

General Joseph Lawton Collins

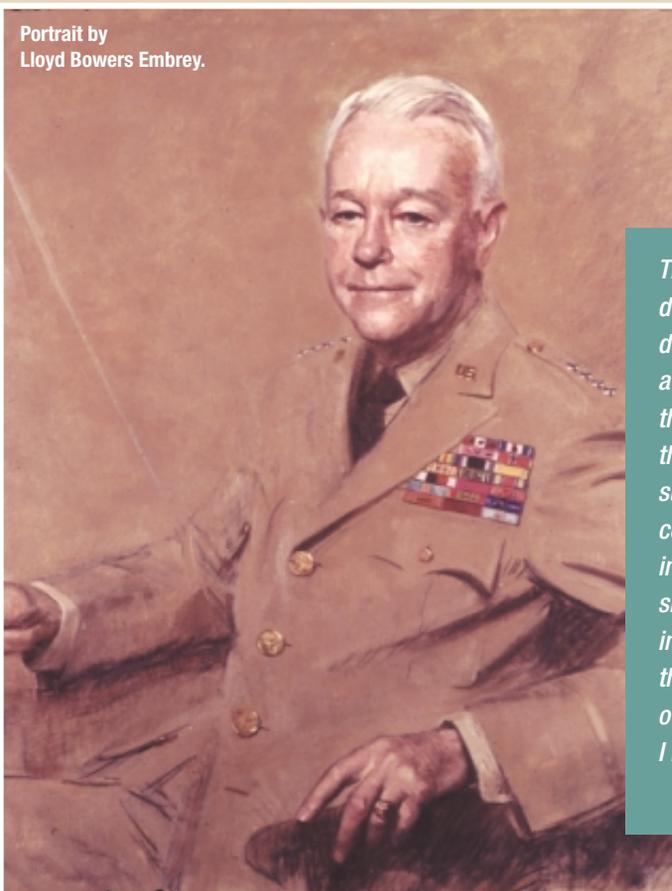
(1896–1987)

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army

VITA

Born in New Orleans, Louisiana; graduated from Military Academy (1917); infantry school of arms and regimental service (1917–19); commanded 3^d Battalion, 22^d Infantry, in France (1919); assistant chief of staff, American Forces, Germany (1920–21); instructor at West Point (1921–25); company officer course, infantry school (1926); field artillery school (1927); instructor, infantry school (1927–31); executive officer, 23^d Brigade, Manila, and assistant chief of staff, Philippine Division (1933–34); completed Army Industrial College (1937); student and instructor, Army War College (1937–40); chief of staff, VII Corps (1941); chief of staff, Hawaiian Department (1941–42); commanded 25th Infantry Division on Oahu and at Guadalcanal (1942–43); commanded VII Corps, Normandy and during European campaigns (1944–45); deputy commander in chief of staff, Army Ground Forces (1945); chief of public information (1945–47); deputy chief and vice chief of staff, U.S. Army (1947–49); chief of staff, U.S. Army (1949–53); U.S. representative to military committee and standing group of NATO (1953–54); special representative to Vietnam with rank of ambassador (1954–55); returned to NATO assignment (1955–56); died in Washington, D.C.

Portrait by
Lloyd Bowers Embrey.



The question arises periodically as to what a Chief of Staff should do if, in all conscience, he cannot support the budget or other policy decisions of the President or the Secretary of Defense. In such a case he is entitled by law to appeal directly to the President, over the head of the Secretary, if necessary. I believe that in loyalty to the President as Commander in Chief, a Chief of Staff should support the President's programs unless, in a crisis, a chief is convinced that the security of the country is at stake, in which instance he should ask to be relieved. I came close to such a point shortly after the outbreak of the Korean War when I felt impelled to inform Secretary Louis Johnson at an Armed Forces Policy Meeting that I would be unable to accept any further cuts in the number of active divisions in the Army. If the Korean War had not intervened I might well have been relieved or forced to resign.

—From *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography*