



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

TO

SAMUEL R. OVERMAN AVIATION STRUCTURAL MECHANIC THIRD CLASS UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Petty Officer OVERMAN is cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on 4 October 1980. During this period he was serving as hoist operator and aircrewman of Coast Guard HH-3F 1480 engaged in the rescue of personnel from the M/V PRINSENDAM which was afire and disabled in the Gulf of Alaska 160 miles northwest of Sitka. Dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station Sitka, the helicopter, with extra firefighting equipment on board, proceeded to the scene despite darkness, rain showers, and strong, turbulent winds. Reaching the burning ship Petty Officer OVERMAN skillfully directed the pilot to a position over the small stern area of the heavily pitching and rolling PRINSENDAM and carefully lowered the desperately need firefighting equipment and Air Station Damage Control Officer to the vessel. After the helicopter was refueled in Yakutat, it returned to the scene. The T/V WILLIAMSBURGH had arrived and was attempting to retrieve the survivors. Due to the tanker's high sides and widely scattered lifeboats, the retrieval of survivors was extremely difficult. The pilot then directed Petty Officer OVERMAN to prepare to hoist the survivors from the lifeboats to WILLIAMSBURGH. Despite 15 to 20 foot seas, salt spray and the lack of effective mobility of the elderly survivors, Petty Officer OVERMAN safely hoisted 56 persons without injury and the victims were transferred to WILLIAMSBURGH. Petty Officer OVERMAN's innovative actions, expert aeronautical skill and valor throughout this mission aided in the successful rescue of 56 persons. His courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.