

# Kennedy Was Youngest Ever Elected President

John Fitzgerald Kennedy started his administration as the 35th President of the United States by dedicating himself to two shining goals—survival of liberty at home and peace in a world shivering in an "uncertain balance of terror."

He invited the Communist world to join in a new beginning of "the quest for peace" before "the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self-destruction."

"Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate," he said in his inaugural address that was devoted almost entirely to foreign policy and foreign affairs.

He suggested that "both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring the problems that divide us."

"Let both sides, for the first time, formulate serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms—and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the absolute control of all nations," Kennedy continued. He appealed to both sides to make use of scientific wonders rather than scientific terrors.

**Pledged Liberty At All Costs**  
But repeatedly he put the Communist bloc on notice that he intended no softening of American purpose, saying: "Let every nation know, whether it wish us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend or oppose any foe in order to assure the survival and success of liberty."

Kennedy said the United States did not dare tempt the adversary nations by allowing itself to be weak—"only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed."

While he said he knew that neither he nor anyone else of his time would live to see a "new world of law" that he envisaged, he suggested that a start be made toward achieving "a beachhead of cooperation" in the jungles of suspicion.

Kennedy wrote the inaugural speech himself. In it, he said the American people could bring to the cause of freedom an energy, faith and devotion which would "light the nation and set up a glow that 'can truly light the world.'"

"And so, my fellow Americans," he went on, "ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country."

**War-time Buddies in Parade**  
Inaugurated with Kennedy was Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas. They had served together in the Senate,

where Kennedy spent eight years. Previously he had served six years in the House.

It was on a freezing Jan. 20, 1961, that Kennedy was sworn in as President in a ceremony of moving dignity, rooted in rich tradition as old as the country itself. He took the oath of office with his hand on a Bible that had been in his mother's family for generations.

One of the star attractions of the inaugural parade was a PT boat mounted on a flatbed truck. The boat was numbered 109, the number of the craft which Kennedy commanded when it was sunk by a Japanese destroyer in the Pacific during World War II. The nine surviving members of the crew were on the float.

As it drew abreast of the reviewing stand, Kennedy waved with both hands to his wartime buddies, who were lined up on the deck and waved just as excitedly.

The President had invited the survivors and their wives to Washington at his expense for the inauguration festivities. He also invited them to attend every official function.

**Greetings From Ex-Enemies**  
The ship that cut Kennedy's PT boat in two was sunk itself a year later off Borneo by an Allied torpedo. The 17 Japanese survivors sent a cable to the man they almost killed congratulating him on his election to the Presidency.

The former skipper, who had become a farmer, said Kennedy's election had brought so much attention to the incident that the destroyer's survivors formed a club.

On the other side of the world from Japan, county Westford, Ireland, celebrated the inauguration of Cousin John.

On the same stone quayside at New Ross, from which Kennedy's great-grandfather had sailed for America in the days of Ireland's famine, the people danced and sang. Bonfires blazed and Gaelic pipes rang out across the waters which in 1850 were the scene of tears of departure. A message of congratulations was sent the new President of the United States.

And there was a reply by radio. In it, Kennedy said:

"Fourteen years ago this summer I visited New Ross and saw the home from which my great-grandfather had journeyed on his long voyage from Ireland to America."

**Two Nations Linked**  
Three generations have passed since then, but across this long time and across the seas I send to all of you my very best wishes. New Ross and Washington, D.C., are tied together today. . . . I pray the Lord's blessing on Ireland and America and upon all those who believe in freedom."

Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev congratulated President Kennedy on his inauguration and said he hoped for "a radical improvement of relations" between Russia and the United States.

Less than week later the Soviet Union freed two American fliers, crewmen of a U.S. reconnaissance plane the Russians had shot down over arctic waters almost seven months earlier. They had become pawns in the cold war.

Kennedy made the dramatic announcement at his first news conference as President. He hailed the release of the airmen as amounting to removal of "a serious obstacle to improvement of Soviet-American relations." The Soviet government called it a reflection of a "sincere desire to usher in a new stage in the relations" between the two powers.

Kennedy personally greeted the two Air Force captains upon their arrival in the United States. Later the fliers, their wives and family members were guests for coffee of President and Mrs. Kennedy at the White House.

**Four Crewmen Killed**  
The United States and the Soviet Union had disagreed on circumstances surrounding the shooting down of the plane.

This country said the American aircraft was on a reconnaissance flight over the Barents Sea north of the Soviet mainland from its base in England on an electromagnetic mapping mission designed as a navigational aid. The Soviet Union claimed, however, that the aircraft was over Soviet Territory and that its downing was justified.

The body of the plane's commander was returned to the United States by the Russians. The other three members of the crew were missing and presumed dead.

In his first State of the Union message 10 days after becoming President, Kennedy said he had been "staggered" by what he had learned concerning "the harsh enormity of the trials" ahead.

"I speak today in an hour of national peril and national opportunity," he told a joint session of Congress. "Before my term has ended, we shall have to test anew whether a nation organized and governed such as ours can endure. The outcome is by no means certain. The answers are by no means clear. . . ."

**Saw Troubles Ahead**  
Kennedy warned that life in the immediate future was not going to be easy, declaring:

"There will be further setbacks before the tide is turned. But turn it we must."

He ordered a last step up in the drive to strengthen the nation's defenses. At the same time he bade Soviet Russia join in a side-by-side march toward peaceful conquest of space and

betterment of mankind through science.

While his speech draft extensively with the world at large, Kennedy's message also surveyed the domestic economy. He called the outlook disturbing and troublesome.

**His Boat Sunk**  
Early Monday morning, August 2, 1943, a Japanese destroyer appeared suddenly out of the darkness and sliced the patrol boat diagonally in two.

