

# **COMMANDERS of WORLD WAR TWO**

**For my grandchildren, Devin, Tayla, Chloe, and Ava.**

**Also by Bill Brady**

World War Two, Cause and Effect  
The Global Tragedy and Triumph 1939-45  
US Pacific Victory in World War Two

## FOREWORD

Bill Brady is arguably one of the foremost South African writers of the present era on the military history of World War Two. A former Chairman of the Durban based South African Military History Society, Bill has done readers proud by writing and publishing this fascinating and educational book about some of the most recognisably famous and infamous 'Commanders of World War Two'.

The author has demonstrated, many times over, in his previously published works that he has the ability and sagaciousness to relate historical facts in an interestingly descriptive manner devoid of irrelevant detail. No less in this work.

In this book we can read about some of the prominent 'Commanders of World War Two' who strategically planned campaigns and battles, directed them, won and lost them and who even lost the war itself.

In addressing the strengths, weaknesses and idiosyncratic behaviours of the commanders, Bill enables the reader to gain insights into the working of their minds and to evaluate their actions following their decisions both good and bad.

This is a valuable work which should become a valuable addition to any historian's war history collection.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### EISENHOWER

General Dwight David Eisenhower (1890-1969) was selected in June 1942 to head US forces in Europe. Five months later he commanded the 'Torch' landings in North Africa, and just over a year after that he was named Allied Supreme Commander for the Normandy invasion. It was a meteoric rise for a man who had never before exercised command in battle.

He had a dominant personality and most capable of making critical decisions. In the vast bureaucracy of high command, he was the single person who could make judgments and issue orders. Of the many high-powered subordinates, most famously Generals Montgomery and Patton, from the time of his appointment as Supreme Commander to the end of the war, he was the one who ran the show.

Eisenhower was a West Point graduate (1915) and professional soldier. When the war broke out for the US on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1941, he was a brigadier general and chief of staff at the Third Army, stationed in Texas. On 12<sup>th</sup> December he got a call from the War Department ordering him to proceed immediately to Washington for a new assignment. He soon discovered how ill-prepared the Americans were for war, and how fortunate they were to have Eisenhower in the ranks.

'Ike', as he was affectionately known throughout his multinational command and subsequent US presidency, was among an elite group for advancement chosen by General George Marshall, US Army Chief of Staff,. When he was given overall command of the 'Torch' invasion, he had to coordinate the efforts of subordinates who in many cases were vastly more experienced. He created a joint command headquarters and an integrated staff, with a British and an American officer for each job. This worked brilliantly, due to his tact and skill. His leadership talents would eventually take him to the White House, where he served two terms, from 1953 to 1961, and was extremely popular.

The key to his success as a leader of men was his insistence on teamwork and his commitment to democracy. General Eisenhower liked to speak of the fury of an aroused democracy. It was in Normandy on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, and in the campaign that followed, that the Western democracies made their fury manifest. The success of this great and noble undertaking was a triumph of democracy over totalitarianism. Eisenhower said he wanted democracy to survive for all ages to come.

In 1964, on D-Day plus twenty years, he was interviewed on Omaha Beach by Walter Cronkite. Looking out at the Channel, Eisenhower said; "You see these people out here swimming and sailing their little pleasure boats and taking advantage of the nice

weather and the lovely beach, Walter. It is almost unreal to look at it today and remember what it was. But it's a wonderful thing to remember what those fellows twenty years ago were fighting and sacrificing for, what they did to preserve our way of life. Not to conquer any territory, not for any ambitions of our own, but to make sure that Hitler could not destroy freedom in the world. I think it's just overwhelming. To think of the lives that were given for that principle, paying a terrible price on this beach alone, on that one day over two thousand casualties. But they did it so that the world could be free. It just shows what free men will do rather than be slaves”.

Few, if any, American officers performed a wider array of strategic functions as Eisenhower; he was a staff planner in the War Department, wartime commander of a massive coalition force, peacetime Chief of Staff, and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO. Eisenhower was directly involved in a number of major transitions including the building of the wartime American Army, its demobilization following victory, and the resuscitation of American military strength with the on come of the cold war.

Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas, on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1890, the third of seven sons. Soon after his birth, the family moved to Abilene, Kansas. His family was not wealthy, necessitating Eisenhower to quickly learn the value of hard work. David Jacob Eisenhower (1863-1942), his father, was a professional engineer and his mother was Ida Elizabeth (Stover) Eisenhower.

Ike attended Abilene High School and graduated with the class of 1909. Although Eisenhower was an average school pupil, he enjoyed studying history, particularly figures like George Washington and Hannibal. He had to take a job to pay for tuition fees prior to entering the United States Military Academy, West Point in June 1911. While Eisenhower's mother was opposed to war, it was her collection of history books that first sparked Eisenhower's early and lasting interest in military history. He persisted

in reading the books in her collection and became a voracious reader on the subject. His decision to attend West Point saddened his mother, but she did not overrule him. He graduated 61st in a class of 164 in 1915, in what became known as 'the class the stars fell on' because fifty nine members eventually became general officers.

Shortly after the United States entered World War One in 1917, Eisenhower was promoted to captain. He was given command of Camp Colt, Pennsylvania, a post of the newly formed Tank Corps. In March, 1918, he was promoted to major and awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. On 15<sup>th</sup> September 1918, Eisenhower was promoted to lieutenant colonel and was ordered to embark on 18<sup>th</sup> November for combat service in France. However, the deployment did not take place due to the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918 Armistice that ended the war. Completely missing out on the battlefield left him depressed and bitter for a time. Later, in World War Two, rivals who had experienced combat service in World War One sought to denigrate Eisenhower for his lack of combat duty. Due to the post World War One reduction of

the army, he reverted to the rank of captain, until June 1920, when he was promoted to major. Which was the rank he held for the next 16 years.

Eisenhower met and fell in love with Mamie Geneva Doud from Iowa. They wed on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1916, and had two sons. Doud Dwight Eisenhower was born in 1917, and died of scarlet fever at the age of three. Their second son, John Sheldon Doud Eisenhower, was born in 1922. John served in the United States Army, retired as a brigadier general, became an author and served as U.S. Ambassador to Belgium from 1969 to 1971. John, coincidentally, graduated from West Point on D-Day, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944.

From 1920, Eisenhower served under a succession of talented generals, including John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur and George Marshall. In 1925-26 he attended the Command and General Staff College (CGS) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and graduated first in his CGS class of two hundred and forty five officers. His schooling continued, focusing on the nature of the next war and the role of the tank in it. His new expertise in tank warfare was strengthened by a close collaboration with George S. Patton and other senior tank leaders. Their leading-edge ideas of speed-oriented offensive tank warfare were strongly discouraged by superiors who considered the new approach too radical and preferred the tank continue to be used in a strictly supportive role for the infantry.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, Eisenhower's career in the army stalled somewhat, as military priorities diminished. This caused many of his fellow officers to resign for high-paying business jobs. He was then assigned to the American Battle Monuments Commission directed by General Pershing, and produced a guide to American battlefields in Europe. Pershing wrote a letter praising Eisenhower, and from then on the army saw him as one of its future leading officers. He then served as chief military aide to General Douglas MacArthur, Chief of Staff of the United States Army, until 1935. He then accompanied MacArthur to the Philippines, where he served as assistant military adviser to the Philippine government. In June 1941, Eisenhower was appointed Chief of Staff to General Walter Krueger, Commander of the 3rd Army, at Fort Sam Houston in Texas, and promoted to brigadier general on October 1941. Although his administrative abilities had been noticed, he was far from being considered by many as a potential commander of major field operations.

After Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower was assigned to the General Staff in Washington, where he served until June 1942. He was appointed Deputy Chief in charge of Pacific Defences under the Chief of War Plans Division (WPD), General Gerow, and then succeeded Gerow as Chief of the WPD. Then he was appointed Assistant Chief of Staff in charge of the new Operations Division (which replaced WPD) under Chief of Staff General George Marshall. It was his close association with Marshall that finally brought Eisenhower to senior command positions. Marshall recognized his great organizational and administrative abilities.

