



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

TO

**ROBERT J. HASSINGER
AVIATION MACHINIST'S MATE SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer HASSINGER is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while serving as flight mechanic and hoist operator aboard Coast Guard HH-3F helicopter 1480 on the night of 20 September 1988. On that night, the aircrew was engaged in the rescue of three people from a sailing vessel which was in danger of foundering in gale force winds and 25-foot seas, 80 nautical miles northwest of San Francisco, California. Arriving on scene, Petty Officer HASSINGER delivered a trail line and rescue basket to a small area of the vessel's deck... a 3 square-foot area between its two masts. Before the first two victims could be hoisted to safety, the vessel rolled violently, causing the hoist cable to become entangled in the vessel's aft mast. Undaunted, Petty Officer HASSINGER calmly and expertly directed the pilot into position above the scene and, with tremendous personal effort, untangled the fouled cable and hoisted the two survivors to safety. After completing the difficult and demanding 30-minute hoist, he expeditiously conducted a successful night rescue swimmer deployment and recovered the swimmer and remaining survivor. Throughout the rescue, Petty Officer HASSINGER constantly evaluated the situation and provided valuable advisories to the pilots. Petty Officer HASSINGER's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of three people. 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.