

Purpose: Provide remarks at a Signaller First Class Douglas Munro Memorial Ceremony on the 75th Anniversary of his passing.

Strategic Intent: Bolster public support and understanding of the Coast Guard as an Armed Force.

Media: Open. Local interest expected.

Duration: 10-15 minutes

OPENING

[Extemporaneous Opening]

Signaller First Class Douglas Munro exemplifies what it means to be a Coast Guardsman.

I am honored to be here today as we celebrate the life and legacy of this American hero, and pay tribute to his ultimate sacrifice.

Munro was just 22 years old when he gave his life in service to his nation. Two weeks shy of his 23rd birthday, in fact.

He was 22 when he volunteered to evacuate that expedition of trapped Marines – he didn't just volunteer, he ran at full speed to save those men. He was 22 when he positioned his boat to provide cover and get that last group of the 500 Marines off the beach. He was 22 when he gave his life so that others could live.

At 22, Douglas Munro embraced the principles that have guided me throughout my career.

Douglas Munro was Service to Nation. He was Commitment to Excellence. He was Duty to People.

As a Service, we have honored his legacy - his namesake - in ways that pay tribute to the principles he embodied...

There is the Coast Guard Cutter MUNRO – our newest National Security Cutter.

The Munro Building, which houses Coast Guard Headquarters in Washington, DC.

And there is Munro Barracks in Cape May, New Jersey where every enlisted recruit resides. And Munro Hall at the Coast Guard Academy where every officer is born.

SERVICE TO NATION / NSC

I'll start with the Coast Guard Cutter MUNRO – our newest National Security Cutter.

Ours is a world of 21st century threats and the National Security Cutter is a 21st century platform. From the keel up – the MUNRO was designed to meet the threats of today. And the men and women who operate these platforms get at the heart of what “Service to Nation” is all about. They are doing all it takes to keep our Nation secure.

Douglas Munro selflessly executed every mission he was assigned those 75 years ago. He ran toward danger and ultimately sacrificed himself so that others could live – this is the ultimate act of Service to Nation. There is no better namesake for this newest cutter than Munro.

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE / HQ

The building that houses our Coast Guard Headquarters also bears the name Munro.

The primary purpose for our Headquarters is to support the mission – to help our men and women in the field execute operations to the best of their ability. To get them the tools they need to keep our country, and its citizens, safe and secure.

The men and women who occupy the Munro Building in Washington D.C. must embody a Commitment to Excellence because they are supporting the men and women who are on the front lines.

It is easy to see this is a principal Douglas Munro lived by.

DUTY TO PEOPLE / CAPE MAY & ACADEMY

Finally, the barracks at Cape May is named after Munro. And there is Munro Hall at the Coast Guard Academy as well.

These locations are the epicenter of our Coast Guard workforce – the primary training centers for both our officers and enlisted and Munro is front and center - he is a model for recruit, cadet, enlisted and officer alike.

This is where the foundation for Duty to People is set – a duty to those we serve and those we serve next to.

Douglas Munro’s story is one of the first we teach to our new recruits, as he is the ultimate forebearer of our service’s core values and an enduring symbol of Duty to People.

In his letter to Douglas Munro’s parents, informing them of their loss, Munro’s Commanding Officer wrote that, without exception, those under his charge had praise for Munro. Nearly all his men returned unscathed, and the desperate Marines rescued.

His Master Sergeant wrote that Douglas was “kind, courteous, thoughtful, and, above all, courageous,” the “kind of American that made [that] war worth fighting.”

CLOSING

Douglas Munro was Service to Nation, Commitment to Excellence, Duty to People.

His best friend and shipmate, Ray Evans, was there on that fateful day. They were fast friends right from the day they

completed their oath of enlistment together here in Washington - the Gold Dust Twins. They were together through it all. Ray Evans told us of Munro's final words, "did they get off."

When Ray was interviewed long after he retired from 23 years of proud service, he said he hoped there would always be a 'Munro' in the Coast Guard fleet."

I hold the same sentiment.

The Munro cutter, the HQ building, and barracks and hall at our training centers – they are all reminders – every day – of their namesake. Reminders of all that our Service is and all that we strive to be.

Today we honor Douglas Munro - the man and the legacy that lives time immemorial.

Thank you all. God Bless. And *Semper Paratus!*