

Three Generals

Chapter 5
by Kay Hively

As the white Chevrolet rolled down the road, Eddie and Michael were puzzled. They had no idea where they were going. It didn't look like they were headed to Kansas City or Hannibal.

Once again, Eddie asked their destination, but his parents only smiled and said it wouldn't

be long before the boys would understand.

Eager to understand, the boys stared out the windows,

looking for a clue to the travel mystery. Each time they approached a small town, Mr. Barnes slowed the car down as he drove through.

Looking out the window, Eddie saw another little town just up the road. A sign told him the town was Clark. Mr. Barnes turned off the main street and the travelers were on a country road. Soon the car stopped in front of a grove of trees.

No matter how hard they looked, the boys couldn't see much of anything. Mr. Barnes got out of the car and the boys followed.

Turning to Eddie and Michael, Mr. Barnes asked what they could see. The boys shrugged their shoulders and said they didn't see anything.

Then Eddie's father pointed out into the countryside and told the boys that leadership and greatness comes from places such as this. Then he

explained that a boy named Omar Bradley had been born in a log cabin near this spot.

Omar was very poor, Mr. Barnes explained. He wanted to go to college but he had no money. Later, after his father died, Omar's Sunday School teacher told him that military school would give him a free education.

Omar took an examination, hoping to win an appointment to West Point, but he placed second. However, the boy who was first could not accept the appointment. That allowed Omar Bradley to attend one of the finest military academies in the country, a school that trained young men to be great leaders.

Turning to Eddie and Michael, At West Point, Omar worked hard. He played on both the baseball and football teams. While in school, he was learning leadership in the classroom, among his friends and on the athletic fields.

Leadership at West Point was important, and every student worked as much on leadership as he did on mathematics, history, science and literature.

After graduating from West Point in 1914, Omar Bradley chose to become a career soldier. He rose to the rank of general during World War II.

Eventually he became a five-star general, one of the

highest ranks that can be given in the United States Army.

Eddie's father said that 59 boys in Omar Bradley's class at West Point became generals. One of his classmates was a young man named Dwight David Eisenhower. He, too, became not only a general, but a five-star general as well. Only five men earned five stars in World War II — with two of the five being graduates in the Class of 1914 at West Point.

Eddie couldn't help but interrupt his father to tell Michael that General Eisenhower was also trying to become the next President of the United States.

Mr. Barnes ended his talk by saying that so many of Bradley's classmates became generals, it is said that the Class of 1914 was the one "the stars fell upon."

The boys stood on the little country road and listened to Mr. Barnes. Now they understood that a poor boy from a small place could become a great man and a great leader.



Next Chapter: Maxwell Taylor

Things to Think About and Do

- Find Clark, Missouri, on the map. What county is it in and what is the county seat?
- What does it mean that "the stars fell on the Class of 1914"?
- Are there stories in your newspaper of students earning scholarships or other academic or leadership awards? Create a Hall of Honor in your classroom to keep track of these local recognitions.

Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Nathan McAlister are both from Neosho, MO.
Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation, ©2011