

General Dwight D. Eisenhower

The statue and memorial that stands above all others on General's Overview is that of 5 star General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander of the allied forces during WW2

Born in Texas in 1890, 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.

A member of a star-studded class that would ultimately produce fifty-nine generals, including Omar Bradley, Eisenhower was a solid student and graduated 61st in a class of 164. While at the academy, he also proved a gifted athlete until having his career cut short by a knee injury. Completing his education, Eisenhower graduated in 1915 and was assigned to the infantry.

Eisenhower was one of a select few who obtained the rank of a 5 star general on December 20, 1944.

In his early Army career, he excelled in staff assignments, serving under Generals John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, and Walter Krueger.

Known as an excellent staff officer, Eisenhower was selected as aide by US Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur. When MacArthur's term ended in 1935, Eisenhower followed his superior to the Philippines to serve as a military advisor to the Filipino government. Promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1936, Eisenhower began to clash with MacArthur on military and philosophical topics. Opening a rift that would last the remainder of their lives, the arguments led Eisenhower to return to Washington in 1939 and take series of staff positions. In June 1941, he became chief of staff to 3rd Army commander Lieutenant General Walter Krueger and was promoted to brigadier general that September.

With the US entry into World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was assigned to the General Staff in Washington where he devised war plans for defeating Germany and Japan. Becoming Chief of the War Plans Division, he was soon elevated to Assistant Chief of Staff overseeing the Operations Division under Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. Though he had never led large formations in the field, Eisenhower soon impressed Marshall with his organizational and leadership skills. As a result, Marshall appointed him commander of the European Theater of Operations (ETOUSA) on June 24, 1942. This was soon followed by a promotion to lieutenant general.

After extensive planning, Eisenhower moved forward with the invasion of Normandy (Operation Overlord) on June 6, 1944. Successful, his forces broke out of the beachhead in July and began driving across France. Though he clashed with Churchill over strategy, such as the British-opposed Operation Dragoon landings in Southern France, Eisenhower worked to balance Allied initiatives and approved Montgomery's Operation Market-Garden in September. Pushing east in December, Eisenhower's biggest crisis of the campaign came with the opening of the Battle of the Bulge on December 16. With German forces breaking through the Allied lines, Eisenhower quickly worked to seal the breach and contain the enemy advance. Over the next month, Allied troops halted the enemy and drove them back to their original lines with heavy losses. During the fighting, Eisenhower was promoted to General of the Army.

With the surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945, Eisenhower was named Military Governor of the US Occupation Zone. As governor, he worked to document Nazi atrocities, deal with food shortages, and aid refugees.

Returning to the United States that fall, Eisenhower was greeted as a hero. Made Chief of Staff on November 19, he replaced Marshall and remained in this post until February 6, 1948. A key responsibility during his tenure was overseeing the rapid downsizing of the army after the war. Departing in 1948, Eisenhower became President of Columbia University. While there, he worked to expand his political and economic knowledge, as well as wrote his memoir *Crusade in Europe*. In 1950, Eisenhower was recalled to be the Supreme Commander for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Serving until May 31, 1952, he retired from active duty and returned to Columbia.

Entering politics, Eisenhower ran for president that fall with Richard Nixon as his running mate. Winning in a landslide, he defeated Adlai Stevenson. A moderate Republican, Eisenhower's eight years in the White House were marked by the end of the Korean War, efforts to contain Communism, construction of the interstate highway system, nuclear deterrence, founding of NASA, and economic prosperity. Leaving office in 1961, Eisenhower retired to his farm in Gettysburg, PA. He lived in Gettysburg with his wife, Mamie (m.1916) until his death from heart failure on March 28, 1969. Following funeral services in Washington, Eisenhower was buried in Abilene, KS at the Eisenhower Presidential Library.