

# Henry L. Stimson

*Honorary Member of  
The Century Association*

ADDRESSES  
MADE IN HIS HONOR

AT THE CLUB HOUSE  
APRIL 6, 1950

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## FOREWORD

*The evening of April 6, 1950 will be long remembered in the Century. Nearly five hundred Centurions came that night from in and out of town to pay tribute to Henry Stimson. He was welcomed with the warmth which he had known for fifty-seven years of fellowship in the Club, but also in a spirit of profound gratitude for the manner in which he had discharged his massive duties in the time of trial of the Nation and of the world.*

*To see him surrounded by certain comrades of those days; to hear the Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force hail him as great chief and beloved chief, was to arouse in us the response accorded only to the rare, noble men of our time. Still near to war, each of us recalled some private dread or hope of which these two men bore the burden, some experience of which they were the symbol.*

*The brief ceremony moved, that night, with untroubled simplicity. The portrait of Colonel Stimson—now an honorary member of the Club—painted by Centurion Eugene Speicher, was unveiled by William Adams Delano, dear to us for forty-three years. Harvey Bundy, Dwight Eisenhower, and John Davis, Centurions all, spoke informally of their*

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friend and colleague in the service of the United States. The evening closed with Henry Stimson's affectionate acknowledgment, and the members rose as General Eisenhower escorted him from the meeting.

In response to the wish of many of those present that night, the Board of Management has authorized this private printing of the record. Older Centurions will remember an earlier transcript whereby the memory of the evening of April 27, 1937, dedicated to Elihu Root, was thus preserved.

Amen. "And when Athens shall appear great to you, consider then that her glories were purchased by valiant men, and by men that learned their duty."

Roger Burlingame,  
Secretary.

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ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT PAUL MANSHIP

GENTLEMEN: The meeting will please come to order. First of all, we are going to have the pleasant part of our program and the tribute to our honorary member.

It is our pleasure, gentlemen, to address Colonel Stimson—Centurion Stimson—and say that your fellows of this old Association are gathered to do you honor, sir. Though that seems in vain, for honors you have had of the highest and the best that your countrymen may give. Rather, it is to ourselves an honor to have you here with us. But we may pay you tribute in an irresistible welling up of affection, which has broken down our reserves and reticence, and filled these ancient halls to bursting.

We welcome you tonight, Centurion Henry L. Stimson, as our new honorary member, with full hearts and deep gratitude. This outpouring of your friends and fellow Centurions is more eloquent than anything we can say. Surely the sight of this gathering must move you, sir, as it does everyone here tonight.

We are happy that your portrait has been painted by a friend and fellow-member Centurion, Eugene E. Speicher.

We have chosen from among your personal and dear friends a beloved Centurion to begin our little ceremony. I now request that your portrait be unveiled, and I am going to call upon our dear friend, William Adams Delano, to come and pull the cord, which will reveal the portrait.

[Mr. William Adams Delano unveiled the portrait of Colonel Henry L. Stimson, while the members stood and applauded.]

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Delano.

Mr. Stimson, I now have the pleasure of calling on your friend, Centurion Harvey H. Bundy, who will say a few words. Mr. Bundy!

ADDRESS BY HARVEY H. BUNDY

MR. MANSHIP, FELLOW CENTURIONS: I am not here to record the life of our guest of honor. Nor am I here to deliver a eulogy of his character. His record is an open book for all men to read. But in his life as a lawyer, and as a public servant, he has had a lot of young men—*younger men, shall I say—*working for him, and with him.

I looked through the list of the Centurions, but I can't recite them all. However, I think of some fellow Centurions who have had that rare privilege of working for and with the Colonel.

There is Tom Thacher, Bob Lovett, Bob Patterson, Jack McCloy, Jim Rogers, George Roberts, Alfred Loomis, Allen Klots, George Merck, Fred Osborn, George Harrison, Arthur Page, Goldthwaite Dorr, Albert Putnam, Vannevar Bush, William Chanler, and others.

