

# Omar Bradley

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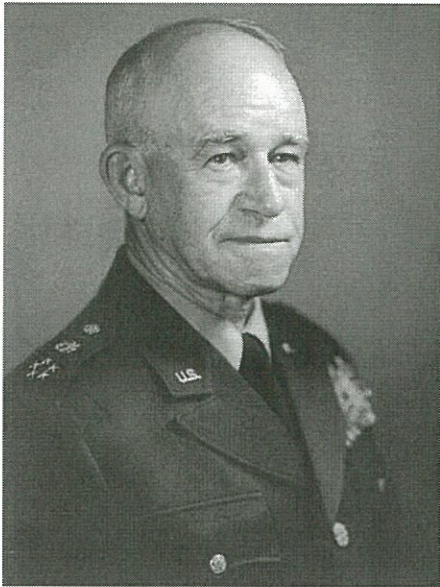
General of the Army **Omar Nelson Bradley** (February 12, 1893 – April 8, 1981), nicknamed *Brad*, was a highly distinguished senior officer of the United States Army who saw distinguished service in North Africa and Western Europe during World War II, and later became General of the Army. From the Normandy landings of June 6, 1944 through to the end of the war in Europe, Bradley had command of all U.S. ground forces invading Germany from the west; he ultimately commanded forty-three divisions and 1.3 million men, the largest body of American soldiers ever to serve under a single U.S. field commander. After the war, Bradley headed the Veterans Administration and became Army Chief of Staff. In 1949, Bradley was appointed the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the following year oversaw the policy-making for the Korean War, before retiring from active service in 1953.

Bradley was the last of only nine people to hold a five-star rank in the United States Armed Forces.

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Omar Bradley



### 1st Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

In office	
August 19, 1949 – August 15, 1953	
President	Harry Truman Dwight Eisenhower
Preceded by	William Leahy (as Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief)
Succeeded by	Arthur Radford

### Chief of Staff of the United States Army

In office	
February 7, 1948 – August 15, 1949	
President	Harry Truman
Preceded by	Dwight Eisenhower
Succeeded by	J. Lawton Collins

### Administrator of Veterans Affairs

In office	
August 15, 1945 – November 30, 1947	
President	Harry Truman
Preceded by	Frank Hines
Succeeded by	Carl Gray



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## Early life and education



Bradley, pictured here at West Point

Bradley, the son of schoolteacher John Smith Bradley (1868–1908) and Mary Elizabeth Hubbard (1875–1931), was born into poverty in rural Randolph County, near Clark, Missouri. Bradley was named after Omar D. Gray, a local newspaper editor admired by his father, and a local doctor called Nelson.<sup>[2]</sup> He was of British ancestry, his ancestors having

emigrated from Great Britain to Kentucky in the mid-1700s.<sup>[3]</sup> He attended country schools where his father taught. When Omar was 15 his father, with whom he credited passing on to him a love of books, baseball and shooting, died. His mother moved to Moberly, Missouri and remarried. Bradley graduated from Moberly High School in 1910, an outstanding student and captain of both the baseball and football teams.

Bradley was working as a boilermaker at the Wabash Railroad when he was encouraged by his Sunday school teacher at Central Christian Church in Moberly to take the entrance examination for the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, New York. Bradley had been planning on saving his money to enter the University of Missouri in Columbia, where he intended to study law. He finished second in the West Point placement exams at Jefferson Barracks Military Post in St. Louis, Missouri. The first-place winner was

	Personal details
Born	<div>Omar Nelson Bradley</div> <div>February 12, 1893</div> <div>Clark, Missouri, U.S.</div>
Died	<div>April 8, 1981 (aged 88)</div> <div>New York City, New York, U.S.</div>
Resting place	Arlington National Cemetery
Education	United States Military Academy (BS)
Signature	<span></span>
	Military service
Nickname(s)	<div>Brad</div> <div>The G.I.'s General</div>
Allegiance	<span><span></span></span> United States
Service/branch	<span><span></span></span> United States Army
Years of service	1915–1981 <sup>[1]</sup>
Rank	<span></span> General of the Army
Unit	<span></span> Infantry Branch
Commands	U.S. Army School of Infantry <div>82nd Infantry Division</div> <div>28th Infantry Division</div> <div>II Corps</div> <div>First Army</div> <div>12th Army Group</div> <div>Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army</div> <div>Joint Chiefs of Staff</div>
Battles/wars	World War II <div>Korean War</div>
Awards	Defense Distinguished Service Medal <div>Army Distinguished Service Medal (4)</div> <div>Navy Distinguished Service Medal</div> <div>Legion of Merit (2)</div> <div>Bronze Star</div> <div>Presidential Medal of Freedom</div> <div><i>Complete list</i></div>



unable to accept the Congressional appointment, and so Bradley took his place. While at the academy, Bradley's devotion to sports prevented him from excelling academically. He was a baseball star, and often played on semi-pro teams for no remuneration (to ensure his eligibility to represent the academy). He was considered one of the most outstanding college players in the nation during his junior and senior seasons at West Point, noted as both a power hitter and an outfielder with one of the best arms in his day.

While stationed at West Point as an instructor, Bradley became a Freemason in 1923, becoming a member of the West Point Lodge #877, Highland Falls, New York until his death.<sup>[4]</sup>

Bradley's first wife, Mary Quayle, grew up across the street from him in Moberly. The pair attended Central Christian Church and Moberly High School together. Moberly called Bradley its favorite son and throughout his life Bradley called Moberly his hometown and his favorite city in the world. He was a frequent visitor to Moberly throughout his career, was a member of the Moberly Rotary Club, played near handicap golf regularly at the local course and had a "Bradley pew" at Central Christian Church. When a flag project opened in 2009 in the Moberly cemetery, General Bradley and his first son-in-law and West Point graduate, the late Major Henry Shaw Bukema, were memorialized with flags in their honor from grateful citizens.

