

Colonel Joseph S. Kimmitt (Class 21-42)

Secretary of the United States Senate 1977 - 1981

Joseph S. Kimmitt was born on April 5, 1918 in Lewistown, Montana. He attended grade school in Great Falls and the University of Montana before being drafted into the U.S. Army in June 1941. He served in the Mule Pack Artillery at Fort Lewis, Washington and then attended the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and was commissioned a second lieutenant on July 14, 1942. He was awarded the Silver Star, the Bronze Star with "V" (three Oak Leaf Clusters) and the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters. In 1946, he accepted a regular Army commission and over the years rose to the rank of Colonel on June 21, 1962. He commanded a 155mm battery in Europe and commanded a battalion in Korea. He attended Utah State University, where he received a B.S. in political science, did graduate studies in international relations at George Washington University, and attended the Command and General Staff College and the Naval War College.

In 1955, Kimmitt became liaison officer to the Senate for the Secretary of the Army. He did three tours as liaison officer, from 1955 to 1958, 1959 to 1960, and 1964 to 1965. In 1965 he left the Army at the request of Senator Mike Mansfield (within whom he had once taken a course on Far Eastern history at the University of Montana) and initially served as Mansfield's administrative assistant.

In 1966, Democrats elected him Secretary for the Majority. In that post he served as the principal floor assistant to the Majority Leader and was responsible for facilitating the work of Democratic senators, keeping them informed of the floor schedule and anticipated votes, and reporting to the leadership on the prospects of important votes. He served a party whose membership ranged widely from Hubert Humphrey on the political left to James Eastland on the right, during the rush of Great Society legislation and the divisive debate over the Vietnam War.

The Majority Secretary's office became a neutral meeting place for senators from both parties to relax at the end of the day and at times to conduct legislative business informally.

When Senator Mansfield retired from the Senate in 1976, Kimmitt challenged the incumbent Secretary of the Senate, Francis R. Valeo, and was elected by the Democratic Conference to replace him. At the same time, Senator Robert C. Byrd was elected as Majority Leader, and Senator Howard Baker was elected Minority Leader. Over the next four years, Kimmitt was the Senate's chief administrative officer, supervising the staff on the Senate floor, including the parliamentarians, legislative clerks, executive clerks, and reporters of debate. As the Senate's chief financial officer, he was responsible for a budget which in fiscal year 1980 topped \$218 million, including the salaries of all senators and staff. He supervised a myriad of other offices ranging from the Stationery Store to the Senate Library. He worked closely with the leadership and senators of both parties, and his office remained a familiar off-hour meeting place for senior senators.

The Republican victory in the 1980 elections ended Stan Kimmitt's term as Secretary of the Senate. Senators rose in a bipartisan tribute before he left. Senate Democratic leader Robert C. Byrd said that he had served with "distinction, integrity, and dedication," while Republican leader Howard Baker called him "the embodiment of dedication and untiring service." The conservative Virginia Senator Harry Byrd, Jr. recalled that Kimmitt had "consistently displayed an unfailing courtesy, a great talent for organization and a total dedication to duty," and the liberal Californian Alan Cranston gave him credit for "keeping the Senate running smoothly and efficiently." Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson described him as an institution man: "He knows and understands the history and traditions of the Senate as few people do."

Afterwards, Kimmitt became vice president for government affairs of Hughes Helicopters, Inc and a Washington representative for McDonald-Douglas, Boeing and other defense-related industries.

U.S., Select Military Registers, 1862-1985 for Joseph Stanley Kimmitt

Army > 1966, Volume I

**KIMMITT Joseph Stanley 036343 B- Mont 5 Apr 18 A- Mont SS BSM
(3OLC) CR(2OLC) Grad Naval WC 59 C&GS Coll 55 Arty Sch
O Adv Crse (ShC) 44 O Adv Crse 52 BS in Bus & S Sc Utah State
Univ 57 Enl 27 June 41 to 13 July 42 2lt AUS 14 July 42 to Col
AUS 21 June 62 RA 1lt FA 22 July 46 D/R 14 July 45 to Lt Col
7 July 62 PL 3762**