

COL Ruby Bradley

The most decorated woman in
U.S. Military History



Dedicated Nurse

- Colonel Bradley entered the Army Nurse Corps as a surgical nurse in 1934. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, Colonel Bradley was 34 and serving at Camp John Hay in the Philippines.

Prisoner of War

- Three weeks later, she was captured; in 1943, she was moved to the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila, the Filipino capital. It was there that she and several other imprisoned nurses earned the title "Angels in Fatigues" from fellow captives.

Angel of Mercy

- For the next several months, she provided medical help to the prisoners and sought to feed starving children by shoving food into her pockets whenever she could, often going hungry herself.

Smuggler and Saint

- The weight she shed made room in her uniform for smuggling surgical equipment into the prisoner-of-war camp that she used to assist in 230 operations and deliver 13 children.

An end to captivity



- On February 3, 1945, U.S. troops stormed the gates of the Japanese camp and liberated Colonel Bradley and her fellow prisoners, ending her three years of captivity.

Return to Battle

- At 80 pounds, Colonel Bradley returned home to West Virginia and waited five years before returning to the battlefield during the Korean War.

Service in Korea

- Colonel Bradley served as a frontline Army nurse in evacuation hospitals in Korea. It was there that she refused to leave until she had loaded the sick and wounded onto a plane while surrounded by 100,000 Chinese soldiers.

Nearly killed

- She escaped just in time, as her ambulance exploded behind her.
- "You got to get out in a hurry when you have somebody behind you with a gun," Colonel Bradley said once in a TV interview.

A Career of Valor Ends

- After three decades of military service, Colonel Bradley retired from the Army in 1963.
- Colonel Bradley, a native of Spencer, West Virginia, died May 28, 2002 in Hazard, Kentucky, at age 94 after a heart attack.

Awards



- Her military record included 34 medals and citations of bravery, including two Legion of Merit medals, two Bronze stars, two Presidential Emblems, the World War II Victory Medal and the U.N. Service Medal.
- She was also the recipient of the Florence Nightingale Medal, the Red Cross' highest international honor.

Her funeral



- Colonel Bradley was honored with a military funeral in the historic cemetery overlooking the nation's capital.
- Her coffin was escorted to the grave site by six white horses, and the symbolic riderless horse followed, while the Army Band played traditional hymns.
- A firing party of seven sounded three volleys in her honor, and the flag covering her coffin was folded and presented to a relative.
- Several family members and Army soldiers laid roses on the coffin, saluting as they turned to leave.