

Dwight David Eisenhower

34th U.S. President (1890 – 1969)

Born in Texas and brought up in Abilene, Kansas, Eisenhower was the third of seven sons. He excelled in sports in high school, and received an appointment to West Point. Stationed in Texas as a second lieutenant, he met Mamie Geneva Doud, whom he married in 1916.

When World War II began, he commanded the Allied Forces landing in North Africa in November 1942; on D-Day, 1944, he was Supreme Commander of the troops invading France.

After the war, he became President of Columbia University, then took leave to assume supreme command over the new NATO forces being assembled in 1951. Republican emissaries to his headquarters near Paris persuaded him to run for the Presidency. When HAROLD STASSEN released his delegates to Eisenhower at the convention, Ike was able to defeat Robert Taft for the nomination on the first ballot. He and his running mate Richard Nixon defeated Democrats ADLAI STEVENSON and John Sparkman in a landslide.

Negotiating from military strength, he tried to reduce the strains of the Cold War. In 1953, the signing of a truce brought an armed peace along the border of South Korea. The death of Stalin the same year signaled a shift in relations with Russia.

In September 1955, Eisenhower suffered a heart attack. After seven weeks he left the hospital, and in February 1956, doctors reported his recovery. In November he was elected for his second term.

In domestic policy, Ike pursued a middle course, continuing most of the New Deal and Fair Deal programs, and emphasizing a balanced budget. As desegregation of schools began, he sent troops into Little Rock, Arkansas, to assure compliance with the orders of a Federal court; he also ordered the complete desegregation of the Armed Forces begun by Truman. "There must be no second class citizens in this country," he wrote.

On January 17, 1961, Eisenhower gave his final televised address to the nation from the Oval Office where he warned "we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex." Later that year, on the 20th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, General Eisenhower joined his fellow Centurions at the December meeting.

Eisenhower died after a long illness on March 28, 1969 at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. He was survived by Mamie, his son John, and four grandchildren. Camp David is named after his grandson DAVID EISENHOWER, married to Richard Nixon's daughter Julie.

