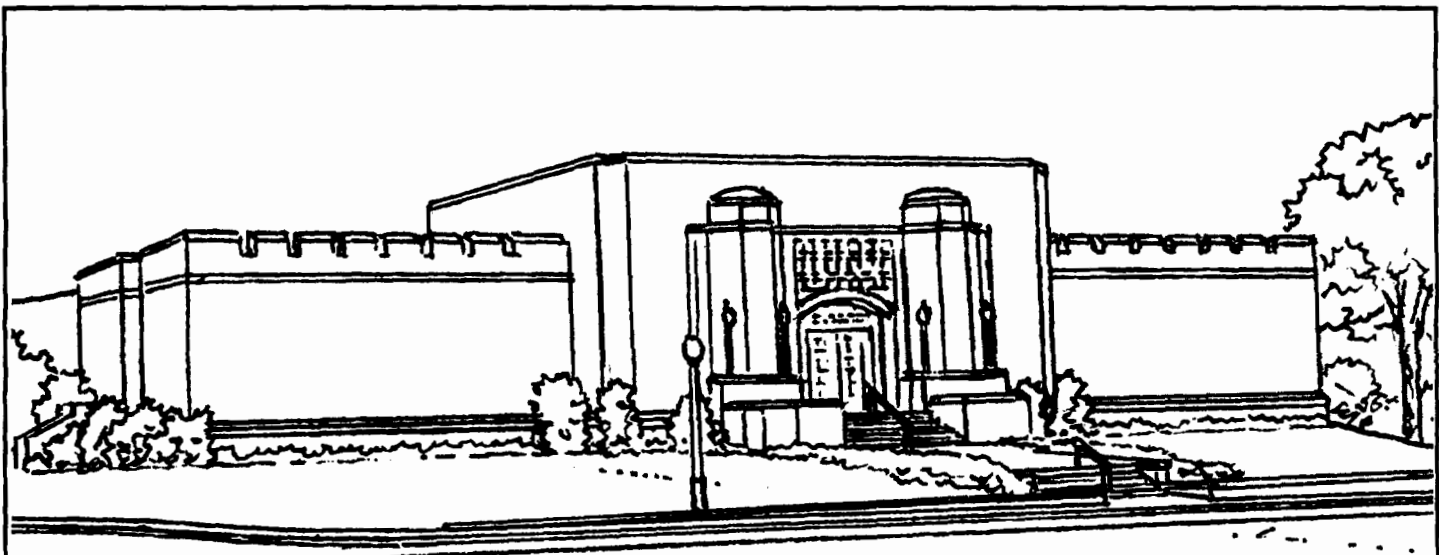


General and Mrs. Marshall retired to their home (Dodona Manor) in Leesburg, Virginia, in September 1951. Here they enjoyed working in their flower gardens.

“There has been considerable comment over the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize for 1953 to a soldier. I am afraid this does not seem as remarkable to me as it quite evidently appears to others,” said Marshall. “The cost of war in human lives is constantly spread before me, written neatly in many ledgers whose columns are gravestones. I am deeply moved to find some means or method of avoiding another calamity of war.”



George C. Marshall was honored for his accomplishments relating to the European Recovery Program (the Marshall Plan) when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Marshall (right) receives the Nobel Peace Prize from Nobel Prize Committee President Gunnar Jahn at Oslo University in Norway on December 10, 1953.



“Succeeding generations must not be allowed to forget his achievements and his example,” wrote British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

President Harry S. Truman promoted the idea that a building house General Marshall's papers and preserve his place in history. In May 1964 the George C. Marshall Research Library was dedicated in Lexington, Virginia, as a living memorial to the General. The building, which faces the Virginia Military Institute's Parade Ground, includes a museum and a library and archive for visitors and researchers to learn about George C. Marshall and his times.