

Missouri Road Trip

Every Hero Has A Story: Omar Bradley

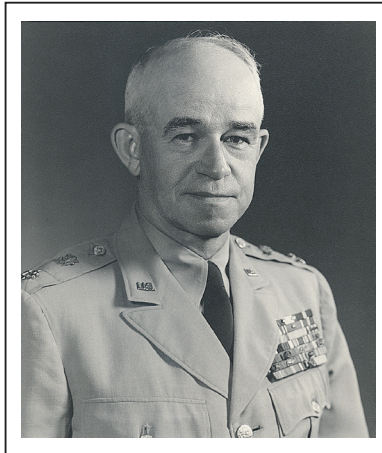
Only two people in the history of the United States military outranked Missouri-born Gen. Omar N. Bradley. One of them was George Washington. Yes, that George Washington.

Born in tiny Clark, Mo., in 1893, Bradley moved to Moberly as a teenager and later attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. At West Point, Bradley ranked 44th in his class of 164 (a class that included future President Dwight D. Eisenhower) and then spent the early part of his military career teaching and training troops.

He didn't see combat in World War I, but by the time World War II began, Bradley was primed to become a great leader.

In 1940, Bradley commanded the Infantry School in Fort Benning, Ga. After U.S. forces suffered a defeat in North Africa in 1943, then Gen. Eisenhower sent for Bradley, who assessed the situation, devised new plans and guided a victory over German forces. Some 40,000 enemy soldiers were captured as the result of Bradley's strategy.

After next leading the U.S. to a successful invasion of Sicily, Bradley was tasked with one of the most significant missions of the entire war: the Invasion of Normandy. He led troops on D-Day (June 6, 1944) when Allied forces moved against the German army in France. In less than a year, forces commanded by



Bradley controlled much of Germany. Before the war in Europe ended in May 1945, Bradley held the distinction of serving as field commander of the largest American force in history.

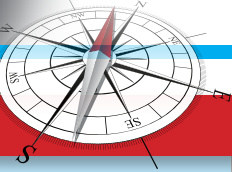
When World War II ended, another Missourian, Harry S. Truman, was the nation's president. He asked Bradley to take the helm of the Veterans Administration (VA), which was designed to help

those who fought in the war. After successfully managing the VA, Bradley accepted the role of Chief of Staff, making him the highest-ranking soldier in the Army. In 1949, he was named the first-ever Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and by 1950 he was appointed by Congress as

Points of Interest

- ★ Because of his popularity with the enlisted men, Bradley was given the nickname "The G.I. General."
- ★ Gen. Bradley was inducted into the Hall of Famous Missourians in the Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City in 1992.
- ★ Visit the Randolph County Historical Society Museum to see a display dedicated to their hometown hero at 223 N. Clark St., Moberly, 660-263-9396, randolphhistory.com.
- ★ Learn more about Gen. Bradley's hometown in the community newspaper, the Moberly Monitor-Index, MoberlyMonitor.com.
- ★ Read about Gen. Bradley on The State Historical Society of Missouri's Historic Missourians site, shs.umsystem.edu.

Sources: State Historical Society of Missouri, Hall of Famous Missourians



General of the Army, with five stars.

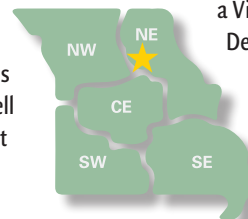
In all of U.S. history, that rank has been exceeded only by the nation's first president and another prominent military leader from Missouri, Gen. John J. Pershing. Omar Bradley died April 8, 1981. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Statue of General Bradley in Rothwell Park, west of Moberly

Take A Road Trip to Moberly!

When you visit Moberly today, stop by Rothwell Park where a statue commemorates the city's favorite son. Rothwell Park, one of the state's largest municipal parks at 447 acres, features several memorials honoring military service, including



a Vietnam Memorial, a War Dog Memorial and a Desert Storm Memorial.

To learn more about Bradley, be sure to visit the Randolph County Historical Society Museum, which has a special display devoted to the general. The museum has limited months and hours of operation, so check before you go.

