

Statement to Commission for Historical Statues in the U.S. Capitol
(limited to three minutes)

David L. Roll, November 17, 2020
Author, *George Marshall: Defender of the Republic*

Other than George Washington there is no Virginian more deserving of a statue in the U.S. Capitol than George C. Marshall. As organizer of victory in World War II and Secretary of State thereafter, he changed the course of world history by defeating not one but two racist, brutal regimes. He liberated tens of millions of civilians, Jews and POWs in Europe and the Asia-Pacific. Via the Marshall Plan and NATO he saved the peoples of Western Europe from starvation and Communist domination.

Marshall was a selfless patriot, always putting the country and the common good ahead of his own interests.

Marshall's cause was not civil rights but winning the war and protecting the American people by securing a lasting peace.

As to criticisms of Marshall's record, I offer the following facts:

When Marshall became president of the American Red Cross on October 1, 1949, he inherited the organization's policy of designating its blood products by the race of the donor. That policy was ended on November 19, 1950 while Marshall was president.

As Army Chief of Staff Marshall took affirmative steps to support the Tuskegee Airmen, including actions to ensure that its leaders had the

necessary resources. There is no evidence that Marshall failed to support dozens of other African and Japanese American combat units that were formed under his watch, including the Black regiments in the 92nd and 93rd Divisions, the 761st tank battalion, the 452nd anti-aircraft battalion, and the 442nd regiment of Japanese Americans.

Against scurrilous opposition, Marshall pushed through Congress legislation establishing the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps and the WAC's, the Women's Army Corps, that entitled them to postwar benefits. Units of Black women served in their ranks. He was an early advocate of women in the army. Marshall had no role in the administration of the GI Bill or other veteran's benefits.

When he was Secretary of Defense, Marshall fought against virulent anti-Semitism in Congress for the appointment of a Jewish woman to be Assistant Secretary for Manpower (irony noted), whose job was to help integrate the armed forces.

The values that Marshall stood for are eternal. Centuries from now Virginians will take pride in seeing George Marshall and George Washington stand together in the U.S. Capitol.