The Americans were eager to get going on defeating the Germans. Eisenhower's first task as Marshall's principal advisor had been to save the Philippines, which by January 1942 was already obviously impossible. Meanwhile, Eisenhower was beginning to think on a worldwide scale. On 22<sup>nd</sup> January he scribbled in his diary, „We've got to go to Europe and fight, and we've got to quit wasting resources all over the world, and still worse, wasting time“. He had concluded that the correct strategy was „Germany first“, on the grounds that the Germans were the main threat. It was imperative to keep the Red Army in the war by putting pressure on Germany from the west. Once Germany was defeated the Americans could go over to the offensive against the Japanese. He recommended to Marshall a program: spend 1942 and the first months of 1943 building an American force in Britain, then invading France. Marshall agreed and told Eisenhower to prepare a draft directive for the American commander in Britain.

Eisenhower came up with a name, the European Theatre of Operations (ETO), and produced the draft. He urged "that absolute unity of command should be exercised by the Theatre Commander, who should organize, train, and command the American ground, naval, and air forces assigned to the theatre". At the end of May 1942, Eisenhower accompanied Lt. General Arnold, commanding General of the Army Air Forces, to London to assess the effectiveness of the theatre commander in England, Major General Chaney. He returned to Washington on 3<sup>rd</sup> June with a pessimistic assessment, stating he had an "uneasy feeling about Chaney and his staff". On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1942, he returned to London as Commanding General, ETO, based in London.

Eisenhower proved to be outstanding at public relations. There was, first and foremost, the man himself. He stood erect; with his square, broad shoulders held back, his head high. His face and hands were always active, his face reddening with anger when he spoke of the Nazis, lighting up as he spoke of the immense forces being gathered to crush them. His relaxed, casual manner was appealing, as was the nickname 'Ike', which seemed to fit so perfectly. His good humour and good looks attracted people. Most reporters found it impossible to be in Eisenhower's presence and not like him.

In November 1942, he was appointed Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force (AEF) of the North African Theatre of Operations. The campaign in North Africa was designated „Operation Torch“ and was planned from a dank underground tunnel within the Rock of Gibraltar. Eisenhower was the first non-British officer to command Gibraltar in 200 years. French cooperation was deemed necessary for Torch to succeed, and Eisenhower encountered a „preposterous situation“ with the rival French factions, and gave his support to Admiral Darlan. Eisenhower came in for severe criticism for the move, considering Darlan's previous high offices of state in Vichy France. Darlan was assassinated later that year and Eisenhower appointed General Giraud.

In February 1943, his authority was extended as commander of the Mediterranean

Theatre of Operations (MTO) to include the British 8th Army, commanded by General Montgomery. The 8th Army had advanced across the Western Desert from the east and was ready for the start of the Tunisia Campaign. Eisenhower gained his fourth star soon after the capitulation of Axis forces in North Africa. In the Mediterranean campaign Eisenhower and his team had improved dramatically from the team that had invaded North Africa in November 1942 and they now prepared for the invasion of France. In that respect, the payoff for Torch was worth the price. In December 1943, President Roosevelt decided that Eisenhower, not Marshall, would be Supreme Allied Commander in Europe to plan and execute the Allied assault on the coast of Normandy in June 1944 under the code name Operation Overlord.

Eisenhower, as well as the officers and troops under him, had learned valuable lessons in their previous operations, and their skills had strengthened. Admiral King fought with Eisenhower over King's refusal to provide additional landing craft from the Pacific. He also insisted that the British give him exclusive command over all strategic air forces to facilitate Overlord, to the point of threatening to resign unless Churchill relented, as he did. Eisenhower then wanted a bombing plan in France in advance of Overlord. He also had to skilfully manage to retain the services of the often unruly General Patton, by severely reprimanding him, when Patton earlier had slapped a soldier and then when Patton gave a speech in which he made improper comments about post-war policy. There is no doubt that without Eisenhower's support at critical moments, Patton would never have had the chance to make his name in the coming campaign.