## U.S. Army

At West Point, Bradley played three years of varsity baseball including on the 1914 team, from which every player who remained in the army ultimately became a general. He graduated from West Point in 1915 as part of a class that contained many future generals, and which military historians have called "the class the stars fell on". Bradley's Cullum Number is 5356. There were ultimately 59 general officers in that graduating class, among whom Bradley and Dwight D. Eisenhower attained the rank of General of the Army, and Eisenhower becoming the 34th President of the United States. Among the numerous others were Joseph T. McNarney, Henry Aurand, James Van Fleet, Stafford LeRoy Irwin, John W. Leonard, Joseph May Swing, Paul J. Mueller, Charles W. Ryder, Leland Hobbs, Vernon Prichard, John B. Wogan, Roscoe B. Woodruff, John French Conklin, Walter W. Hess, and Edwin A. Zundel.

Bradley was commissioned as a second lieutenant into the Infantry Branch of the United States Army and was first assigned to the 14th Infantry Regiment. He served on the Mexico–United States border in 1915. When the United States entered World War I, in April 1917 (see the American entry into World War I), he was promoted to captain and sent to guard the Butte, Montana copper mines. Bradley joined the 19th Infantry Division in August 1918, which was scheduled for European deployment, but the influenza pandemic and the armistice with Germany intervened.

Between the wars, he taught and studied. From 1920 to 1924, he taught mathematics at West Point. He was promoted to major in 1924 and took the advanced infantry course at Fort Benning, Georgia. After brief duty in Hawaii, he studied at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1928–29, and upon graduating served as an instructor in tactics at the U.S. Army Infantry School. There the assistant commandant, Lieutenant Colonel George Marshall called him "quiet, unassuming, capable, with sound common sense. Absolute dependability. Give him a job and forget it."<sup>[5]</sup> From 1929, he taught at West Point again, taking a break to study at the U.S. Army War College in 1934. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in 1936 and worked at the War Department; after 1938 he was directly under the U.S. Army Chief of Staff George Marshall. In February 1941, he was promoted to (wartime) temporary rank of brigadier general (bypassing the rank of colonel)<sup>[6]</sup> (this rank was made permanent in September, 1943). The temporary rank was conferred to allow him to command the U.S.



Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia (he was the first from his class to become even a temporary general officer). In February 1942, two months after the American entry into World War II, he was made a temporary major general (a rank made permanent in September 1944) and took command of the 82nd Infantry Division before succeeding Major General James Garesche Ord as commander of the 28th Infantry Division in June.

## Louisiana Maneuvers

The Louisiana Maneuvers were a series of U.S. Army exercises held around Northern and Western-Central Louisiana, including Fort Polk, Camp Claiborne and Camp Livingston, in 1940 and 1941. The exercises, which involved some 400,000 troops, were designed to evaluate U.S. training, logistics, doctrine, and commanders. Overall, headquarters were in the Bentley Hotel in Alexandria.

Many Army officers present at the maneuvers later rose to very senior roles in World War II, including Bradley, Mark Clark, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Walter Krueger, Lesley J. McNair and George Patton.

Lt. Colonel Bradley was assigned to General Headquarters during the Louisiana Maneuvers but as a courier and observer in the field, he gained invaluable experience for the future. Colonel Bradley assisted in the planning of the maneuvers, and kept the General Staff in Washington, D.C. abreast of the training that was occurring during the Louisiana Maneuvers.

Bradley later said that Louisianans welcomed the soldiers with open arms. Some soldiers even slept in some of the residents' houses. Bradley said it was so crowded in those houses sometimes when the soldiers were sleeping, there would hardly be any walking room. Bradley also said a few of the troops were disrespectful towards the residents' land and crops, and would tear down crops for extra food. However, for the most part, residents and soldiers established good relations.<sup>[7]</sup>

## World War II

Bradley's personal experiences in the war are documented in his award winning book *A Soldier's Story*, published by Henry Holt & Co. in 1951. It was re-released by The Modern Library in 1999. The book is based on an extensive diary maintained by his aide de camp, Chester B. Hansen, who ghost wrote the book using that diary. Hansen's diary is maintained by the U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle Barracks, PA.<sup>[8]</sup>

On March 25, 1942 Bradley, recently promoted to major general, assumed command of the newly activated 82nd Infantry Division. Bradley oversaw the division's transformation into the first American airborne division and took parachute training. In August the division was re-designated as the 82nd Airborne Division and Bradley relinquished command to Major General Matthew B. Ridgway.

Bradley then took command of the 28th Infantry Division, which was a National Guard division with soldiers mostly from the state of Pennsylvania.

