

Q107 – Dwight Eisenhower is famous for many things. Name one .

DOUGLAS GINSBURG, Federal Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals, D.C. Circuit:

Dwight Eisenhower is a great American success story: a poor boy who went from a Kansas farm to the White House.

When America entered World War II, Lieutenant Colonel Eisenhower was transferred to the War Department in Washington – and his career skyrocketed. In three years, he rose from one-star general to five – a record to rival that of Ulysses Grant during the Civil War.

In 1942, Eisenhower planned the American landings in French North Africa, then under the control of Nazi Germany. In the spring of 1943 the Germans surrendered in North Africa and Eisenhower planned the invasion of Sicily and the Italian mainland. At the end of the year, he became supreme commander of all Allied Forces in Western Europe. On his shoulders rested the decision to send more than 150,000 men toward the beaches of Normandy, France on D-Day: what he called “the great crusade” to free Europe from Nazi rule.

On the eve of invasion, Eisenhower braced for failure by writing a note accepting the sole blame. The invasion succeeded, and, in 1945 Germany was defeated. Seven years later, Eisenhower rode his popularity into the White House as our 34th president. Song: “You like Ike, I like Ike, everybody likes Ike, for president. Hang out the banner, beat the drum, we’ll take Ike to Washington.” Six months after taking office, he signed the armistice that stopped the Korean War.

President Eisenhower signed the law that created our Interstate Highway System. And what inspired our interstates? The German autobahn – which General Eisenhower had seen firsthand during World War II.