

## **CNO Statement on Passing of RADM Eugene Fluckey (Ret.)**

Every man and woman serving our Navy today joins me in mourning the death of retired Rear Adm. Eugene Fluckey, recipient of the Medal of Honor and a true naval hero. We extend humbly to his family our thoughts, prayers and deepest sympathies in this, their time of great grief and sorrow.

One of the most daring and successful submarine skippers of World War II -- he was credited with sinking 29.3 enemy ships totaling more than 146,000 tons -- Eugene Fluckey helped lead and inspire our Navy to victory. He inspires us still today. We will miss him sorely.

In addition to the Medal of Honor, they pinned upon his chest four Navy Crosses, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit and a host of other unit and campaign awards. He was known for his audacity and courage, on more than one occasion running his boat in close to shore to attack enemy shipping and bases. He even helped pioneer the idea of submarine support to special operations. In the summer of 1945, he launched a group of his own commandos ashore to set demolition charges on a coastal railway line, destroying a 16-car train. It was the sole landing by U.S. military forces on the Japanese Home Islands during the war.

Admiral Fluckey was also a loyal and devoted leader, for whom his people had the greatest respect and in whom they entrusted their lives and their honor. He knew all too well how much they depended on his steady hand, and how much he, in turn, depended on them.

In his final war patrol report as Commanding Officer of USS BARB, he had this to say about his crew: "What wordy praise can one give such men as these; men who ... follow unhesitatingly when in the vicinity of minefields so long as there is the possibility of targets ... Men who flinch not with the fathometer ticking off two fathoms beneath the keel ... Men who will fight to the last bullet and then start throwing the empty shell cases. These are submariners."

As we mourn his passing, so too should we pause and reflect on the contributions of this great man to our Navy and to our nation ... and of the thousands of lives he guided, the careers he mentored, the difference he made simply by virtue of his leadership. We ought never forget his own words of wisdom: "Put more into life than you expect to get out of it. Drive yourself and lead others. Make others feel good about themselves. They will outperform your expectations, and you will never lack for friends."

Rear Adm. Fluckey certainly never lacked for friends. And on behalf of those of us -- his friends and shipmates -- still serving in the Navy, I wish for his soul fair winds and following seas and for his family and loved ones our deepest respect and sympathies.