It is, therefore, perhaps fitting that I, as one of these who have had this rare privilege, now say to you how much we appreciate the opportunity of having worked with and for the Secretary, and to express our very deep affection. We have known this man very well. We have known his great strength, his great capacity for friendship.

We have quailed in the presence of his wrath. We have basked in the sunshine of his smile. We have waited, with the utmost impatience, to get his attention when he was busy on somebody else's problem.

And we have been very glad we waited, when we saw the strength, the power and the determination with which he moved forward to solve the problems with which we were wrestling.

We have had the great privilege of knowing Mrs. Stimson, and we have discovered that the Colonel is not the only one in that personal partnership who has character, determination and devotion.

We have worked with the Colonel. We have played with him. We have been refreshed with him. Sometimes we have been refreshed in that outdoors he loves, almost to the point of exhaustion. Perhaps, I might say, somewhat over-refreshed.

I remember coming back with him from Potsdam. He came down to Bavaria to stay with another man who had worked for him—George Patton. We were talking with General Patton in his villa at the Tegernsee, and the Colonel came in and said, "Well, how about a little refreshment? I want to get refreshed. I want to catch a trout."

So we started off in an automobile, and went up a trout stream. The Secretary was dressed in an old pair of trousers, with his hat pulled down over his eyes, and before we knew it he was in midstream up to his waist, trying to catch a trout.

General George Patton had been his aide. I stood on the bank. Mr. Stimson didn't see what happened on the bank. But if you knew George Patton, you will remember that he had a certain capacity for drama. He

strutted up and down the bank, and had with him, what General Eisenhower will remember, that wonderful helmet, without the covering on it. He had four stars here on one shoulder, and four stars on the other shoulder, four stars up on his head, and four stars on his pearlhandled revolver on his side, and four stars on the other pearlhandled revolver, and countless rows of decorations, and there he stood.

Meanwhile, our guest of honor, in his grey flannels, with water up to his waist, was trying to catch a trout. A soldier—a GI, obviously not on duty—came by, shambling along the bank, and didn't see George Patton.

That was a major tragedy. He failed to salute. General Patton rose in his wrath, and he said, "Soldier!" This man turned, and I can see him now, shaking, almost dropping to the ground. "Soldier! You didn't salute." And the man said, "N-n-no, sir, I didn't recognize you." Patton said, "Is there anything more, soldier, which I can put on to persuade you that I am a Four-Star General?" And then the General, with a disarming smile, said, "Run along soldier." Then the man in the grey flannels came from the water, and, by George, he had a trout about that long. [Indicated 6 inches.] Now, I am told that two days ago our guest caught the largest trout down on Long Island.

I like to think of the day when we returned from a day with the Bomber Command in England. We had been watching the B-17's come back from a mission.

We were very emotionally stirred. Because, if you watch the bombers go out, and know how many go out, and count them as they return, and you find that some do not come back, and some drop the flares, which indicate they have wounded aboard, you are stirred, and you are more than stirred when the wounded are carried off. Mr. Stimson talked with them all.

We came back to our headquarters, Manor House in Southern England. General Spaatz and General Doolittle were with us, and the first thing we did, including, I think, our guest of honor, was to have a very much needed drink. We stood there, and General Spaatz looked around the room—the great hall in the Manor House. There he saw the Gainsboroughs and the Romneys, the family portraits, and suddenly he spied over the mantel piece a wonderful picture by Hoppner. You may know it—Cupid & Psyche, a very beautiful lady, almost completely undraped, except for a little gauze that some Victorian had painted at some strategic parts of her anatomy. General Spaatz looked up, and knowing the Secretary loves Army lingo, said, “Mr. Secretary, that is some pinup girl you have in your quarters.”

I shall not forget the time when we were on our way abroad, by air. The Secretary was traveling as a “very important person.” And as our plane came in, drawn up around him were a vast number of officers, and he thought this was really very pleasant. He thought they were greeting the Secretary of War.

He stepped from his plane, and there was a very mild applause, and then a certain drifting away, and he said, “Well, that was very nice of them to be down here. I appreciate their coming to greet me.” And the officer in charge said, “Mr. Secretary, if I must be frank, they thought it was Hedy Lamarr.”