General Bradley got on very well with Eisenhower, but he did not share his chief's tolerance towards that loose cannon, Patton. Patton, a God-fearing man famous for his profanity, enjoyed addressing his troops in provocative terms. He once told them; "Now I want you to remember, that no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. You win it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country".

Although neither Eisenhower nor Bradley could admit it, the most difficult of the D Day landing beaches was going to be Omaha. This objective for the American 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions had been closely reconnoitred by the British. In the second half of January, the midget submarine X-20 had been towed close to the Normandy coast by an armed trawler. General Bradley had requested that, having checked the beaches selected for the British and Canadian forces, they should also examine Omaha to make sure that it was firm enough for tanks. Captain Scott Bowden, a sapper, and Sergeant Bruce Ogden-Smith of the Special Boat Section swam ashore, and reported back that the beach was most formidable and there were bound to be tremendous casualties.

Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory, who made everyone angry had even managed to rile Eisenhower. He was convinced that the two US airborne divisions due to be dropped on the Cotentin peninsula faced a massacre. He repeatedly urged the cancellation of this vital element in the Overlord plan to protect the western flank. Eisenhower told Leigh-Mallory to put his concerns in writing. This he did, and after careful

consideration Eisenhower rejected them with Montgomery's full support. Eisenhower's ability to keep such a disparate team together was an extraordinary achievement.

Early on 2nd June 1944, Eisenhower moved into a trailer hidden in the park at Southwick under camouflage nets. He dubbed it 'my circus wagon', and when not in conference or visiting troops, he would try to relax by reading westerns on his bunk and smoking. At 10 00 hours that Friday, in the library in Southwick House, Group Captain Stagg, a meteorologist, gave Eisenhower and the other assembled commanders-in-chief the latest weather assessment. Stagg knew that by the evening conference he must produce a firm opinion on the deterioration of the weather over the weekend. The decision to proceed or to postpone had to be made very soon.

Eisenhower, despite his nervous state and the appalling responsibility heaped upon him, wisely adopted a philosophical attitude. He had been selected to make the final decisions, so make them he must and face the consequences. The biggest decision, as he knew only too well, was almost upon him. Quite literally, the fate of many thousands of his soldiers' lives rested upon it.

General Eisenhower, who started it all with his "OK, let's go" order, gets the last word, although, it was never certain that Operation Overlord would succeed. The seriousness surrounding the entire decision, including the timing and the location of the Normandy invasion, might be summarized by a second shorter speech that Eisenhower wrote in advance, in case he needed it. He stated he would take full responsibility for catastrophic failure, should that be the final result. Long after the successful landings on D-Day and the BBC broadcast of Eisenhower's brief speech concerning them, the never-used second speech was found in a shirt pocket by an aide. It read: "Our landings in France have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the airmen and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone".

The D-Day coastal assault landings were costly but successful. Many prematurely considered that victory in Europe would come by summer's end; however German capitulation would not come for almost a year. From then until the end of the war in Europe, Eisenhower had command of all Allied forces, on the Western Front. He was ever mindful of the inevitable loss of life and suffering that would be experienced on an individual level by the troops under his command, and their families. This prompted him to make a point of personally visiting every division involved in the invasion.

Once the Normandy break-out had succeeded, Eisenhower insisted on retaining personal control over the land battle strategy, and was immersed in the command and supply of multiple assaults through France. Montgomery insisted priority be given to his 21st Army Group's attack being made in the north, while Generals Bradley

(12th U.S. Army Group) and Devers (6th U.S. Army Group) insisted they be given priority in the centre and south of the front. Eisenhower worked tirelessly to address the demands of the rival commanders to optimize Allied forces, often by giving them some tactical latitude; many historians conclude this delayed the Allied victory in Europe. However, due to Eisenhower's persistence, the pivotal supply port at Antwerp was successfully, albeit belatedly, opened in late 1944, and victory became a more distinct probability.