Bradley did not receive a front-line command until early 1943, after Operation Torch. He had been given VIII Corps after being succeeded by Lloyd D. Brown as commander of the 28th Division, but instead was sent to North Africa to be Eisenhower's front-line troubleshooter. At Bradley's suggestion, II Corps, which had just suffered a great defeat at the Kasserine Pass, was overhauled from top to bottom, and Eisenhower installed George S. Patton as corps commander in March 1943. Patton requested Bradley as his deputy, but



Bradley retained the right to represent Eisenhower as well.<sup>[9]</sup>

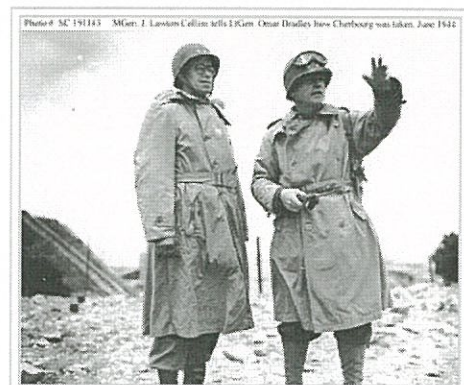
For the front-line command, Bradley was promoted to temporary lieutenant general in March 1943 and succeeded Patton as head of II Corps in April, directed it in the final Tunisian battles of April and May. Bradley continued to command II Corps in the invasion of Sicily.

## Normandy 1944

Bradley moved to London as commander in chief of the American ground forces preparing to invade France in 1944. For D-Day, Bradley was chosen to command the US First Army, which, alongside the British Second Army, made up General Montgomery's 21st Army Group.

On June 10, General Bradley and his staff debarked to establish a headquarters ashore. During Operation Overlord, he commanded three corps directed at the two American invasion targets, Utah Beach and Omaha Beach. During July he inspected the modifications made by Curtis G. Culin to Sherman tanks, that led to the Rhino tank. Later in July, he planned Operation Cobra, the beginning of the breakout from the Normandy beachhead. Operation Cobra called for the use of strategic bombers using huge bomb loads to attack German defensive lines. After several postponements due to weather, the operation began on July 25, 1944 with a short, very intensive bombardment with lighter explosives, designed so as not to create more rubble and craters that would slow Allied progress. Bradley was horrified when 77 planes bombed short and dropped bombs on their own troops, including General Lesley J. McNair.<sup>[10]</sup>

The ground belched, shook and spewed dirt to the sky. Scores of our troops were hit, their bodies flung from slit trenches. Doughboys were dazed and frightened....A bomb landed squarely on McNair in a slit trench and threw his body sixty feet and mangled it beyond recognition except for the three stars on his collar.<sup>[11]</sup>



Lt Gen Omar Bradley (left), Commanding General, U.S. First Army, listens as Maj Gen J. Lawton Collins, Commanding General, US VII Corps, describes how the city of Cherbourg was taken. (c. June 1944)

However, the bombing was successful in knocking out the enemy communication system, rendering German troops confused and ineffective, and opened the way for the ground offensive by attacking infantry. Bradley sent in three infantry divisions—the 9th, 4th and 30th—to move in close behind the bombing. The infantry succeeded in cracking the German defenses, opening the way for advances by armored forces commanded by Patton to sweep around the German lines.

As the build-up continued in Normandy, the Third Army was formed under Patton, Bradley's former commander, while General Hodges succeeded Bradley in command of the First Army; together, they made up Bradley's new command, the 12th Army Group. By August, the 12th Army Group had swollen to over 900,000 men and ultimately consisted of four field armies. It was the largest group of American soldiers to ever serve under one field commander.



## Falaise Pocket

Hitler's refusal to allow his army to flee the rapidly advancing Allied pincer movement created an opportunity to trap an entire German Army Group in northern France.<sup>[12]</sup> After the German attempt to split the US armies at Mortain (Operation Lüttich), Bradley's Army Group and XV Corps became the southern pincer in forming the *Falaise Pocket*, trapping the German Seventh Army and Fifth Panzer Army in Normandy. The northern pincer was formed of Canadian forces, part of British General Sir Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Group. On August 13, 1944, concerned that American troops would clash with Canadian forces advancing from the north-west, Bradley overrode Patton's orders for a further push north towards Falaise, while ordering XV Corps to 'concentrate for operations in another direction'.<sup>[13]</sup> Any American troops in the vicinity of Argentan were ordered to withdraw.<sup>[14]</sup> This order halted the southern pincer movement of General Haislip's XV Corps.<sup>[15]</sup> Though Patton protested the order, he obeyed it, leaving an exit—a "trap with a gap"—for the remaining German forces.<sup>[15]</sup> Around 20,000–50,000 German troops (leaving almost all of their heavy material)<sup>[16]</sup> escaped through the gap, avoiding encirclement and almost certain destruction.<sup>[15]</sup> They would be reorganized and rearmed in time to slow the Allied advance into the Netherlands and Germany.<sup>[15]</sup> Most of the blame for this outcome has been placed on Bradley.<sup>[17][18]</sup> Bradley had incorrectly assumed, based on Ultra decoding transcripts, that most of the Germans had already escaped encirclement, and he feared a German counterattack as well as possible friendly fire casualties.<sup>[19]</sup> Though admitting a mistake had been made, Bradley placed the blame on General Montgomery for moving the British and Commonwealth troops too slowly, though the latter were in direct contact with a large number of SS Panzer, Fallschirmjaeger, and other elite German forces.<sup>[20][21]</sup>



Bradley (center) with Patton (left) and Montgomery (right) at 21st Army Group HQ, Normandy, 7 July 1944.

## Germany

The American forces reached the "Siegfried Line" or "Westwall" in late September. The success of the advance had taken the Allied high command by surprise. They had expected the German *Wehrmacht* to make stands on the natural defensive lines provided by the French rivers, and had not prepared the logistics for the much deeper advance of the Allied armies, so fuel ran short.