I remember my chief’s amusement at the time, and I remember very well his wrath at another time. We were on our way to Potsdam. We stopped at another villa, which General Eisenhower had arranged for the rest cure of American officers. You will remember that, General Eisenhower.

The Secretary went up to his room and unpacked his bag, and in about two minutes came down, raging with wrath, and said, “Get me out of this place. And do it damn quick. I can’t stand it. There are nothing but mirrors in the bathroom, and I can’t stand looking at myself in all directions.”

When I think of this man, I think of the 80th birthday of Mr. Justice Holmes, where he had for dinner some of the young men who had worked for him—which I did. We toasted him with champagne, which had been hidden in the cellar. I am not sure whether it was prohibition or not. In any event, it was legal. He rose to his feet, and he said, “My lads, I thought when I reached my 80th birthday I should wrap my life up in a scroll, tie it up with a ribbon, sit in an easy chair, read the books I wanted to read, and see the friends I wanted to see. But it isn’t so. I find it is just

as it used to be when I was a captain in the 20th Massachusetts Volunteers in the Civil War. You never capture a firing line but just over the horizon is a new trench to be captured.”

And thus it has been with the Colonel. Any man who, in two years, has produced two books, who has written a letter which has been of such importance that it has been published in over 100 American papers, also in France and England, he has not finished the course.

Now, you may have what you choose for your definition of immortality, but one thing I believe—the example of this man will live in the lives of those who have worked for him, and in others too, and through them to generations yet unborn. It is true that what men say is of very much less importance than what they do. But he has put in words the example of his own life. He has said to us younger men, if we may so describe ourselves, “Let them have hope, and virtue, and let them believe in mankind and its future, for there is good, as well as evil, and the man who tries to work for the good, believing in its eventual victory, while he may suffer setback and even disaster, will never know defeat. The only deadly sin I know, is cynicism.”

I hope we younger men—and we are not so young now—may take these words and his example to heart. On behalf of those men, and I believe on behalf of you all, I now express to him our very deep affection, and wish him many years of happiness.

THE PRESIDENT: It is fitting that one of your warriors should say a few words, and I have the pleasure of calling upon Centurion Eisenhower.

ADDRESS BY DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

MR. SECRETARY, MR. PRESIDENT, AND GENTLEMEN: I have been told there is nothing much to this business of heredity, except skill in selecting your parents. The old saying has a certain application in the military. Anyone who is skillful enough in selecting his bosses isn't going too far wrong.

Now, of course, there is probably a great deal of luck in this luckiness. But if a person has merely this much brains to realize when good fortune has touched his shoulders and appreciates his bosses, then he is probably going to get along in the Army.

In the war I had the very great good fortune of reporting to the War Department and to two of the greatest men who have ever come to my attention—Secretary Stimson and George Marshall.

Now, we were very busy in those days developing plans, arrangements, schemes, and everything we could do, with the single idea of defeating Germany.

I reported to the War Department on December 14, 1941. The influence of those two men had already made itself so marked that there was no question what the staff had to solve, and that was, how to find the method and the scheme of going out and whipping Germany, not of saving New York City, or Washington, or San Francisco, which every day saw phantom bombers roving through the skies. It was how to whip Germany. And I knew that I had gone into the War Department, as it was then known, under two fighters—two fighters

for America—two leaders, under whom defeat could never be known.

And so when your President asked me whether I would say a word of tribute to a great American public servant, it was natural that I should say to myself, "I wonder what he would want me to say?" because he was my chief. In a very definite way he will always be my chief, because he was an inspiration at a moment when all the world seemed black, where the psychology of our nation was having a difficult time rising above the difficulties of the moment, and he was a leader, and not a follower.

I puzzled this question a bit, and finally I said, "Why don't I go to his book?" And there, some strange things struck me. On page 27, gentlemen, you will find an account of a young and hopeful Republican running for the governorship of New York State, and he really made a fight. The predictions were that the Republicans that year were going to be defeated by 300,000, as a minimum, and I believe the final score was 66,000.