In recognition of his senior position in the Allied command, on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1944, he was promoted to General of the Army, equivalent to the rank of Field Marshal in most European armies. In this and the previous high commands he held, Eisenhower showed his great talents for leadership and diplomacy, winning the respect of front-line commanders. He interacted adeptly with, Churchill, Montgomery and de Gaulle. Nevertheless he did have serious disagreements with Churchill and Montgomery over questions of strategy, but these rarely upset his relationships with them.

The Germans launched a surprise counter offensive in the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 which was turned back in early 1945 by the Allies after Eisenhower repositioned his armies. The improved weather then allowed the Air Force to engage. German defences continued to deteriorate on both the eastern front with the Soviets and the western front with the Allies.

After the Rhine victories, the allies pushed into Germany. Eisenhower was free to send his armies wherever he chose. Montgomery wanted him to give 1st Army to 21st Army Group and let it join 9th Army for a drive on to Berlin, under his command. Hodges wanted Berlin, as did Simpson, Patton, Brooke, and Churchill. But Bradley didn't and neither did Eisenhower. Partly their reason was political. At the Yalta conference the Big Three had agreed to divide Germany into zones of occupation, and Berlin into sectors. In central Germany, the Elbe River was the boundary.

If Simpson's 9th or Hodges's 1st Army fought its way across the Elbe and on to Berlin, they would be taking territory that would have to be turned over to the Soviet occupation forces; if they fought their way into Berlin they would have to give up more than half the city to the Red Army. On the advance towards Berlin, Eisenhower was notified by General Bradley that Allied forces would suffer an estimated one hundred thousand casualties before taking the city. This was borne out when the Soviets sustained almost two hundred thousand casualties in taking Berlin. "A pretty stiff price to pay for a prestige objective, especially when we've got to fall back and let the other fellow take over". Further, Eisenhower believed that if the Americans tried to race the Russians to Berlin, they would lose. 9th and 1st Armies were 250 miles from Berlin; the Red Army was on the banks of the Oder River, about 60 miles from the city. And the Red Army was there in great strength, with well over a million troops.

Another consideration: Eisenhower's goal was to win the war and thus end the carnage as quickly as possible. Every day that the war went on meant more deaths for the concentration camp inmates, for the millions of slave labourers in Germany,

and for the Allied POWs. If he concentrated on Berlin, the Germans in Bavaria and Austria, where many of the POW and slave labour camps were located, would be able to hold out for who knew how long.

The SS and Hitler Youth were not only fanatics but were armed with the most modern weapons, which gave small groups of them deadly firepower. Even after the surrender of the Ruhr, the Germans never ran out of guns or ammunition. These boys could get all the panzerfausts, potato mashers, machine guns, rifles, and mines they could carry. If they were lucky enough to have fuel, they could have Tiger tanks, 88s, and more heavy stuff. This combination of fanatic boys and plenty of weapons and ammunition created a nightmare situation.

After the mid-April mass surrender of German troops, including thirty generals in the Ruhr pocket, the Wehrmacht collapsed. The code word 'werewolf' was sent out by Hitler's command post. This meant that small groups were to be formed and head east. Few did, the veterans sat down and awaited their American captors. The Volkssturm, the Waffen SS, and the Hitler Youth were another matter. They fought fiercely and inflicted great damage. The GIs never knew, when the lead jeep rounded a corner, what was ahead. If inexperienced boys were there, they would fire, most often a panzerfaust shell at the jeep. The Americans retaliated by smashing the village. "I'm not going to be the last man killed in this war" was the feeling, so when some teenage boy fired on them, they brought down a tremendous amount of shells. It was chaos and catastrophe, brought on for no reason, except that Hitler had raised these boys for just this moment. The fanatics were forcing the Americans to do to the German civilians and cities what Hitler wanted to do to them, because, in Hitler's words, "they had shown themselves to be unworthy of him".

