



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE AIR MEDAL
(GOLD STAR IN LIEU OF A SECOND)**

TO

**LIEUTENANT ROBERT MINEO
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant MINEO is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while serving as Aircraft Commander aboard Coast Guard CGNR 6531. Shortly after midnight, on 8 September 2019, the M/V GOLDEN RAY rapidly capsized in St. Simons Sound casting her 24 crewmen into seemingly unsurvivable conditions. The 656-foot cargo ship, carrying 4200 vehicles, listed dangerously to port, caught fire, and was at risk of imminent rollover. Arriving on scene, Lieutenant MINEO located a survivor trapped on the starboard bridge wing over 100ft above the water. Lieutenant MINEO expertly maneuvered CGNR 6531 into a hover and recovered the first survivor. Amidships, a second group of injured survivors clung to railings. Lieutenant MINEO developed a plan of action to save them from their precarious perch. Hovering in darkness 150 ft above the sea, he deployed the rescue swimmer through myriad obstacles and down 50 feet of near vertical surface, recovering one injured survivor. Low on fuel, Lieutenant MINEO transferred the two survivors to awaiting medical teams at a nearby airfield and refueled. Returning to the stricken ship he rapidly hoisted two additional survivors. Amid the final hoist, an explosion and cloud of black smoke rendered the visibility near zero. Operating at the edge of aircraft limits, Lieutenant MINEO flew CGNR 6531 clear of danger. Lieutenant MINEO's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of four survivors. 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.