

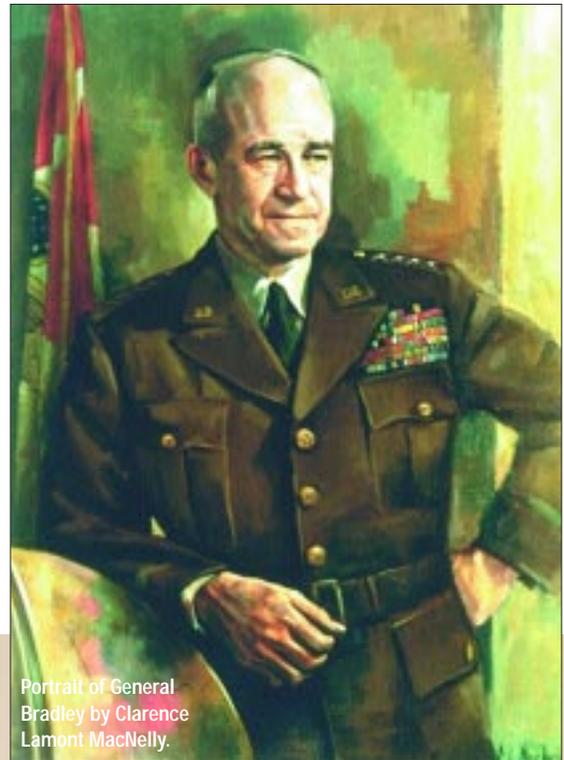
General of the Army Omar Nelson Bradley

(1893–1981)

Chief of Staff, U.S. Army
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

VITA

Born in Clark, Missouri; graduated from Military Academy (1915). Assigned to 14th Infantry and duty in the West (1915–19). ROTC duty, Minnesota and South Dakota (1919–20); instructor, West Point (1920–24). Advanced course, Infantry School (1925). Served with 19th and 27th Infantry, Hawaii (1925–27); in charge of National Guard and Reserve affairs for Hawaiian Islands (1927–28). Attended Command and General Staff School (1929) and Army War College (1934). Instructor, Infantry School (1929–33) and West Point (1934–38). Chief, operations branch (G–1), War Department (1938–40); assistant secretary, General Staff (1940–41). Commandant, Infantry School, and established infantry OCS (1941–42). Commander, 82^d and 28th Infantry Divisions (1942–43). Personal representative of commander, North African Theater of Operations (1943). Commander, II Corps in North Africa and Sicily (1943), and First Army and 12th Army Group in invasion and final European campaigns (1944–45). Administrator of veterans affairs (1945–47). Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (1948–49); responded to National Security Act of 1947 with Army reorganization leading to appointment of vice chief and two deputy chiefs of staff, consolidated technical services under a director of logistics, and finance and management under a comptroller. Served as first Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (1949–53), and first Chairman, NATO Military Staff Committee (1949–50); promoted to General of the Army (1950). Died in New York City.



Portrait of General
Bradley by Clarence
Lamont MacNelly.

Courtesy of the U.S. Army Art Collection

[In 1949] Congress enacted several laws modifying the 1947 National Security Act, designed to intensify unification. One [law] . . . established the formal post of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who would serve a two-year term (and be eligible for reappointment to a second term in time of peace) but who would not have a formal “vote” in the JCS.

Probably on Ike’s recommendation, [Secretary of Defense] Johnson then turned to me, even though I had told Ike earlier in the year I did not want the job. I now changed my mind. I agreed to serve in the job one term—two years. The main reason for my change of heart was my deep concern about the state of the military establishment. Owing to the cancellation of the supercarrier, there was a vicious mutiny afoot in the Navy . . . [which] could conceivably tear apart the Department of Defense, possibly tempting the Kremlin to capitalize on our military disarray. A firm but fair JCS Chairman, assisted by a neutral Army general (my replacement as Army Chief of Staff), might be the moderating force that could prevent a crippling brawl.

On August 12, Louis Johnson and I went to the White House, where President Truman announced my nomination as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Senate approved the nomination at once, and at 0900 on August 16, in a modest ceremony at Johnson’s office, I was sworn in. The reaction to my appointment generally was positive. I was still blessed with a “favorable press.” However, to the Navy I was still an enemy. With the JCS now officially enlarged to four men . . . the Navy felt that even though I had no official vote, its voice would be further weakened.

—From *A General’s Life* by Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair