

**MCPOCG Michael P. Leavitt's Remarks
At the Ceremony honoring
Signalman First Class Douglas Munro**

*Coast Guard Headquarters
Thursday, September 27th, 2012*

Thank you Admiral Thomas.

And thank you all for being here this morning.

It is such an honor to be here today to share with you the legacy of our Medal of Honor recipient, Signalman First Class Douglas Munro, who lost his life trying to protect those in peril 70 years ago.

The Commandant sends his deep regrets that he cannot be here today. As most of you know, he is passionate about the history of our service and the great debt we owe to those who came and served before us. He speaks often about that "long blue line" of Coast Guardsmen; their accomplishment, their commitment, and their sacrifice. He believes it is more than simply looking back in our wake. It is looking at the course ahead and the obligation set before us. It is our legacy – and a reminder of the responsibility we bear to keep faith with those who came before us.

On September 27th 1942, during World War II, Douglas Munro was a coxswain on a landing craft at Point Cruz on the Island of Guadalcanal, in the South Pacific. They had just off loaded a group of Marines onto the beach, but shortly after being off loaded, the Marines came under overwhelming enemy fire and resistance. The landing party was told to extract the marines and without a second thought, Douglas Munro who was the officer in charge of a group of Higgins boats directed his crews to return to the beach and evacuate the Marines.

Douglas Munro led five Higgins boats to land and then in order to protect the five heavily loaded boats, Douglas Munro drew enemy fire by skillfully placing his boat as cover between the beachhead and the enemy.

That was when he was fatally wounded but he remained conscious long enough to ask "did they get off" and he passed away knowing that he successfully carried out his final mission. In a few minutes, we will read the award citation, which covers the heroic acts that he and his crews performed that day.

Later today, at the Laurel Hill Memorial Park in Cle-Elum, Washington, family, friends, Marines, veterans from all around the country, and Coast Guardsmen will

gather around Douglas Munro's gravesite for remembrance of his selfless service to our Nation.

I have had the honor of attending this remembrance ceremony. I will never forget the compassion, comradeship, love, and understanding exhibited as they reflect upon Douglas Munro, and his family's sacrifice. They will share stories. And when you listen to these stories, particularly from those who served with Douglas Munro, among other things you will hear them talk about his strong work ethics, profound professionalism, leadership and character.

Signalman First Class Douglas Munro was proficient in craft, leadership, and he led with disciplined initiative during a very difficult and challenging time in our history. He exemplified our core values of "Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty".

His courage, commitment, and selfless service is the legacy that HE will always stand for. It's a legacy that helps define our history and our heritage.... It's a legacy that will help us define who we are as Coast Guardsmen and it's a legacy that defines the United States Coast Guard THEN, NOW, AND WELL INTO THE FUTURE.

As I travel around the World I see Douglas Munro's legacy in all the great things our men and women are doing in the United States Coast Guard and it makes me proud to be a Coast Guardsman.

God bless Douglas Munro and his family for their sacrifice and God Bless the United States Coast Guard.

SEMPER PARATUS