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## From the Archives: The Brash Captain

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## *From the Archives*

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### The Brash Captain

On 3 October 1917 General Pershing visited the 1st Infantry Division during their training in France to witness a battalion demonstration. Afterwards Pershing “just gave everybody hell.” He said, “The division didn’t show much evidence of training, had made poor use of its time, and had not followed directives.”

As Pershing dismissed the Division Commander and Chief of Staff with contempt, a junior officer “stung at the manifest injustice,” and at what he considered the unfairness of Pershing’s appraisal, began to speak. When Pershing turned away, the young officer “mad all over” put his hand on the general’s arm and overwhelmed him with a torrent of facts.

While his fellow staff officers were horrified and felt that the young captain would be fired, he himself had no regrets. He said, “All I can see is that I might get field duty instead of staff duty, and certainly that would be a great success.”

Contrary to the expectations of his messmates, the young captain later became General Pershing’s aide. His name was George C. Marshall.

Source: Richard J. Sommers, ed., *Vignettes of Military History, Volume I* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army Military History Research Collection, now the US Army Military History Institute [USAMHI], October 1976), Vignette No. 13, contributed by then-Lieutenant Colonel Roy S. Barnard, drawn from Forrest C. Pogue, *Education of a General*, pp. 151-53.