Eisenhower faced a decision on strategy. Bradley favored an advance into the Saarland, or possibly a two-thrust assault on both the Saarland and the Ruhr Area. Montgomery argued for a narrow thrust across the Lower Rhine, preferably with all Allied ground forces under his personal command as they had been in the early months of the Normandy campaign, into the open country beyond and then to the northern flank into the Ruhr, thus avoiding the Siegfried Line. Although Montgomery was not permitted to launch an offensive on the scale he had wanted, George Marshall and Hap Arnold were eager to use the First Allied Airborne Army to cross the Rhine, so Eisenhower agreed to Operation Market-Garden. Bradley opposed Operation Market Garden, and bitterly protested to Eisenhower the priority of supplies given to Montgomery, but Eisenhower, mindful of British public opinion regarding damage from V-1 missile launches in the north, refused to make any changes.

Bradley's Army Group now covered a very wide front in hilly country, from the Netherlands to Lorraine.





Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall (center) and Army Air Forces Commander General Henry H. Arnold confer with Bradley on the beach at Normandy in 1944.

Despite having the largest concentration of Allied army forces, Bradley faced difficulties in prosecuting a successful broad-front offensive in difficult country with a skilled enemy. General Bradley and his First Army commander, General Courtney Hodges eventually decided to attack through a corridor known as the Aachen Gap towards the German township of Schmidt. The only nearby military objectives were the Roer River flood control dams, but these were not mentioned in contemporary plans and documents.<sup>[22]</sup> Bradley and Hodges' original objective may have been to outflank German forces and prevent them from reinforcing their units further north in the Battle of Aachen. After the war, Bradley would cite the Roer dams as the objective.<sup>[23]</sup> Since the Germans held the dams, they could also unleash millions of gallons of water into the path of advance. The campaign's confused objectives, combined with poor intelligence<sup>[24]</sup> resulted in the

costly series of battles known as the Battle of Hurtgen Forest, which cost some 33,000 American casualties.<sup>[25]</sup> At the end of the fighting in the Hurtgen, German forces remained in control of the Roer dams in what has been described as "the most ineptly fought series of battles of the war in the west."<sup>[25]</sup> Further south, Patton's Third Army, which had been advancing with great speed, was faced with last priority (behind the U.S. First and Ninth Armies) for supplies, gasoline and ammunition. As a result, the Third Army lost momentum as German resistance stiffened around the extensive defenses surrounding the city of Metz. While Bradley focused on these two campaigns, the Germans were in the process of assembling troops and materiel for a surprise winter offensive.

## Battle of the Bulge

Bradley's command took the initial brunt of what would become the Battle of the Bulge. For logistical and command reasons, General Eisenhower decided to place Bradley's First and Ninth Armies under the temporary command of Field Marshal Montgomery's 21st Army Group on the northern flank of the Bulge. Bradley was incensed, and began shouting at Eisenhower: "By God, Ike, I cannot be responsible to the American people if you do this. I resign."<sup>[26]</sup> Eisenhower turned red, took a breath and replied evenly "Brad, I—not you—am responsible to the American people. Your resignation therefore means absolutely nothing."<sup>[27]</sup> Bradley paused, made one more protest, then fell silent as Eisenhower concluded "Well, Brad, those are my orders."<sup>[27]</sup> At least one historian has attributed Eisenhower's support for Bradley's subsequent promotion to (temporary) four-star general (March 1945, not made permanent until January 1949) to, in part, a desire to compensate him for the way in which he had been sidelined during the Battle of the Bulge.<sup>[28]</sup> Others point out that both Secretary of War Stimson and General Eisenhower had desired to reward General Patton with a fourth star for his string of accomplishments in 1944, but that Eisenhower could not promote Patton over Bradley, Devers, and other senior commanders without upsetting the chain of command (as Bradley commanded these people in the theater).<sup>[29][30]</sup>

## Victory

Bradley used the advantage gained in March 1945—after Eisenhower authorized a difficult but successful Allied offensive (on a broad front with British Operation Veritable to the north and American Operation Grenade to the south) in February 1945—to break the German defenses and cross the Rhine into the industrial heartland of the Ruhr. Aggressive pursuit of the disintegrating German troops by the 9th Armored Division resulted in the capture of a bridge across the Rhine River at Remagen. Bradley quickly exploited



the crossing, forming the southern arm of an enormous pincer movement encircling the German forces in the Ruhr from the north and south. Over 300,000 prisoners were taken. American forces then met up with the Soviet forces near the Elbe River in mid-April. By V-E Day, the 12th Army Group was a force of four armies (1st, 3rd, 9th, and 15th) that numbered over 1.3 million men.

## Command style

Unlike some of the more colorful generals of World War II, Bradley was polite and courteous in his public appearances. A reticent man, Bradley was first favorably brought to public attention by war correspondent Ernie Pyle, who was urged by General Eisenhower to "go and discover Bradley".<sup>[31]</sup> Pyle subsequently wrote several dispatches in which he referred to Bradley as the *GI's general*, a title that would stay with Bradley throughout his remaining career.<sup>[32]</sup> Will Lang Jr. of *Life* magazine said "The thing I most admire about Omar Bradley is his gentleness. He was never known to issue an order to anybody of any rank without saying 'Please' first."