But, during the course of that campaign, Mr. Stimson's father found it very difficult to go to his old clubs, because everywhere he went he heard curses, in most hearty terms—"this Socialist, Roosevelt, and his tool, Stimson." Roosevelt, first!

Now, later in that same book, we find Henry L. Stimson testifying in 1945, before a committee of Congress. He was talking about Universal Military Service, and he was talking about a world of realism—a world in

which, as yet, force was unfortunately too great an influence. As I remember his phrase, it was the "fuzzy-headed idealists." We should have Universal Military Training, not only for its production of military strength, but for its very deep and psychological effect upon us, and upon the world.

In other words, certainly to the "fuzzy-headed idealists," a very conservative—possibly even a tory—piece of testimony. Is it true then that Mr. Stimson, in 1910, was a Socialist, and a tool of a Socialist? And in 1945 a reactionary?

Not for one moment. Because, as you go through the life of the man—the biography of the man—you will find a certain steadiness of character. And when I read those things, I said, "I believe what he would like me to talk about"—I assure you that he wouldn't choose me to talk—but as long as I have to talk, he would probably say, "General, talk about the character of a free man, and what it means." I believe that is what his life has meant.

Do you remember way back, when he went to the Philippines, and undertook to carry—let us say, to symbolize—the Flag of America before that people, and what freedom should mean to them in terms of rights and privileges, but accompanied by very grave responsibilities—each of them now to carry responsibilities that he had not known—the character, the duties of a free man. And the Secretary of State—and he alone, it seemed, among the people of the world, seeing the significance of the 1931 invasion of Manchuria he could

have said to himself in this day and time when college students are swearing they will never take up arms again, no matter what the nature of the war, that he stood out and said, "This is wrong, and it must be combatted."

He said to us then, by his example, "Freedom does not seek an easy way. Freedom does not ask what is popular. It says, 'What is right? What is just? And what is fair?'"

It was my misfortune that I did not know this great man—this very great man—until his term of service had reached that point that was, to my mind, about to reach its climax. His leadership of the Army in World War II was wonderful. I met him in December of 1941 and from that day onward he has for me meant the man who yields not one second to such enemies as defeat, flattery, favor-seeking, or any kind of thing, except truth and honesty, and the meaning of our great country that is the world's greatest exponent of freedom, and all the blessings that freedom can bring to men, materially, morally and intellectually.

I don't know how, in my feeble way—possibly in the way of a soldier—to pay the tribute I feel deep in my heart to this great American. But I should say that if he lives in the hearts of all of you, as brilliantly and brightly as he lives in mine, if he can mean to all of you and to all of your children, and those that come after you, what he means to me, then I am quite certain that all the future pages of history are going to acclaim

you for putting his portrait here behind this dais this evening, and say, "You have done well, and he has deserved well of the Republic."

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, General Eisenhower.

Colonel Stimson, we are now going to hear from your life-long friend and colleague, Centurion Davis.

ADDRESS BY JOHN W. DAVIS

MR. PRESIDENT, COLONEL STIMSON AND FELLOW-CENTURIONS: I feel that after listening to Mr. Bundy and General Eisenhower, my own appearance on this program is more or less anticlimactic. What I shall say to you, therefore, in the few minutes I propose to occupy, will be addressed more to you as Centurions than to the guest of honor, as a further tribute from us to him.

If this night were to receive any distinguishing name I would suggest that it might well be called "basking night."

Let me explain that. If you will turn to a volume which is rarely consulted by Centurions, because their own knowledge is sufficient without such a reference—the dictionary—you will find the definition of that word. "Basking" is defined as "to lie in warmth" or, "luxuriating in a genial warmth."

And, in the same sense it might well be applied to any gathering of Centurions. In the language of Cicero, "Men must eat many pecks of salt together before the claims of friendship are fulfilled." We have eaten our pecks of salt and I trust we have many more to eat together.

