

IN RECOGNITION OF LIEUTENANT
COLONEL KEVIN S. COCHIE

HON. DUNCAN HUNTER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2014

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service of Lieutenant Colonel Kevin S. Cochie, a true gentleman, a Soldier's Soldier, and friend. Lieutenant Colonel Cochie retires from the US Army on June 31st after serving the US Army in uniform for over 20 years. A veteran of Afghanistan and Iraq, he faithfully served the Special Operations community and the Secretary of the Army with distinction.

Kevin served as a Special Operations helicopter pilot in the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, the Night Stalkers. His operational experience served as the catalyst for a successful acquisition career. Because of his efforts, highly advanced and specially modified helicopters were made even better, resulting in life saving survivability improvements and mission essential improvements that directly contributed to the removal of multiple high value enemy targets from the battlefield.

LTC Cochie's career culminated with an assignment serving the Secretary of the Army as a Legislative Liaison, advocating for Army Aviation. He quickly rose to the status of "Master Jedi Knight" among all Defense Department legislative liaisons. His ability to socialize to Congress program details and urgent requirements was nothing short of impressive. For years to come, Kevin's example of how to engage Congress will serve as a benchmark for other legislative liaisons to follow.

In conclusion, God bless Kevin, his wife Sara, and daughter Madison for their service to the Army, the Defense Department, and our great Nation.

HONORING ROBERT HARBULA

HON. MICHAEL F. DOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 3, 2014

Mr. DOYLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents who is truly an American hero.

Mr. Robert Harbula of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, fought bravely as a U.S. Marine in the Korean War—including the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. Private First Class Harbula served in G Company of the Third Battalion of the First Marine Regiment, part of the First Marine Division, in the Korean War. His unit was referred to initially as "George Company" and then, later, after Chosin Reservoir, as "Bloody George."

Private First Class Bob Harbula was assigned to the Marine unit guarding Camp David, the Presidential retreat, when he served as an usher for the Washington, DC, premiere of "Sands of Iwo Jima" in January of 1950. After seeing the movie, he decided that he ought to get a more dangerous posting, so he volunteered for a marine raider unit several months later. Soon thereafter, he ended up in Camp Pendleton as part of the First Marine Division—and in August 1950, he found him-

self on a troopship headed for Japan with the First Marines as one of the early reinforcements for the hard-pressed UN forces in Korea. Mr. Harbula was part of the machine gun squad attached to G Company's First Platoon.

Korea had been occupied for 35 years by Japan until the end of World War II, at which point it was partitioned at the 38th Parallel. South Korea was occupied and protected by US forces. North Korea was occupied by the Soviet Union. UN plans to hold elections and unify the country were rejected by the Soviets, and a communist dictatorship was established in the north.

On June 25th, North Korean troops crossed the boundary separating North and South Korea, taking the ill-prepared South Korean Army by surprise and overwhelming it. Three days later, the North Korean army occupied Seoul, the South Korean capital. US troops from the Eighth Army based in Japan rushed to aid the South Koreans. They were thrown into battle piecemeal in a desperate effort to gain time for more reinforcements to arrive. South Korean troops and the US 24th Infantry Division fought the North Korean troops relentlessly, inflicting substantial casualties, but they were repeatedly defeated by superior numbers and forced to retreat. By August, US and South Korean forces had been pushed back to a fragile perimeter around the port city of Pusan in the southwest corner of the Korean peninsula. Despite repeated North Korean attacks, the Pusan Perimeter held and bled the North Koreans dry.

General Douglas MacArthur, commander of US forces in the region, decided to launch a major amphibious landing deep in the North Korean army's rear at the port city of Inchon on Korea's west coast. Mr. Harbula's unit was in the first wave of the assault craft, which landed under heavy fire on September 15th. From that moment on, George Company was in nearly constant combat as US forces captured Inchon and fought their way into Seoul, where the fighting often deteriorated into vicious house-to-house combat. On the night of September 25th, George Company—heavily outnumbered—stopped a major North Korean counterattack by tanks, self-propelled artillery, and hundreds of men along Seoul's Ma Po Boulevard. Mr. Harbula and his section did what they could, firing a machine gun non-stop at the lead tank. With artillery support, George Company withstood and repelled the attack—but at a terrible cost.

