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## **Carmody-Munro Hall**

Central Washington University

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## What's in a Name? Carmody-Munro Hall

CWU's Carmody-Munro Hall is named in honor two of the university's most heroic figures, Signalman First Class Douglas Albert Munro, the only member of the Coast Guard to ever earn the prestigious Medal of Honor, and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Cortland Carmody, who served as a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Force in France.

Munro was born to U.S. parents in 1919 in Vancouver, British Columbia, but grew up in South Cle Elum and attended the Central Washington College of Education (now known as CWU) before enlisting in 1939.

Carmody was born in 1921 in Nebraska but moved to Ellensburg when he was 13. After graduating from Ellensburg High School, he attended Central Washington College of Education (now known as CWU) before enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Force.

On September 27, 1942, Munro was in charge of a group of transport boats landing Marines during the U.S. invasion of Guadalcanal. In the course of their landing, the Marines encountered heavy fire from entrenched Japanese soldiers, who apparently were much greater in number than had been anticipated.

The Marines called for an emergency evacuation and Munro volunteered to lead five boats back to the shore to collect the soldiers. During the evacuation, Munro used his own boat to draw enemy fire and to protect the other boats.

"He valiantly placed his craft, with its two small guns, as a shield between the beachhead and the Japanese," noted the citation honoring his actions. "When the perilous task of evacuation was nearly completed, Munro was killed by enemy fire, but his crew, two of whom were wounded, carried on until the last boat had loaded and cleared the beach."

His last words, according to survivors, were, "Did they get off?"

Following the event, Munro was honored with the Medal of Honor, which was awarded to his mother, Edith, by President Franklin Roosevelt in a White House ceremony in May 1943. Later, a Navy destroyer and a Coast Guard cutter were named after him. A new national security cutter named for him was commissioned in April 2017.

Carmody's story is equally tragic. After completing pilot training, he was assigned to the 367<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group in France. On August 6, 1944, Carmody was flying in a P-38J Lightning airplane along with others in his squadron for a fighter sweep over Nonancourt, France.

Another member of the squadron, however, had taken off late and was attempting to catch up to the formation. As he closed on the group, he attempted to move into his predetermined

position. Apparently not aware of the closing aircraft, Carmody moved into the same position and the two airplanes collided, killing both pilots.

In 1946, Central remodeled several airport buildings to accommodate the influx of male students enrolling at the university under the GI Bill and named them after several students who had perished in World War II, including Munro and Carmody.

In 1967, the university built more permanent residence halls at the north end of campus. One of those structures was named Carmody-Munro Hall to honor both men.