The Allied fear was that Hitler would be able to encourage these armed bands over the radio to continue the struggle, His voice was his weapon. If he could get to the Austrian Alps he might be able to surround himself with SS troops and use the radio to put that voice into action. Precisely that was happening, according to American agents in Switzerland. As early as 11<sup>th</sup> March 1945, it was declared, "The main trend of German defence policy does seem directed primarily to the safeguarding of the Alpine Zone. This area is practically impenetrable. Evidence indicates that considerable numbers of SS and specially chosen units are being systematically withdrawn to Austria. Here, defended by nature the powers that have hitherto guided Germany will survive to reorganize her resurrection. Here a specially selected corps of young men will be trained in guerrilla warfare, so that a whole underground army can be fitted and directed to liberate Germany".

Eisenhower's mission was to get a sharp, clean, quick end to the war. The Russians were going to take Berlin anyway. There were more German divisions in southern Germany than to the north. The best way to carry out the mission was to overrun Bavaria and Austria before the Germans could set up their Alpine Redoubt. Eisenhower ordered 9th Army to halt at the Elbe, 1st Army to push on to Dresden on

the Elbe and then halt, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7th Armies, plus the French army, to overrun Bavaria and Austria.

Put another way, he refused to race the Russians to Berlin. He was much criticized for this. It remains his most controversial decision of the war, and has been much written about. However, there is no concrete evidence that the GI's wanted to charge into Berlin. For the GI's, what stood out about Eisenhower's decision was that he put them first. If the Russians wanted to get into the ultimate street fight that was their business. The British had wanted Berlin but Eisenhower decided it would be a military mistake for him to attack Berlin, and said orders to that effect would have to be explicit. The British backed down, but then wanted Eisenhower to move into Czechoslovakia for political reasons. Washington refused to support Churchill's plan to use Eisenhower's army for political manoeuvres against Moscow. The actual division of Germany thus followed the lines that Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin had previously agreed upon.

Day after day over the last couple of weeks, more concentration camps were discovered. On 15th April, the British got into Belsen. That day Edward R. Murrow went to Buchenwald, just north of Weimar. Like Eisenhower and every GI who saw one of the camps, Murrow feared that no one could believe what he saw. He gave a description on his CBS radio program. In his conclusion he said, "I pray you to believe what I have said about Buchenwald, I have reported what I saw, but only part of it. For most of it I have no words. If I've offended you by this rather mild account of Buchenwald, I'm not in the least sorry. I was there". Upon full discovery of the death camps that were part of the Final Solution (Holocaust), he ordered camera crews to comprehensively document evidence of the atrocity for use in the Nuremberg war crimes tribunals.

Later that day an awful black, acrid smoke appeared. It came from one of the outlying camps of the Dachau system. When the Americans approached, the SS officer in charge had ordered the remaining four thousand slave labourers to be liquidated. The guards had nailed shut the doors, and windows of the wooden barracks, hosed down the buildings with gasoline, and set them on fire. The prisoners had been cremated alive. Later, soldiers that loaded civilians from Landsberg into trucks to take them to see the atrocity, later wrote; "Would you believe that no one admitted any knowledge of the camp, they told us they thought it was a secret war factory, so they didn't ask questions. They all defended Hitler, saying, the Führer knew nothing of this! They blamed the Nazi's, but not their dear Führer".

Their dear Führer, meanwhile, declared that; "the German people have not shown themselves worthy of their Führer," and on 30<sup>th</sup> April, killed himself. He named Admiral Karl Dönitz as his successor. Dönitz's task was to surrender, hopefully to the Western Allies only. He therefore sent General Alfred Jodl, the German Chief of Staff, to Eisenhower's headquarters in Reims to accomplish that goal. Jodl arrived on Sunday evening 6<sup>th</sup> May. Eisenhower conferred with his aides Generals Smith and Strong, emphasizing that the Germans were willing, indeed anxious, to surrender to

the West, but not to the Red Army. Dönitz, he said, would order all German troops remaining on the Western Front to cease fire. Smith replied that the surrender had to be a general one to all the Allies. Jodl then asked for forty-eight hours "in order to get the necessary instructions to all their outlying units". Smith said that was impossible. After the talks dragged on for over an hour, Smith put the problem to Eisenhower.

