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Senate

HONORING GENERAL RAYMOND G. DAVIS

Mr. MILLER. Madam President, I rise today to reflect on the life of a great American, a legendary marine, and a native Georgian. I refer to GEN Raymond G. Davis, who passed away yesterday in Georgia at the age of 88.

General Davis was one of this country's greatest military heroes. He courageously served his country as a marine in World War II, in Korea, and in Vietnam during his 33 years of military service. General Davis was a noble veteran, tireless advocate, and distinguished recipient of the Medal of Honor.

I know we have a lot of very important things going on in this Chamber today, but I don't think it is too much to take 3 or 4 minutes to remember one of the great battles in military history and the role this man played in it. I refer to the Chosin Reservoir in Korea, known as the Frozen Chosin. In the biggest shock of the war, 300,000 Chinese Communist soldiers crossed the Yalu River from China into North Korea and trapped 8,000 members of the first marine division at the Chosin Reservoir. There was only one way out, an icy road that twisted around steep mountains. If the Chinese gained control of it, all of the marines would be annihilated.

Then LTC Raymond Davis was a 35-year-old Georgia Tech graduate with already two Silver Stars for heroism in Korea, and the Navy Cross, our second highest award, for gallantry at Peleiu.

He commanded a battalion of marines faced with an impossible task: to get the marines on Fox Hill linked up with them or the thousands would be trapped at the reservoir and would be doomed.

That afternoon, at 24-below-zero weather, the battalion began struggling up the side of a steep ridge. Davis's men climbed 1,000 yards before the Chinese opened up. The marines kept clawing their way, inch by inch, up the icy slopes. They battled enemy soldiers who seemed tucked into every crevice. Atop the first ridge, the men's sweat froze on their eyebrows and beards. They put their wounded on stretchers and pushed on. The men rose and trudged toward still another ridge. All along, snipers picked at the slow exposed line, but there was no time for the marines to stop and fire back. They went downhill by sliding on the ice. Davis was so numb that three times he forgot a compass reading taken only moments before.

At 4 a.m. this great Georgian halted his unit. The battalion was close to Fox Company, but it lost radio contact. Trying to reach that unit in the darkness without communication might get them caught in a crossfire. They would rest until daybreak. As Davis started to nap, a sniper's bullet pierced his sleeping bag and grazed his head. He tried again to sleep.

By first light there was still no radio contact with Fox Company

and Davis feared the unit had been overrun. Then came word from his radio operator: Colonel, he announced, we have Captain Barber on the radio.

As the two officers talked, still hundreds of yards apart, both fought back tears. Late in the morning, Davis's battalion arrived atop Fox Hill. The Chinese had lost the battle for Toktong Pass.

Within hours, two marine battalions were moving through the pass away from the Frozen Chosin. Many icy miles and more bitter fighting lay ahead before the marines reached the port, but the stand at Toktong Pass had opened the way.

In 5 days, Fox Company had killed 1,000 of the enemy. Only 82 of the 220 marines were able to walk off that hill. In 2 weeks, the first marine division moved over icy roads and ridges through eight Chinese divisions. The Americans brought out all their wounded, their dead, and the equipment. On the way, they killed 25,000 of the enemy. The marines lost 730 of their numbers.

Such is the legacy of GEN Raymond Davis and those brave marines. General Davis received the Medal of Honor, a symbol of unusual human courage above and beyond the call of duty for his valiant efforts during the war. Over 1 million Americans served in Korea, and 131 of those were named recipients of the Medal of Honor. After the general's passing, only 36 of them live to wear it today. That medal is a tribute to perhaps the only thing truly noble in the horror of war.

Although General Davis earned this Nation's highest military honor for valor while on active duty, his service to the country was far from over. Over the last 30 years, in a civilian capacity, General Davis has continued to lead in ways that few other Americans could match. Since his retirement, General Davis became a pillar of the community, working diligently on behalf of all of our Nation's veterans.

Beginning in 1987, first as vice chairman and then later as chairman, General Davis was the one who directed the efforts of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Advisory Board, and it was his determination and personal initiative that led to the approval of the Korean War Veterans Memorial design and its construction and finally its dedication in July of 1995.

The Nation's citizens, and in particular all Korean war veterans and marines and their families, are indebted to Raymond G. Davis for his inspired leadership and service. In war and in peace, as an active duty marine and as a private citizen, GEN Raymond Davis' outstanding courage, unswerving devotion to duty, inspiring leadership, and sound judgment have represented the highest traditions of military service and citizenship. This man was a true American hero.