While the public at large never forgot the image created by newspaper correspondents, a different view of Bradley was offered by combat historian S. L. A. Marshall, who knew both Bradley and George Patton, and had interviewed officers and men under their commands. Marshall, who was also a critic of George S. Patton,<sup>[33]</sup> noted that Bradley's 'common man' image "was played up by Ernie Pyle...The GIs were not impressed with him. They scarcely knew him. He's not a flamboyant figure and he didn't get out much to troops. And the idea that he was idolized by the average soldier is just rot."<sup>[34]</sup>

While Bradley retained his reputation as the *GI's general*, he was criticized by some of his contemporaries for other aspects of his leadership style, sometimes described as 'managerial' in nature.<sup>[35]</sup> British General Bernard Montgomery's assessment of Bradley was that he was "dull, conscientious, dependable, and loyal".<sup>[36]</sup> He had a habit of peremptorily relieving senior commanders who he felt were too independent, or whose command style did not agree with his own, such as the colorful and aggressive General Terry Allen, commander of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division (who was relocated to a different command because Bradley felt that his continued command of the division was making it unmanagably elitist, a decision with which Eisenhower concurred).<sup>[37]</sup> While Patton is often viewed today as the prototype of the intolerant, impulsive commander, Bradley actually sacked far more generals and senior commanders during World War II, whereas Patton relieved only one general from his command—Orlando Ward—for cause during the entire war (and only after giving General Ward two warnings).<sup>[38]</sup> When required, Bradley could be a hard disciplinarian; he recommended the death sentence for several soldiers while he served as the commander of the First Army.<sup>[39]</sup>

One controversy of Bradley's leadership involved the lack of use of specialized tanks Hobart's Funnies in the Normandy invasion.<sup>[40]</sup> After the war Chester Wilmot<sup>[41]</sup> quoted correspondence with the developer of the tanks, Major General Percy Hobart, to the effect that the failure to use such tanks was a major contributing factor to the losses at Omaha Beach, and that Bradley had deferred the decision whether to use the tanks to his staff who had not taken up the offer, other than in respect of the DD (swimming) tanks. However a later memo from the 21st Army Group is on record<sup>[42]</sup> as relaying two separate requests from the First Army, one dealing with the DD tanks and "Porpoises" (towed waterproof trailers), the other with a variety of other Funnies. The second list gives not only items of specific interest with requested numbers, but items known to be available that were not of interest. The requested items were modified Shermans, and tank attachments compatible with Shermans. Noted as not of interest were Funnies that required Churchill or Valentine tanks, or for which alternatives were available from the USA. Of the six requested types of Funnies, the Sherman Crocodile is known to have been difficult to produce, and the Centipede



never seems to have been used in combat. Richard Anderson considers that the press of time prevented the production of the other four items in numbers beyond the Commonwealth's requirements. Given the heavier surf and the topography of Omaha Beach, it is unlikely that the funnies would have been as useful there as they were on the Commonwealth beaches.<sup>[43]</sup>

## Post-war

### Veterans Administration

President Truman appointed Bradley to head the Veterans Administration for two years after the war. He served from August 15, 1945 to November 30, 1947<sup>[44]</sup> and is credited with doing much to improve its health care system and with helping veterans receive their educational benefits under the G. I. Bill of Rights. Bradley's influence on the VA is credited with helping shape it into the agency it is today. He was a regular visitor to Capitol Hill and lobbied on behalf of veterans' benefits in testimony before various congressional veteran affairs committees. Due to his numerous contributions to the Veterans Administration, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs' primary conference room at the headquarters of the Department of Veterans Affairs is named in Bradley's honor.



General Omar Bradley, 1949

### Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Bradley became the Army Chief of Staff in 1948. After assuming command, Bradley found a U.S. military establishment badly in need of reorganization, equipment, and training. As Bradley himself put it, "the Army of 1948 could not fight its way out of a paper bag."<sup>[45]</sup><sup>[46]</sup><sup>[47]</sup><sup>[48]</sup>

On August 11, 1949, President Harry S Truman appointed Bradley the first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After his initial 1948 plan to expand the Army and modernize its equipment was rejected by the Truman Administration, Bradley reacted to the increasingly severe postwar defense department budget cutbacks imposed by Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson by publicly supporting Johnson's decisions, going so far as to tell Congress that he would be doing a "disservice to the nation" if he asked for a larger military force.<sup>[47]</sup><sup>[48]</sup><sup>[49]</sup><sup>[50]</sup> Bradley also suggested that official Navy protests of Secretary Johnson's canceling the supercarrier *United States* were due to improper personal or political, even mutinous motives, calling Navy admirals "fancy dans who won't hit the line with all they have on every play unless they can call the signals", and who were in "open rebellion against the civilian control."<sup>[51]</sup><sup>[52]</sup>

In his second memoir, Bradley would later state that not arguing more forcefully in 1948 and 1949 for a sufficient defense budget "was a mistake...perhaps the greatest mistake I made in my postwar years in Washington."<sup>[53]</sup><sup>[54]</sup>

On September 22, 1950,<sup>[55]</sup> he was promoted to the rank of General of the Army, the fifth—and last—man to achieve that rank. That same year, Bradley was made the first Chairman of the NATO Military Committee. He remained on the committee until August 1953, when he left active duty. During his service, Bradley visited the White House over 300 times and was frequently featured on the cover of TIME magazine.



In 1950 Bradley was elected as an honorary member of the New York Society of the Cincinnati in recognition of his outstanding service to his country.