Eisenhower felt that Jodl was trying to gain time so that more German soldiers and civilians could get across the Elbe and escape the Russians. He told Smith to inform Jodl that "he would break off all negotiations and seal the western front preventing by force any further westward movement of German soldiers and civilians, unless Jodl signed the surrender document". But he also decided to grant the forty-eight-hour delay before announcing the surrender, as Jodl requested.

Smith took Eisenhower's reply to Jodl, who thereupon sent a cable to Dönitz, explaining the situation and asking permission to sign. Dönitz was enraged; he characterized Eisenhower's demands as "sheer extortion". He nevertheless felt impelled to accept them, and was consoled somewhat by the thought that the Germans could still save many troops from the Russians during the forty-eight hour delay. Just past midnight, therefore, he cabled Jodl: "Full power to sign in accordance with conditions as given has been granted by Grand Admiral Dönitz".

At 02 00 hours on 7th May, Generals Smith, Morgan, Spaatz, Tedder, a French and Russian representative, gathered at Reims in a relatively small room. The Allied officers had to squeeze past one another to get to their assigned chairs around a heavy oak table. When they had all sat down, Jodl, accompanied by an aide, was led into the room. Tall, perfectly erect, immaculately dressed, his monocle in place Jodl looked the personification of Prussian militarism. He bowed stiffly. Strong found himself, to his own surprise, feeling a bit sorry for him.

While the somewhat elaborate procedures for the signing went on, Eisenhower waited in his adjacent office, pacing and smoking. The signing took a half hour. Jodl delivered the German nation into the hands of the Allies and officially acknowledging that Nazi Germany was dead; outside, spring was bursting forth, promising new life. Eisenhower knew that he should feel elated, triumphant, joyful, but all he really felt was dead beat. He had hardly slept in three days; it was the middle of the night; he just wanted to get it over with. At 02 00 hours, Strong led Jodl into Eisenhower's office. Eisenhower sat down behind his desk, Jodl bowed, then stood at attention. Eisenhower asked Jodl if he understood the terms and was ready to execute them. Jodl said yes. Eisenhower then warned him that he would be held personally accountable if the terms were violated. Jodl bowed again and left.

Eisenhower then entered and surrounded with officers and aides, photographers were called in to record the event for posterity. Eisenhower then made a short newsreel and radio recording. When the newsmen left, Smith said it was time to send a message to the CGS. Everyone had a try at drafting an appropriate document. Smith later recalled, "I tried one myself, and like all my associates, groped for

resounding phrases as fitting accolades to the Great Crusade and indicative of our dedication to the great task just completed”.

Eisenhower quietly watched and listened. Each draft was more grandiloquent than the last. The Supreme, Commander finally thanked everyone for his efforts, rejected all the proposals, and dictated the message himself. "The mission of this Allied force was fulfilled at 02 00 hours local time, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1945”.

After his many wartime successes, General Eisenhower returned to the U.S. for a hero's reception. This was quite unique for a military hero that had never seen front line in his life. The nearest he came to being under enemy fire was in 1944 when a German fighter strafed the ground while he was inspecting troops in Normandy. Eisenhower dived for cover like everyone else and after the plane flew off, a British brigadier helped him up and seemed very relieved he was not hurt. When Eisenhower thanked him for his solicitude, the brigadier deflated him by explaining "my concern was that you should not be injured in my sector". This incident formed part of Eisenhower's fund of stories he would tell now and again.