The Inchon landing and the liberation of Seoul caused the weakened and over-extended North Korean forces in the south to collapse and beat a panicked retreat northward. The US Eighth Army began pressing northward in aggressive pursuit along Korea's west coast. The X Corps, which included the First Marine Division, was pulled out of the line and loaded onto amphibious transport ships. They sailed around the Korean Peninsula and disembarked at the end of October in the port of Wonsan on North Korea's southeastern coast, which had already been secured by South Korean units.

George Company's first assignment after landing at Wonsan was holding a village called Majon-ni several miles inland at the junction of roads leading to Seoul, Wonsan, and Pyongyang. On November 2nd, PFC Harbula's machine gun squad was helping to escort a re-supply convoy through a treach-

erous mountain gorge when it was ambushed. Bob Harbula provided cover, firing a .30 caliber machine gun from the hip, while the surviving trucks were carefully turned around on the one-lane, cliff-edged road and driven out of the ambush to Wonsan, where they reported to headquarters and requested a rescue mission for the remaining survivors.

George Company garrisoned Majon-ni for several weeks after the ambush. PFC Harbula took command of his 10-man machine gun squad after the sergeant who had been in charge was seriously wounded in the ambush. On November 14th, George Company moved north to the Hungnam-Chigiyong region. That same day, a cold front moved into the region from Siberia, sending temperatures as low as -35 degrees each night. Such brutal weather would continue for the next two weeks, making weapons and equipment inoperable and causing thousands of injuries and deaths from frostbite and exposure over the course of the battle.

The rugged Taebaek Mountains that ran up the middle of the Korean peninsula divided the Eighth Army from X Corps as each force pushed north. On November 24th, MacArthur ordered the "Home by Christmas" offensive to conquer all of North Korea up to the Yalu River, which formed the boundary between North Korea and China. The Eighth Army was to push north, while the First Marine Division was to push west from the Chosin Reservoir, cut off a North Korean major supply line, and link up with the Eighth Army.

Unbeknownst to General MacArthur and his advisors, hundreds of thousands of Chinese troops had begun infiltrating into North Korea in mid-October. The General and his staff thought that there were only a few small Chinese units fighting in North Korea. In fact, Chinese troops were massing for attacks in both the east and west. In the east, the 9th Army Group of the Chinese "People's Volunteer Army" had encircled most of the Chosin Reservoir, a large man-made lake north of Wonsan and 65 miles northwest of the port city of Hungnam.

On November 25th, nearly two hundred thousand Chinese troops launched a surprise attack on the Eighth Army, defeating it resoundingly in the Battle of the Ch'ongchion River and sending it retreating southward in what came to be called "the Big Bug-out."

On November 27th, however, the First Marine Division's orders were still to attack northwestward. Most of the Division's combat troops, primarily thousands of Marines from the First Marine Division's 5th and 7th Regiments, were positioned around the village of Yudam-ni west of the reservoir. An understrength regimental combat team from the 7th Infantry Division held territory on the east side of the reservoir up through the village of Hudong-ni to Sinhung-ni. A winding narrow road led through the mountainous terrain from each village to the bottom of the lake, where they met in the village of Hagaru-ri, which was lightly defended by a hodgepodge of units from the First Marine Division, including a number of companies from George Company's First Marine Regiment. Essential supplies had been stockpiled at Hagaru-ri, and engineers were desperately trying to build a small airstrip when they weren't fighting off enemy attacks.

It was 14 miles of treacherous terrain from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ni. To the east of the reservoir, it was a similar distance from Sinhung-