## Korean War

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Bradley was the senior military commander at the outset of the Korean War. When North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, Bradley was faced with re-organizing and deploying an American military force that was a shadow of its World War II counterpart.<sup>[56][57]</sup> The impact of the Truman administration's defense budget cutbacks were now keenly felt, as poorly equipped American troops, lacking sufficient tanks, anti-tank weapons, or artillery were driven down the Korean peninsula to Pusan in a series of costly rearguard actions.<sup>[58][59]</sup> In a postwar analysis of the unpreparedness of U.S. Army forces deployed to Korea during the summer and fall of 1950, Army Major General Floyd L. Parks stated that "Many who never lived to tell the tale had to fight the full range of ground warfare from offensive to delaying action, unit by unit, man by man...[T]hat we were able to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat...does not relieve us from the blame of having placed our own flesh and blood in such a predicament."<sup>[60]</sup>

Bradley was the chief military policy maker during the Korean War, and supported Truman's original plan of 'rolling back' Communist aggression by conquering all of North Korea. When Chinese Communists entered North Korea in late 1950 and again drove back American forces, Bradley agreed that rollback had to be dropped in favor of a strategy of *containment* of North Korea. The containment strategy was subsequently adopted by the Truman administration for North Korea, and applied to communist expansion worldwide. Never an admirer of General Douglas MacArthur, Bradley was instrumental in convincing Truman to dismiss MacArthur as the overall commander in the Korean theatre<sup>[61]</sup> after MacArthur resisted administration attempts to scale back strategic objectives in the Korean War.

In his testimony to the U.S. Congress, Bradley strongly rebuked MacArthur for his support of victory at all costs in the Korean War. Soon after Truman relieved MacArthur of command in April 1951, Bradley said in Congressional testimony, "Red China is not the powerful nation seeking to dominate the world. Frankly, in the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this strategy would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy."

## Retirement

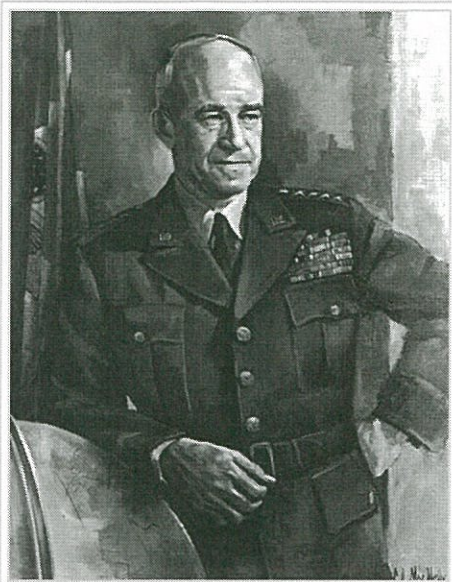
Bradley left active duty military service in August 1953. However, he chaired the Commission on Veterans' Pensions, commonly known as the "Bradley Commission", in 1955–1956. In January 1956, Bradley became one of the founding members of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities, later the President's Intelligence Advisory Board.<sup>[62]</sup>

In retirement, Bradley held a number of positions in commercial life including Chairman of the Board of the Bulova Watch Company from 1958 to 1973.<sup>[63]</sup>

His memoirs, *A Soldier's Story* (ghostwritten by aide de camp Chester B. Hansen who kept a day by day diary during the war<sup>[64]</sup>), appeared in 1951; a fuller autobiography *A General's Life: An Autobiography* (coauthored by Clay Blair) appeared in 1983. He took the opportunity to attack Field Marshal Montgomery's 1945 claims to have won the Battle of the Bulge.

On 1 December 1965, Bradley's wife, Mary, died of leukemia. He met Esther Dora "Kitty" Buhler and





Portrait of Bradley

married her on September 12, 1966; they were married until his death.

As a horse racing fan, Bradley spent much of his leisure time at racetracks in California and often presented the winners trophies. He also was a lifetime sports fan, especially of college football. He was the 1948 Grand Marshal of the Tournament of Roses and attended several subsequent Rose Bowl games (his black limousine with personalized California license plate "ONB" and a red plate with 5 gold stars was frequently seen driving through Pasadena streets with a police motorcycle escort to the Rose Bowl on New Year's Day), and was prominent at the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas, and the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, Louisiana in later years.

Bradley also served as a member of President Lyndon Johnson's Wise Men, a high-level advisory group considering policy for the Vietnam War in 1967–68. Bradley was a hawk and recommended against withdrawal from Vietnam.<sup>[65]</sup>

In 1970, Bradley served as a consultant for the film *Patton*, though the extent of his participation is largely unknown. Screenwriters Francis Ford Coppola and Edmund H. North wrote most of the film based on two biographies, Bradley's *A Soldier's Story* and *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* by Ladislav Farago. As the film was made without access to General Patton's diaries or any information from his family, it largely relied upon observations by Bradley and other military contemporaries when attempting to reconstruct Patton's thoughts and motives.<sup>[66]</sup> In a review of the film *Patton*, S.L.A. Marshall, who knew both Patton and Bradley, stated that "The Bradley name gets heavy billing on a picture of [a] comrade that, while not caricature, is the likeness of a victorious, glory-seeking buffoon...Patton in the flesh was an enigma. He so stays in the film...Napoleon once said that the art of the general is not strategy but knowing how to mold human nature...Maybe that is all producer Frank McCarthy and Gen. Bradley, his chief advisor, are trying to say."<sup>[66]</sup> While Bradley knew Patton personally, it was also well known that the two men were polar opposites in personality, and that Bradley despised Patton both personally and professionally, though in the film they're portrayed as close friends.<sup>[67][68][69]</sup> Bradley's role in the film remains controversial to this day.

In 1971 Bradley was the subject of an episode of the TV show *This Is Your Life*.

Bradley attended the 30th anniversary of D-Day at Normandy, France on June 6, 1974, participating in various parades.

On 10 January 1977, Bradley was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Gerald Ford.

Bradley was the keynote speaker at Pointe du Hoc, Normandy, France on June 6, 1979 for the 35th anniversary of D-Day, where in a wheelchair he performed an open ranks inspection of the U.S. representative army unit, the 84th Army Band from VII Corps HQ, Stuttgart, West Germany.

