



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

TO

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT LLOYD ASHWORTH, JR. UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Lieutenant Commander ASHWORTH cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on 9 August 1972 as aircraft commander of Coast Guard H-3F 1483 helicopter engaged in the perilous evacuation of a crewman suffering from tetanus aboard the Japanese fishing vessel RYUYO MARU 2 in the fog-shrouded waters of the Bering Sea in Alaska. Lieutenant Commander ASHWORTH and his crew were dispatched from Kodiak Air Station to rendezvous with the vessel 783 miles from Kodiak and evacuate the patient to St. Paul Island. After fuel stops at Cold Bay and St. Paul Island, where a corpsman enplaned, the helicopter departed in zero-zero weather conditions and climbed to visual conditions on top of the fog bank to proceed to a rendezvous point 122 miles northeast of St. Paul. After experiencing stronger than forecast winds, errors in navigational information, lack of communications with the vessel, and no visual contact with the surface, Lieutenant Commander ASHWORTH computed a new rendezvous point. Locating the vessel by radar, he initiated an instrument approach to gain visual contact and expertly conducted a precision approach from 2500 feet to a coupled 50-foot hover utilizing estimated wind conditions, maintaining a stable hover off the bow of the vessel while the patient was hoisted aboard. Lieutenant Commander ASHWORTH departed the area, again climbing to visual conditions for the return flight to St. Paul Island where he accomplished a difficult instrument approach in near zero-zero weather conditions. While transiting 45 to 30-foot hills near the end of the runway he encountered a flock of sea gulls. By taking immediate evasive action, he quickly overcame this potentially hazardous situation, made a safe landing and transferred the patient to a Coast Guard transport aircraft for delivery to medical facilities. Lieutenant Commander ASHWORTH demonstrated outstanding airmanship and dauntless valor throughout this most demanding mission. His remarkable skills, courage, faultless judgment and unwavering devotion to duty reflect the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.