



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS**

TO

**BRIAN W. UTECHT
AVIATION SURVIVALMAN THIRD CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer UTECHT is cited for extraordinary heroism while participating in aerial flight on the morning of 27 September 1990 while serving as rescue swimmer aboard Coast Guard HH-3F helicopter CGNR 1435 engaged in the rescue of three persons from the fishing vessel SALMO POINT, 180 miles northwest of Sitka, Alaska. The aircrew arrived on scene to discover the vessel's stern partially awash. When all efforts to save the vessel failed, the crew abandoned ship into their life raft. The aircrew determined that the rescue swimmer had to be deployed to rescue the survivors. Petty Officer UTECHT knowingly placed himself in extreme danger in the frigid Alaskan waters to save the vessel's crew. Facing 35-foot seas and 50-knot winds, Petty Officer UTECHT gave a "thumbs up" to his fellow crewmembers as he was lowered down into the raging seas. As soon as he touched the water, Petty Officer UTECHT was out of the sling and fighting his way through the rough seas towards the survivors. He reached the life raft and briefed the survivors on recovery procedures. Constantly fighting the seas, he carried each survivor clear of the life raft for a basket pickup. Several times, Petty Officer UTECHT was placed in precarious positions as he was tossed about by the raging seas. The last survivor panicked and thrashed violently as Petty Officer UTECHT struggled to place him into the rescue basket. After all survivors were safely hoisted aboard, Petty Officer UTECHT was recovered from the dangerous seas. He then evaluated and treated the survivors for shock and exhaustion while enroute to a hospital. Petty Officer UTECHT's actions and valor were instrumental in the rescue of three victims. 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.