



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL

TO

LIEUTENANT ANDRES V. DELGADO UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Lieutenant DELGADO is cited for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight on the morning of 24 August 2000 while serving as co-pilot aboard Coast Guard HH-60J helicopter CG6036. The aircrew was engaged in the perilous search for a downed aircraft with four persons aboard in the steep mountainous terrain of the Alaskan Peninsula. Lieutenant Delgado flew CG6036 over 125 miles overcoming turbulent headwinds, near zero visibility, freezing rain and snow showers enroute the search area. After 45 minutes of searching, deteriorating conditions forced CG6036 to land and wait for the weather to improve. After a 2-hour delay, the weather improved enough allowing CG6036 to resume searching. Within minutes, Lieutenant DELGADO located the plane crashed at the 2,700-foot level on a mountainside. During the hoist of the rescue swimmer to crash site, CG6036 experienced unexpected white out conditions just prior to the swimmer making ground contact. With no visual references, Lieutenant DELGADO had only his instruments to maintain a steady hover as the flight mechanic placed the swimmer on the cliff face despite hoisting in the blind". To minimize the effects of the rotor wash on the fuselage, which was precariously clinging to the cliff face, Lieutenant DELGADO repositioned to a staging area 700 feet below the crash site. After being notified two persons had survived, Lieutenant DELGADO immediately gathered the swimmer's first aid equipment and rescue litter and began crawling 700 feet up the near vertical face on all fours packing 70 pounds of equipment over loose shale, snow, and ice. Overcoming severe leg cramps and dehydration, Lieutenant DELGADO pressed on to the crash scene where he assisted in the loading and recovery of the patient. Once airborne, Lieutenant DELGADO navigated CG6036 125 miles over the Alaskan Peninsula to King Salmon where the patient underwent immediate life saving surgery. Lieutenant DELGADO's actions, aeronautical skill, and valor were instrumental in saving this woman's life. His courage, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.