



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

SM1c Douglas A. Munro, USCG

1919-1942

Official U.S. Coast Guard Biography:

Douglas A. Munro, a signalman first class of the United States Coast Guard, died heroically on Guadalcanal on 27 September 1942. Having volunteered to evacuate a detachment of Marines who were facing annihilation by an unanticipated large enemy force, he succeeded in safely extricating them and in doing so was mortally wounded.



Douglas Albert Munro was born in Vancouver, Canada, of American parents, on 11 October 1919, but spent his entire life previous to his enlistment in South Cle Elum, Washington. His parents were Mr. and Mrs. James Munro of South Cle Elum. Douglas Munro was educated at the South Cle Elum Grade School and graduated from the Cle Elum High School in 1937. He attended the Central Washington College of Education for a year and left to enlist in the United States Coast Guard in 1939. He had an outstanding record as an enlisted man and was promoted rapidly through the various ratings to a signalman, first class.

In the engagement in which he gave his life, Munro had already played an important part, having been in charge of the original detachment of ten boats that had landed the Marines at the scene. Having successfully landed them, Munro led his small boat force to a previously assigned rally position. Almost immediately upon his return, he was advised by the officer-in-charge that conditions at the insertion point were not as expected. The Marines were under attack from a larger Japanese force and needed to be extracted immediately. Munro volunteered to lead the boats back to beach for the evacuation. Commanding the rescue expedition, he brought the boats in-shore under heavy enemy fire and proceeded to evacuate the Marines still on the beach. Though the majority of the Marines had been loaded into the boats, the last remaining elements of the rear guard were having difficulty embarking. Assessing the situation, Munro maneuvered himself and his boats into a position to cover the last groups of men as they headed to the boats. In doing so, he exposed himself to greater enemy fire and suffered his fatal wound. At the time it was reported that he had remained conscious long enough to utter his final words: "Did they get off"?

For his heroic and selfless actions in the completion of this rescue mission Munro was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He was also posthumously awarded the Purple



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Heart Medal. His other decorations included the American Defense Service Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Area Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Other Munro Material:

- **Official Service Record**
 - **Medal of Honor Citation**
 - **Official U.S. Navy Press Release Regarding Munro's Death in Combat**
 - **Map of the Battle at Matanikau Where Munro was Killed in Action**
 - **Other Official Documents & Letters**
 - **Photographs**
 - **Munro's Friend & Shipmate Raymond Evans' Oral History**
 - ***The Gold Dust Twins*, an article written by Munro's Friend & Shipmate Raymond Evans**
 - **Official Biography of Douglas Munro's Mother, SPAR Edith Munro, USCGR**
 - **Narrative: *Douglas Munro At Guadalcanal***
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