

BY HARRY F. ROSENTHAL

WASHINGTON (CP) — From the day he entered West Point to the day he left the White House 50 years later, Dwight David Eisenhower achieved unparalleled popularity seldom matched in the United States. His grin and folksy nickname were his hallmarks.

There was a simple plainsman's eloquence about Eisenhower that touched Americans. He had no flair as an orator, little sophisticated wit, and no flamboyance.

But "I like Ike" was a national sentiment — so much so that the Democratic and Republican parties both sought to make him president, even while his political persuasion was unknown.

He was the only Republican president in a generation. And his party controlled the House of Representatives for only two of his eight years in office, yet he rolled up majorities matched previously only by Franklin D. Roosevelt in his first two terms.

He was a career soldier who called war "this damnable thing;" who said he hoped to see "people in my profession permanently put out of a job."

AVOIDS POLITICS

It was characteristic of Eisenhower that in his speech to the 1968 Republican national convention—piped to the delegates from his hospital room—he subordinated politics to a plea for "travelling the pathways of peace, with honor and justice."

Peace and honor. The words surfaced again and again in a brilliant career that was a succession of peaks with few valleys: general of the army, allied commander-in-chief for North Africa, commanding general of Allied power in the European theatre, chief of staff of the U.S. Army, president of Columbia University, two terms as president of the United States.

Always he spoke of the strength of America. "Let us first remind ourselves of the greatness of this nation and its people," he told the Republican convention. "Let's not waste time this year searching out someone to blame, even though

some seem more disposed to concede rather than to stand firmly for America."

HAS THIRD ATTACK

Less than 12 hours after he spoke, Eisenhower was stricken with his third heart attack of the year—the sixth one since 1955. He was unable to watch the convention on television, but was told that Richard M. Nixon, his vice-president, had been chosen as the Republican presidential candidate for the Nov. 5 presidential election.

"I am delighted," were the words relayed from the hospital room.

He had endorsed Nixon shortly before the convention started, the first time Eisenhower had used his prestige publicly to attempt to influence the party's choice of a nominee.

Nixon responded in his acceptance speech by declaring: "Let's win this one for Ike!"

Eisenhower, 34th president of the United States, was the third of the seven sons of David and Ida Stover Eisenhower. One of his brothers, Paul, died in infancy; the others were successes in their own right: Arthur, a banker; Edgar, a lawyer; Earl, an electrical engineer; Milton, a government official and college president; and Roy, a drug-gist.

Their grandfather travelled west with the wagon trains in 1878 and settled near Abilene, Kan. Their father failed with his general store and moved his family to Denison, Tex., where Dwight was born Oct. 14, 1890.

A year later the family returned to Abilene and the father took a job in a creamery.

WAS 61ST IN CLASS

Young Eisenhower graduated 61st in a class of 114 from West Point in 1915. As a lieutenant at Fort Sam Houston, Tex., he met a Denver girl, Mamie Geneva Doud at a party. They were married July 1, 1916. A son, Dwight Doud, born a year later, died of scarlet fever at three. A second son, John Sheldon Doud, followed his father to West Point.

In the 1930s, the Maj. Eisenhower accompanied Gen. Douglas MacArthur to the Philippines. Early in the Second World War, he came to the attention of Gen. George C. Marshall, the army chief of staff, who summoned Eisenhower to Washington. Ike was sent to London to make recommendations about the organization and development of American forces in Europe. To his surprise, he was named to the European Theatre command with orders to execute his own plan.

Eisenhower first headed the expeditionary force to North Africa in 1942 and early the next year was made commander-in-chief of all Allied forces in the North African campaign.

In 1943, Eisenhower was named Allied commander for the invasion of Europe. D-Day came on June 6, 1944.

DIRECTED ALLIES

He directed the Allied forces to victory over Germany and presided over surrender ceremonies. Soon after, he returned to Washington to become army chief of staff, holding the post until 1948 when he became president of Columbia University.

But President Harry Truman summoned him to Washington to serve temporarily as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Later he took a longer leave of absence to organize and command North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces.

The affection the country felt for Ike paid off in the 1952 election. He had a plurality of more than 6,500,000 votes over Democrat Adlai Stevenson, carrying 39 of the 48 states. He did even better in the 1956 re-election, topping Stevenson by 9,500,000 votes.