We are not only basking in the warmth that attends any gathering of Centurions. We are also basking tonight in a reflected glow, cast upon us by one of our members.

A famous proverb says that "Men are known by the company they keep." And when any member of our

group distinguishes himself, we all throw out our chests a little, and say, "Of such men are we composed."

Now, I think we have more than an ordinary opportunity here to bask in reflected glory. Here is one of our members who has been for 59 years a distinguished and active member of the bar. He began his career as a public servant, in the line of his profession, as one of the most effective United States District Attorneys that this district has ever known.

He was, as General Eisenhower has mentioned, a candidate, though an unsuccessful candidate, for Governor of the State of New York, meeting the only check in his career, which, so far as I know, he has ever encountered.

He was not discouraged by that because he recalled, no doubt, that many other good men and true had been nominated for office and failed of election. Of course, that reflection is still in the back of my mind.

And then he was called, time after time, to the councils of the nation. He became Secretary of War, Secretary of State, Governor of the Philippines, and then he became Secretary of War again and then Secretary of War once more.

He enjoys a distinction which, I believe, is entirely unique in American history. No other man, so far as I know—so far as my careful researches have disclosed—has ever been four times a member of the President's Cabinet—twice under presidents of one party and twice under the presidents of another party. If anybody wants

to be technical about it, or over-meticulous, it may be suggested that his fourth service, under President Truman, was merely a hangover.

But even if you wish to delete that fourth term of service, I repeat that no other man in American history has ever been called three times—called three times to the Cabinet of the President—and that, under different political administrations. Therefore, there is no reason why we shouldn't do a little basking on that account.

Not content with civilian offices, he has served as an officer in the field. In World War I he was a colonel in the field artillery, in which capacity he no doubt received the written commission of a president of still a different political regime.

Now, why was all this? I may be permitted to believe that there are three characteristics which our fellow Centurion possesses that are responsible for this most distinguished career.

I place at the head of them, character. I believe that Colonel Stimson's call to public service, no less than his performance when that duty has fallen upon him, can be explained mainly by character—the most precious possession that any man can have. A character which led him never to sell the truth to serve the hour and which inspired in all those whom he met, a confident belief that here was a man of transcendent and unimpeachable honesty and honor.

I think the second characteristic to which his career may be attributed is that of courage. There is no in-

stance in his career where he failed or faltered in the face of opposition or in the face of criticism. It may be said of him, as was said of John Knox, that he never feared the face of mortal man.

The third characteristic by which I would explain our Centurion pride in him is that of wisdom. Of this virtue there are many varieties, but I speak of a cool and balanced wisdom that seeks all the facts before isolating the problem and, having found the facts and the problem, proceeds with reasoned firmness to find a solution. In other words, a wisdom that does not go off half-cocked.

Character, courage, and wisdom are the outstanding qualities of the person whose career we are discussing. Now, fellow-Centurions, let us bask in that refulgent gleam. Let us believe, each for himself, that such characteristics are immanent in all of us although the opportunity to exhibit them may be more or less restricted.

I told you that I was talking about Centurions by and large and not solely about our long-loved companion and friend. My wish—our wish is that he may long remain on exhibition to be pointed to as a sample of what a Centurion can be and is, of what a Centurion can do and does.

“Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,  
Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line.”

THE PRESIDENT: Colonel Stimson, you have heard your friends have their say, and we have been very, very happy to have you here this evening. Thank you very much for coming and letting us pay you this little tribute.

MY FRIENDS AND BROTHERS IN THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION: I think that I have heard your President say sometimes that I was almost the oldest man in The Century Club. I don't know whether you realize what a bang that gives to a man. But in the Century it has meant a life-long companionship with men of character and courage, that Mr. Davis has just spoken about.

To live with men of that kind, to have this old building a home to which one can go, means more than anyone of my ability can say. I love it. I love you all.

I cannot tell you how I feel about the tribute, and what you have said about me today. I know how little it is deserved, in many respects. But to have you feel it is enough for me. And I thank you from the bottom of my heart for it—all of you.