



## News Release

### **Port Security Official Receives Bronze Star Medal Ruggiero honored for bravery during deployment in Afghanistan**

January 23, 2012

U.S. Navy Commander Steve Ruggiero, the Port of Long Beach's Assistant Director of Security, was awarded the Bronze Star Medal on Monday for his meritorious service in Afghanistan.

U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Michael Shatynski presented Ruggiero with the medal during a meeting of the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners. Ruggiero, a Navy reservist, returned home in December from an eight-month deployment to Afghanistan.



Board of Harbor Commissioners President Susan E. Anderson Wise called Ruggiero a "true American hero," and Port Executive Director J. Christopher Lytle said "all of us who work with you at the Port are privileged to be here today to witness this well-deserved honor."

The Bronze Star is a U.S. Armed Forces individual military decoration and the country's fourth-highest award for bravery, heroism or meritorious service. Ruggiero distinguished himself through exceptionally meritorious service while deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as the Afghanistan Border Military Coordinator with the Border Management Task Force, United States Forces Afghanistan, from March 27 to October 21, 2011.

During a September 2011 Taliban attack on the U.S. Embassy, Ruggiero twice moved civilians to safety under fire, despite his own injuries, military officials said. He led dozens of missions on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border at significant personal risk. In addition, his exceptional problem solving, training and program management skills saved the U.S. government millions of dollars, while greatly improving border security.

Ruggiero also received the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ISAF Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the Department of State Meritorious Service Award, during a ceremony attended by various officials from elected offices, law enforcement and the military.

Ruggiero's wife and two young daughters also attended the ceremony.

"You served your country as much as I have," Ruggiero told his family. "It was you

who assured me that what I did was important."

Then Ruggiero and Wise presented his daughters with certificates and medals from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who thanked the girls "for sharing your father."

To view webcast of Monday's Board of Harbor Commissioners meeting, [click here](#).

A Boston native, Ruggiero is a highly commended U.S. Navy officer with extensive training in maritime security. He oversees day-to-day security operations at the Port and manages coordination with the various agencies charged with security at the port complex, including the U.S. Coast Guard, Customs and Border Protection, Long Beach Police and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, among others. He is a resident of Orange County.

The Port of Long Beach is one of the world's premier seaports, a primary gateway for trans-Pacific trade and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety and environmental stewardship. With 140 shipping lines connecting Long Beach to 217 seaports worldwide, the Port handles trade valued at more than \$155 billion each year and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs in Southern California.

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