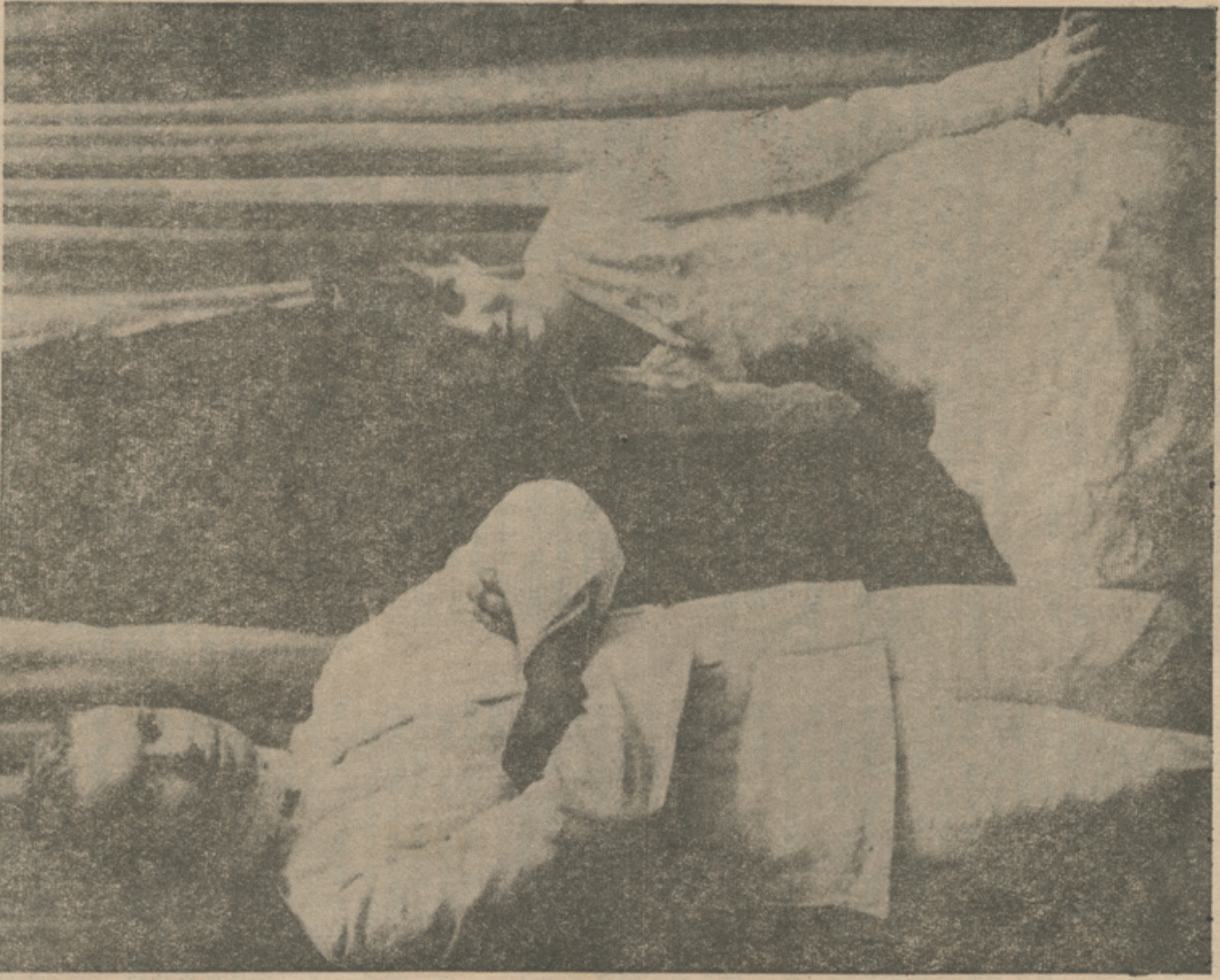
grim race for superiority. It was also the time when the Space Age dawned with manned satellites. Man travelled under the sea for the first time. In 1954, the Supreme Court declared the segregation of schools to be unconstitutional. Three years later, Eisenhower became the first president since the Reconstruction period after the Civil War to use federal troops to enforce a court order—the integration of schools in Little Rock, Ark.

The United States, under Eisenhower, severed relations with Cuba after Fidel Castro's revolution, but it did not support the Hungarian uprising. Eisenhower sent Marines to Lebanon at that country's request after a coup in neighboring Iraq. But he criticized Britain and France after their attack on Egypt.

An angered Khrushchev scuttled the Paris summit before it got started and the uproar that Russia appeared to be moving cast a shadow that lingered until the end of Eisenhower's term of office.

Then, May 1, 1960, disaster struck. A U-2 spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Soviet Russia.

USES TROOPS



... Dwight D. Eisenhower with his bride, the former Mamie Geneva Doud, shortly after their wedding in Denver July 1, 1916.

Eisenhower's Simple Honesty Won Him World-Wide Friends