Bradley spent his last years in Texas at a special residence on the grounds of the William Beaumont Army Medical Center, part of the complex which supports Fort Bliss.

One of Bradley's last public appearances was as the guest of honor at the inauguration of President Ronald



Reagan on January 20, 1981.<sup>[70]</sup>

Omar Bradley died on 8 April 1981 in New York City of a cardiac arrhythmia, just a few minutes after receiving an award from the National Institute of Social Sciences. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery, next to his two wives.<sup>[71]</sup>

## Recognition

Bradley's posthumous autobiography, *A General's Life*, was published in 1983. The book was begun by Bradley himself, who found writing difficult, and so Clay Blair was brought in to help shape the autobiography; after Bradley's death, Blair continued the writing, making the unusual choice of using Bradley's first-person voice. The resulting book is highly readable, and based on extremely thorough research, including extensive interviews with all concerned, and Bradley's own papers.<sup>[72]</sup>

Bradley is known for saying, "Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than about peace, more about killing than we know about living."<sup>[73]</sup>

The U.S. Army's M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle and M3 Bradley cavalry fighting vehicle are named after General Bradley.

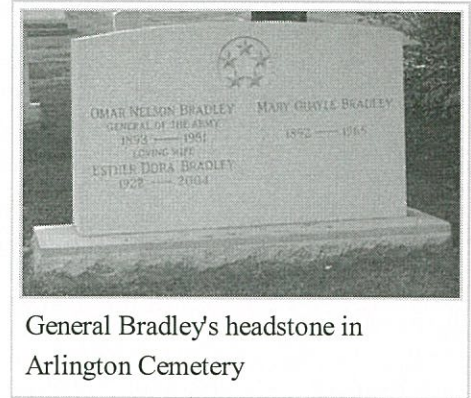
Bradley's hometown, Moberly, Missouri, is planning a library and museum in his honor. Two recent Bradley Leadership Symposia in Moberly have honored his role as one of the American military's foremost teachers of young officers. On February 12, 2010, the U.S. House of Representatives, the Missouri Senate, the Missouri House, the County of Randolph and the City of Moberly all recognized Bradley's birthday as General Omar Nelson Bradley Day. The ceremony marking the day was held at his high school alma mater and featured addresses by the current Congressional representative, Blaine Luetkemeyer, and Moberly High School Principal Aaron Vitt.

On May 5, 2000, the United States Postal Service issued a series of *Distinguished Soldiers* stamps in which Bradley was honored.<sup>[74]</sup>

## Summary of service

















### Dates of rank

Source: <sup>[75]</sup>



General Bradley's headstone in Arlington Cemetery



No insignia	Cadet, United States Military Academy: August 1, 1911
<i>No pin insignia in 1915</i>	Second Lieutenant, United States Army: June 12, 1915
	First Lieutenant, United States Army: July 1, 1916
	Captain, United States Army: May 15, 1917
	Temporary Major, National Army: June 17, 1918 to January 22, 1920
	Major, National Army: July 1, 1920
	Captain, Regular Army (reverted to permanent rank*): November 4, 1922
	Major, Regular Army: June 25, 1924
	Lieutenant Colonel, Regular Army: July 26, 1936
	Brigadier General, Army of the United States: February 24, 1941
	Major General, Army of the United States: February 15, 1942
	Lieutenant General, Army of the United States: June 2, 1943
	Colonel, Regular Army: October 1, 1943**
	Brigadier General, Regular Army: September 1, 1943**
	Major General, Regular Army: September 8, 1944
	General, Army of the United States: March 12, 1945
	General, Regular Army: January 31, 1949
	General of the Army, Regular Army: September 22, 1950

Note\* – Discharged as Major and appointed Captain November 4, 1922; acts June 30, 1922 and September 14, 1922<sup>[76]</sup>

Note\*\* – Bradley's effective date for permanent brigadier general in the Regular Army is earlier than his effective date of promotion for permanent colonel. While serving as a temporary lieutenant general in early 1943, Bradley was notified that he would be promoted to permanent colonel with an effective date of October 1, 1943. At the time, promotions to permanent brigadier and major general had been withheld for



more than two years, except for Delos C. Emmons, Henry H. Arnold, and Dwight Eisenhower. President Franklin D. Roosevelt lifted the moratorium after Bradley was notified that he would be promoted to colonel, but before the October 1 effective date.

In determining whom to promote after the lifting of Roosevelt's moratorium, Marshall consulted with Eisenhower, and they agreed to promote Bradley and several others. Marshall and Eisenhower then arranged the effective dates of promotion to brigadier general based on where they wanted each of the individuals selected to rank in terms of seniority. Bradley's date of rank for permanent brigadier general was then set as September 1, 1943—even though this was before his October 1, 1943 effective date for promotion to colonel—based on where Eisenhower and Marshall wanted Bradley to fall in terms of seniority as a brigadier general.

Bradley's and the other promotions to brigadier general on which Marshall and Eisenhower had conferred were not acted on until mid-October 1943 because Congress had to approve a waiver for those generals, including Bradley, who did not yet have 28 years of service. As a result, his October 1, 1943 date for promotion to permanent colonel was allowed to remain in effect. When Congress acted in mid-October to approve Bradley's time in service waiver and promotion to permanent brigadier general, his effective date for brigadier general was backdated to September 1, 1943. The September 1, 1943 date for permanent brigadier general enabled Bradley to line up with his peers where Marshall and Eisenhower intended for purposes of seniority.