Following the German unconditional surrender, Eisenhower was appointed Military Governor of the U.S. Occupation Zone, based at the IG Farben Building in Frankfurt am Main. He had no responsibility for the other three zones, controlled by Britain, France and the Soviet Union, except for the city of Berlin, which was managed by the Four-Power Authorities. Eisenhower followed the orders laid down by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), but softened them by bringing in 400 000 tons of food for civilians and allowing more fraternization. In response to the devastation in Germany, including food shortages and an influx of refugees, he arranged distribution of American food and medical equipment. His actions reflected the new American attitudes of the German people as Nazi victims not villains, while aggressively purging the ex-Nazis.

In November 1945, Eisenhower returned to Washington to replace Marshall as Chief of Staff of the Army. His main role was rapid demobilization of millions of soldiers, a slow job that was delayed by lack of shipping. Eisenhower was convinced in 1946 that the Soviet Union did not want war and that friendly relations could be maintained. He strongly supported the new United Nations and favoured its involvement in the control of atomic bombs. However, in formulating policies regarding the atomic bomb and relations with the Soviets Truman was guided by the U.S. State Department and ignored Eisenhower and the Pentagon. Indeed, Eisenhower had opposed the use of the atomic bomb against the Japanese, writing, "First, the Japanese were ready to surrender and it wasn't necessary to hit them with that awful thing. Second, I hated the thought of our country being the first to use such a weapon". By mid-1947, as East-West tensions over economic recovery in Germany escalated, Eisenhower gave up his hopes for cooperation with the Soviets and agreed with a containment policy to stop Soviet expansion.

In January 1948, after learning of plans in New Hampshire to elect delegates supporting him for the forthcoming Republican National Convention, Eisenhower

stated through the Army that he was "not available for, and could not accept nomination to, high political office; life-long professional soldiers, in the absence of some obvious and overriding reason, should abstain from seeking high political office". Eisenhower maintained no political party affiliation during this time. Many believed he was forgoing his only opportunity to be president;

In 1948, Eisenhower became President of Columbia University in New York. During that year, Eisenhower's memoir, *Crusade in Europe*, was published. Critics regarded it as one of the finest U.S. military memoirs, and it was a major financial success as well. Eisenhower's profit on the book was substantially aided by an unprecedented ruling by the U.S. Department of the Treasury that Eisenhower was not a professional writer, but rather, marketing his lifetime experiences. He only had to pay capital gains tax on his \$635 000 advance instead of the much higher personal tax rate. This ruling saved Eisenhower about \$400 000.

The contacts gained through university and American Assembly fund-raising activities would later become important supporters in Eisenhower's bid for the Republican Party nomination and the presidency. In December 1950, he took an extended leave from the university to become the Supreme Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and he was given operational command of NATO forces in Europe.

President Truman, symbolizing a broad-based desire for an Eisenhower candidacy for president in 1951 pressed him to run for the office as a Democrat. However, Eisenhower declared himself and his family to be Republicans. He was persuaded to declare his candidacy in 1952. The effort was a long struggle; Eisenhower had to be convinced that political circumstances had created a genuine duty for him to offer himself as a candidate, and that there was a mandate from the populace for him to be their President. Henry Cabot Lodge, who served as his campaign manager, and others succeeded in convincing him, and in June 1952 he resigned his command at NATO to campaign full-time. Eisenhower's campaign was noted for the simple but effective slogan, „I Like Ike“. It was essential to his success that Ike express his opposition to Roosevelt's policy at Yalta and against Truman's policies in Korea and China, matters in which he had once participated. It was necessary for Eisenhower to appease the right wing Old Guard of the Republican Party; his selection of Richard M. Nixon as the Vice-President on the ticket was designed in part for that purpose. Nixon also provided a strong anti-communist presence as well as some youth to counter Ike's more advanced age.

He defeated Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson in a landslide, marking the first Republican return to the White House in 20 years. Eisenhower was the last president born in the 19th century, and at age 62, was the oldest man to be elected President since James Buchanan in 1856. (President Truman stood at 64 in 1948 as the incumbent president at the time of his election four years earlier.) Eisenhower was the only general to serve as President in the 20th century, and the most recent President to have never held elected office prior to the Presidency. Eisenhower's

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