



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE AIR MEDAL**

TO

**THOMAS J. ISLEY
AVIATION STRUCTURAL MECHANIC SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer ISLEY is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the afternoon of 15 August 1978 while serving as SAR aircrewman and hoist operator of Coast Guard HH-52A 1391 helicopter engaged in the perilous rescue of a critically injured survivor of a small private plane which crashed near Shelter Cove, California. The terrain surrounding the crash site was impossible to reach by vehicle, due to thick underbrush and dense forest, which necessitated a hoist operation. After several attempts to lower the hoist hook to the ground rescue party were unsuccessful because of trees on the mountain slope, and with darkness approaching and weather deteriorating, it was decided to try to lower the helicopter into the trees to enable the rescue party to reach the hook. Petty Officer ISLEY provided precise advisories to the pilot as the helicopter was lowered into the trees, using the rotor wash to push away the tops and branches of the adjacent trees. With the hoist hook lowered to its limit, the ground party was finally able to connect the rescue basket and Petty Officer ISLEY hoisted the man to the helicopter. Again providing advisories to the pilot, Petty Officer ISLEY assisted in raising the helicopter above the trees and attended to the survivor until the man was transferred to an awaiting ambulance at Shelter Cove. Petty Officer ISLEY's expert aeronautical skill, perseverance and timely actions contributed to saving the man's life. His courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.