The effective postdated (and then backdated) date of rank for Bradley's promotion to permanent brigadier general—September 1, 1943—thus came before the effective postdated date of rank for his promotion to colonel—October 1, 1943.<sup>[77][78][79][80][81]</sup>

## Orders, decorations and medals

### United States

	Defense Distinguished Service Medal
	Army Distinguished Service Medal (with three oak leaf clusters)
	Navy Distinguished Service Medal
	Silver Star
	Legion of Merit (w/oak leaf cluster)
	Bronze Star Medal
	Presidential Medal of Freedom
	Mexican Border Service Medal
	World War I Victory Medal
	American Defense Service Medal
	American Campaign Medal
	European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one silver and three campaign stars
	World War II Victory Medal
	Army of Occupation Medal with Germany clasp



 National Defense Service Medal

## Foreign

### Czechoslovakia

 War Cross 1939–1945


### France

 French *Croix de guerre* with silver palm

### Luxembourg

 Luxembourg War Cross

### Poland

 Commander's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta

### Russia / Soviet Union

 Order of Suvorov (1st class)

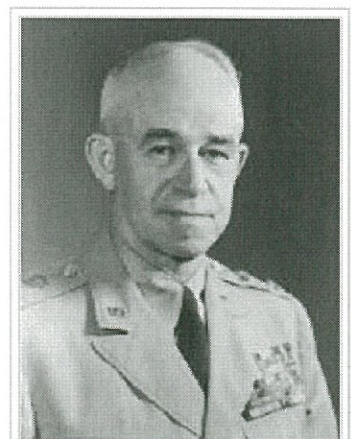
 Order of Kutuzov (1st class)

### United Kingdom

 British Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath

## Assignment history

- 1911: Cadet, United States Military Academy
- 1915: 14th Infantry Regiment
- 1919: ROTC professor, South Dakota State College
- 1920: Instructor, United States Military Academy (West Point)
- 1924: Infantry School Student, Fort Benning, Georgia
- 1925: Commanding Officer, 19th and 27th Infantry Regiments
- 1927: Office of National Guard and Reserve Affairs, Hawaiian Department
- 1928: Student, Command and General Staff School
- 1929: Instructor, Fort Benning, Infantry School
- 1934: Student, United States Army War College
- 1934: Plans and Training Office, USMA West Point
- 1938: War Department General Staff, G-1 Chief of Operations Branch and Assistant Secretary of the General Staff
- 1941: Commandant, Infantry School Fort Benning





Omar Bradley, General of the Army



- 1942: Commanding General, 82nd Infantry Division and 28th Infantry Division
- 1943: Commanding General, II Corps, North Africa and Sicily
- 1943: Commanding General, Field Forces European Theater
- 1944: Commanding General, First Army (Later 1st and 12th U.S. Army Groups)
- 1945: Administrator of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Administration
- 1948: United States Army Chief of Staff
- 1949: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
- 1953: Retired from active service

## See also

-  United States Army portal
-  Military of the United States portal

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United States Army Center of Military History.

## External links

- Chester B. Hansen Collection (<http://cdm16635.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16635coll16/id/3658>) – Hansen was the aide of GEN (and GOA) Bradley during and after World War II. US Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania
- Omar Nelson Bradley, General of the Army (<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/omarnels.htm>) – Arlington National Cemetery profile.
- Omar Nelson Bradley, Lt. General FUSAG 12TH AG ([http://historicalregistry.com/?page\\_id=222](http://historicalregistry.com/?page_id=222)) – Omar Bradley's D-Day June 6, 1944 Maps restored, preserved and displayed at Historical Registry
- The American Presidency Project (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=5550>)
- "Omar Bradley" (<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=125>). Find a Grave. Retrieved 2008-07-31.
- The short film *Big Picture: The Omar N. Bradley Story* (<https://archive.org/details/gov.archives.arc.2569666>) is available for free download at the Internet Archive



Military offices		
Preceded by <b>Courtney Hodges</b>	<b>Commandant of the United States Army Infantry School</b> 1941–1942	Succeeded by <b>Leven Allen</b>
Preceded by <b>Newly activated post</b>	<b>Commanding General 82nd Infantry Division</b> March 1942 – June 1942	Succeeded by <b>Matthew Ridgway</b>
Preceded by <b>James Ord</b>	<b>Commanding General 28th Infantry Division</b> 1942–1943	Succeeded by <b>Lloyd Brown</b>
Preceded by <b>George Patton</b>	<b>Commanding General II Corps</b> April 1943 – September 1943	Succeeded by <b>John Lucas</b>
Preceded by <b>George Grunert</b>	<b>Commanding General First Army</b> 1943–1944	Succeeded by <b>Courtney Hodges</b>
Preceded by <b>Newly activated post</b>	<b>Commander-in-Chief 12th Army Group</b> 1944–1945	Succeeded by <b>Post deactivated</b>
Preceded by <b>Dwight Eisenhower</b>	<b>Chief of Staff of the United States Army</b> 1948–1949	Succeeded by <b>Joseph Collins</b>
Preceded by <b>William Leahy</b>	<b>Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff</b> 1943–1944	Succeeded by <b>Arthur Radford</b>
<b>New office</b>	<b>Chair of the NATO Military Committee</b> 1949–1951	Succeeded by <b>Etienne Baele</b>
Political offices		
Preceded by <b>Frank Hines</b>	<b>Administrator of Veterans Affairs</b> 1945–1948	Succeeded by <b>Carl Gray</b>
Awards		
Preceded by <b>Billy Graham</b>	<b>Recipient of the Sylvanus Thayer Award</b> 1973	Succeeded by <b>Robert Murphy</b>

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