



# In Honor of Gen Raymond G. Davis, Sr., USMC(Ret)

by Gen Michael W. Hagee

*Gen Davis is remembered not only as a warrior but also as a selfless, caring leader and citizen.*

**O**n 3 September the Marine Corps lost a true hero. It has been over 30 years since he retired from our ranks. Most Marines on active duty know him only from the history books. When we read his biography, we are struck by his heroism and sacrifice. As a battalion commander on Peleliu he was wounded and was awarded the Navy Cross. In Korea, again he led a battalion and was awarded the Medal of Honor. His final field command was the 3d Marine Division along the demilitarized zone in Vietnam from 1968-69. During his last tour on active duty he served as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps. Over the span of his career he was awarded the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal twice, the Silver Star twice, the Legion of Merit twice, the Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. Units he was in earned the Presidential Unit Citation five times and the Navy Unit Citation. But, these do not give us the full image of this man and what he meant to the Marine Corps and the Nation.

Gen Davis was the epitome of selfless service and inspired leadership. Fighting in three wars, he led from the front. Although wounded in the first hour of the Peleliu landing, he refused evacuation to remain with his men. On one occasion, when heavy Marine casualties and the enemy's pointblank cannon fire had enabled the Japanese to break through, he personally rallied and led his men in fighting to reestablish defensive positions.

As the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines during the Chosin Reservoir campaign, Gen Davis:

... spearheaded his unit in a fierce attack up the steep, ice-covered slopes in the face of withering fire and, personally leading the assault groups in a hand-to-hand encounter, drove the hostile troops from their positions.

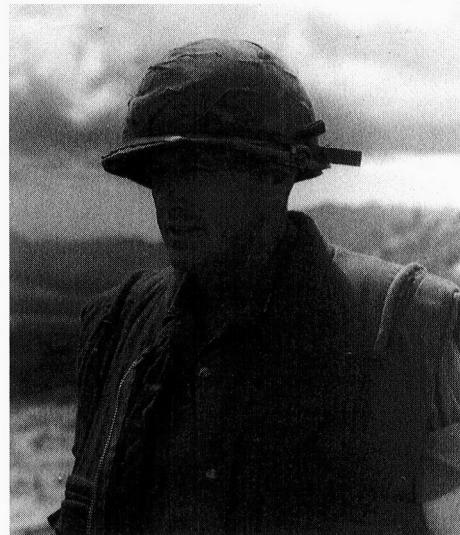
Modestly, as was his character, Gen Davis attributed the success of his battalion, as they

trekked through deep mountain snow in temperatures near 30 degrees below zero to relieve a besieged company holding the critical pass, to Marines knowing that "they were going to rescue other Marines."

As Commanding General, 3d Marine Division in Vietnam, he instituted a "mobile" operations mentality into the division, thereby increasing the division's effectiveness tremendously. In his words:

The way to get it done, was to get out of those fixed positions and get mobility, to go and destroy the enemy on our terms—not sit there and absorb the shot and shell and frequent penetrations that he was able to mount.

Off the battlefield he was an instructor at Marine Corps schools and would eventually serve as the director of the Education Center—preparing Marines to lead as he did. Right before the Korean War—a war that would see the Reserves making up nearly 50 percent of the Marine units in action by June of 1951—he was the inspector-instructor of a Reserve infantry battalion. He served in a number of intelligence billets, con-

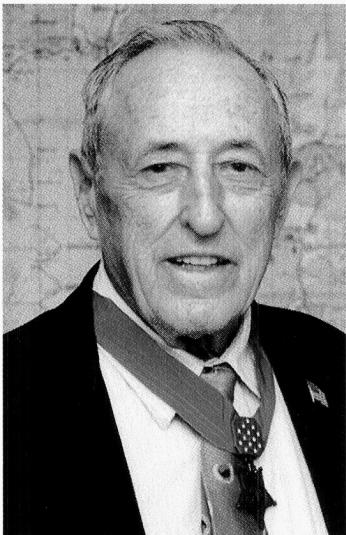




tributing greatly to the expertise in this field both in the Marine Corps and in the joint forces. His final active duty assignment was as the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Upon his retirement and despite every reason and earned justification to enjoy the quiet satisfactions of a legendary warrior, Gen Davis instead continued to lead and to champion the ideals and causes he held sacred. He donated the proceeds from his book, *The Story of Ray Davis*, to many local Marine Corps activities and organizations. He worked tirelessly on Korean War veterans' issues. He was the driving force in the Korean War Veterans Memorial including its design, symbolisms, authorization, construction, and funding.

For the 50th anniversary of the Korean War, he regularly traveled across the country and overseas to speak about the price of freedom—with little private time for himself. For over five decades, he always said that he want-



ed to go back to Chosin and visit the land where his men fought so valiantly and gave so much. He said that he wanted to live long enough to be able to do that, to say goodbye to the men he lost. North Korea allowed him to visit Chosin only within this last year. Finally, he was able to walk the fields and look one last time at a land where in 1950 his Marines gave everything they possibly could in a terribly inhospitable place.



Throughout his life he made exceptional contributions to both our Corps and the United States. We have lost a true warrior, a citizen, and a patriot. But the legacy of his achievements, the examples of his valor, and above all his selflessness have created a monument more lasting than any in stone. He was the epitome of a Marine, on and off the battlefield. We mourn with his family.



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