"It happened so fast there wasn't a chance to do a thing," the young skipper said later. "The destroyer hit our starboard forward gun station and sliced right through. I was in the cockpit. I looked up and saw a red glow and streamlined streaks. Our tanks were ripped open and gas was flaming on the water about 20 yards away."

He remembered later thinking, at the moment the destroyer hit, "this is how it feels to be killed." Two of the crew were lost.

Kennedy, his back badly wrenched, and three of his men were on the still floating forward half of the torpedo boat. Six others were scattered about in the water in their life jackets. The young skipper worked for 45 minutes to tow his seriously-burned engineer to the bow hall. It took three hours to collect all of the men.

The watertight bulkheads kept the bow of the PT boat afloat and on this the survivors drifted. About 2 p.m. Kennedy decided to abandon the bow section, which was about to sink, and try to reach a small island three miles away.

**Refuge Near Enemy Base**  
He swam to it, towing one man. The others clung to a plank and swam in a group. It took about five hours to reach land. Two days later the men had eaten all the coconuts on the island's two trees. Then they swam to a larger island where there were plenty.

This island was close by the cone-mountained Japanese base of Kolombangara.

For three successive nights, Kennedy, once a backstroke on the Harvard swimming team, put on a lifebelt and swam far out to try to signal another PT boat. But none came into view.

On Thursday afternoon two natives found the group and brought food and coffee, together with a small kerosene stove for warmth. Saturday night a rescue boat guided by a native pilot arrived.

During Kennedy's campaign for the Presidency, several of his fellow survivors worked for his election.

Lieutenant Kennedy was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps medals and the Purple Heart. One of his brothers, Joseph P. Jr., a Navy pilot, was killed in action in Europe in 1944.

**Sister and Husband Killed**  
A month later, the husband of one of his sisters, Kathleen, died in action in France. He was the Marquis of Hartington, a captain in the Coldstream Guards. Lady Hartington herself met tragic death in the spring of 1940, along with three others, in the crash of a plane in France.

A spinal injury that Senator Kennedy suffered in the South Pacific action necessitated two operations. One was performed in 1945 and another in 1954. The second required eight months of convalescence.

Born in Brookline, Mass., May 29, 1917, Kennedy received his bachelor of science degree cum laude from Harvard in 1940 and then studied at the London School of Economics.

His father set up a million-dollar trust fund for each of his nine children when they were in early childhood. The Kennedy wealth was amassed from such widely diversified interests as banking, liquor, motion pictures, theaters, Wall Street and real estate. Once when questioned about his father's wealth, John Kennedy conceded drily: "He has some resources."

In Congress at 29  
John Kennedy entered politics at the age of 29, when he was elected to Congress. That was in 1946.

After winning reelection twice to the House of Representatives, he ran for the Senate in 1952 and defeated Senator Lodge.

He won by 70,000 votes despite the fact that Eisenhower, the Republican presidential can-

didate, swept normally Democratic Massachusetts by 210,000 to that G.O.P. landslide year.

Even the Democratic leaders had considered Lodge unbeatable. Lodge himself was so sure he was safe that he devoted much of his energies to Eisenhower. When he started looking after his own campaign, he found Kennedy had a highly efficient organization.

He lost, and later on President Eisenhower appointed Lodge U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

Kennedy's political stock was enhanced further when he won reelection in 1958 by the largest plurality ever piled up for a Senate seat in Massachusetts—almost 900,000.

In 1953 Kennedy and Miss Jacqueline Lee Bouvier were married in St. Mary's Catholic Church at Newport, R.I. Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston officiated and read a special message of blessing from the Pope. A daughter, Caroline Bouvier, was born in 1957. Three years later there was a son, John F. Jr.

**Religious Question Discussed**  
Prior to the 1960 primary election balloting in the predominantly Protestant state of West Virginia, Kennedy discussed the religious questions in an address before the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington. In that speech he said he was not "a Catholic candidate for President."

Kennedy began with the assertion that "I do not speak for the Catholic Church on issues of public policy—and no one in that church speaks for me." He said he had voted often in the

past.

Now comes the fourth assassination of an American President. It is a terrible indictment of a nation that claims to be the most enlightened nation on earth.

Why this record? The answer is hard to find.

Perhaps there is a clue in the derivation of the word.

It comes from ASSASSINS or HASHISHIN (hemp-eaters) the name of a twelfth-century band of Moslems in Persia and Asia Minor who smoked a drug called hashish, and under its influence murdered their enemies.

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JOHN F. KENNEDY

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and  
**a Titchik Affair**

Senae against the wishes of many Catholics.  
"The fact is," he went on, "that the Catholic Church is not a monolith—it is committed in this country to the principles of individual liberty—and it has no claim over my conduct as a public officer sworn to do the public interest."  
What is it about the Presidency, he demanded, that some believe it ought not to be filled by a Catholic? He said members of his faith abandoned in other national offices, including the U.S. Supreme Court.  
Kennedy said the "only legitimate question that could be asked was: 'Would you, as President of the United States, be responsive in any way to ecclesiastical pressures or obligations of any kind that might in any fashion influence or interfere with your conduct of that office in the national interest?'"  
"I have answered that question many times. My answer was and is 'no.'"  
He won the presidential nomination on the first ballot at the convention in Los Angeles. Senator Johnson, who controlled the U.S. Senate as Majority Leader, was Kennedy's main opponent. But the convention rejected Johnson, and also two other party stalwarts—Sen. Stuart Symington and Adlai E. Stevenson, twice the standard bearer.  
Kennedy chose Johnson as his running mate.

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