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Douglas Munro, USCG

Letter from his commanding officer to his parents after Munro's death in action:

Lieutenant Commander D. H. Dexter, USCG

The following is a transcribed copy of LCDR Dexter's letter to the parents of Douglas Munro written soon after their son was killed in action with the enemy at Guadalcanal on 27 September 1942. LCDR Dexter was Munro's commanding officer at the time of Munro's death.

"Guadalcanal, BSI

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Munro:

Believe me when I say sincerely that this is a very sad letter for me to write advising you of the death of your son Douglas, but as Commanding Officer of the unit to which he was attached at the time of his death, I have pride in telling you that he covered himself with honor and I hope Glory, and fulfilled the mission so satisfactorily that almost all of the men he had under his charge returned to their unit and, without exception, all had praise for your son's execution of his duties.

It was a year ago last June that Douglas and Raymond Evans came to me and asked if they could be transferred to Captain Ashe's staff. I succeeded in getting them and since that day have felt that Douglas was one of my boys, for both Douglas and Ray Evans have been with me and his loss has left a very decided space which I feel will never be filled so far as I am concerned.

On Sunday the 27th of September an expedition was sent into an area where trouble was to be expected. Douglas was in charge of the ten boats which took the men down. In the latter part of the afternoon, the situation had not developed as had been anticipated and in order to save the expedition it became necessary to send the boats back to evacuate the expedition. Volunteers were called for and, true to the highest traditions of the Coast Guard and also to traditions with which you imbued your son, he was among the first to volunteer and was put in charge of the detail.



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The evacuation was as successful as could be hoped for under fire. But as always happens, the last men to leave the beach are the hardest pressed because they have been acting as the covering agents for the withdrawal of the other men, and your son, knowing this, so placed himself and his boats so that he could act as the covering agent for the last men, and by his action and successful maneuvers brought back a far greater number of men than had been even hoped for. He received his wound just as the last men were getting in the boats and clearing the beach. Upon regaining consciousness his only question was 'Did they get off?' and so died with a smile on his face and the full knowledge that he had successfully accomplished a dangerous mission.

I am sending this to you direct for I feel that you should have the privilege of knowing the facts, but request that you keep it confidential until such time as the official notification is received. I regret having to make this request but feel that it is for the good of all concerned. I consider this is a personal letter and not an official report.

In the year and a half that I have known Douglas, I have grown to admire him and through him, you. He was the true type of American manhood that is going to win this war and I hereby promise that I will make all efforts to personally call on you whenever it is my privilege to be near Cle Elum and to pay homage to you both as parents of Douglas.

Sincerely and respectfully,

(Sgd) D. H. Dexter

Lt. Comdr., U.S. Coast Guard