

Five-star general Omar Bradley turns 88 Thursday

United Press International
EL PASO — Five-star Gen. Omar Nelson Bradley, who has spent 69 years in the U.S. Army and has commanded more combat troops than any general in history, turns 88 Thursday.

Bradley, the nation's only surviving five-star general and the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will be honored with a party Saturday at his adopted home of Fort Bliss.

Confined to a wheelchair because of knee problems stemming

from his days as a member of the West Point football team, Bradley's last public appearance was at President Reagan's inauguration, where he served as grand marshal of the inaugural parade.

He spent two days last week hospitalized at Beaumont Army Medical Center in El Paso because of a viral infection, but said he intended to attend the fourth party in his honor at the Army post.

Bradley's birthday party among friends and colleagues at Fort

Bliss has become a yearly tradition, with presents arriving from the powerful throughout the country.

Major Gen. John B. Oblinger Jr., post commander, will host the festivities Saturday. Among those expected to attend are Rep. Richard White, D-Texas, the mayor of El Paso and West Point Cadet 1st Capt. Stanley March, captain of the football team and brigade commander, marking the first time since 1953 a cadet has held both jobs.

Bradley never retired, and still is considered on active duty. He was awarded special status for a five-star general, and still addresses officer and leadership classes. He has been a resident of El Paso since November 1977.

A 1915 graduate of West Point, Bradley attended school with Dwight Eisenhower. He did not go overseas until World War II and won his first star at the age of 50.

He served in North Africa under Gen. George Patton but

Patton served under Bradley during the invasion of Normandy.

Under Eisenhower, who was Supreme Allied Commander, Bradley was field commander for the American forces that stormed ashore and opened the western front on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

Bradley commanded more combat troops than any other general in history.

He followed Eisenhower as chief of staff in the 1950s, becoming the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under President

Harry Truman. But his greatest pride came in being the epitome of the infantryman, the foot soldier.

"They consider me one of them," he told UPI in an interview in 1969.

Bradley's rank is equivalent to that of a British field marshal.

He served as chairman of the military committee of NATO.

He remained as chief of staff until 1953, when he became chairman of Bulova. He was kept on

active duty but his salary was frozen.

Bradley reached the pinnacle of military rank as a five-star general of the Army. The only other Army men so honored were Eisenhower, Henry Harley Arnold, Douglas MacArthur and George C. Marshall, who also received five stars, and John J. Pershing.

Bradley's wife is reportedly working on a television script about her husband's life.

Wills Point father kills family, self

United Press International
TERRELL — A strident, fundamentalist minister, who was as enchanted by guns as he was fearful of the outside world, likely devised a suicide pact with his family to avoid a two-year prison sentence, a surviving son said.

Ralph Simpson, 57, killed his wife and two daughters with a .22-caliber rifle, set the house on fire and then killed himself Monday, police said. His son, Jim Simpson, 27, who had moved out of the house last week, said the prison term facing Simpson may have triggered the killings.

"The idea of going to prison and being away from his family, I think, had a lot to do with what he did," Simpson said. "I think prison to him was just like death and he didn't want his family to face it without him. He was regarded as a fanatic but he cared very deeply for his family."

In August 1979 Simpson was convicted of aggravated assault for threatening a Wills Point neighbor with a rifle. He defended himself, was sentenced to two years and had been free on appeal.

Gloria Newman, who lived near Simpson in Wills Point, said she was scared of Simpson.

"He always said that he had been in the military and that he was a weapons expert and he was always shooting guns — all kinds of shotguns, deer rifles, pistols — at all hours of the day and night," she said.

"There were times that the bullets would pass over our house. He talked about shooting animals, all kinds of animals and how much fun it was to blow up birds' nests with his shotguns."

She said she rebuffed Simpson's evangelistic efforts and he sometimes would pace the highway in front of her house with a long-handled ax to scare her.

Firefighters discovered the four bodies — with Simpson lying across the women — when they arrived to put out the fire Monday morning. A typed, one-page suicide note, signed by all four, was found wrapped in a plastic bag on the window of his car, apparently so it would not be destroyed in the fire.

Justice of the Peace L.T. Smith said only that the note said, "We choose to die by our own hand." Religion was not mentioned.

Simpson, who had no congregation but was the evangelist leader of Herald of Hope, reportedly kept his family away from contact with others, to the extent of teaching his daughters, Rebecca, 17, and Patti, 12, at home rather than allowing them to attend public schools.

"He had a very deep-seated religious conviction and it carried into the lives of his children," said Felix Massey, principal of a Wills Point school where one of Simpson's daughters studied briefly. "He just had a knack for bringing out the hostilities in people."

"He found things like ERA, gay rights, militant civil rights advocates real disturbing," Jim Simpson, a car salesman, said.

Bandidos told to leave New Caney

United Press International
NEW CANEY — Police arrested 32 people at a gathering of the Bandidos motorcycle club and told the members to hold their meetings somewhere else.

The arrests Sunday were for driving while intoxicated, public intoxication, carrying prohibited weapons and possession of drugs. Sheriff Joe Corley said the Bandidos caused no major trouble during the gathering, but said he had informed Bandidos president Ronald Hodge his club was not welcome in the city.

"I told him to find somewhere else to party," Corley said.

About 200 Bandidos from across the country were camping over the weekend on land belonging to a friend of the club. Corley raided the group with 50 officers from city, county, state and federal agents.

The group was in town to attend national indoor motorcycle races in Houston.

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