



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL

TO

JASON R. MATHERS AVIATION SURVIVAL TECHNICIAN THIRD CLASS UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Petty Officer MATHERS is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while serving as Rescue Swimmer aboard Coast Guard helicopter 6510 on 30 September 2000. Responding to an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon from the F/V STILL CRAZY I, 50 nautical miles south of Cape Fear, North Carolina, CG 6510 launched into heavy weather with near zero visibility. Aided by Night Vision Goggles, CG 6510 and crew skillfully navigated 110 nautical miles, utilizing the aircraft weather radar to avoid numerous severe thunderstorms. Once on scene, CG 6510 encountered extremely hazardous conditions with low visibility, zero illumination, driving rain, 35-knot winds and 25-foot seas. Demonstrating exceptional vigilance, CG 6510 located a faint strobe light attached to a life raft carrying three survivors from the sunken F/V STILL CRAZY I. After several failed attempts, CG 6510 established a stable hover over the life raft, while Petty Officer MATHERS bravely prepared for a challenging night deployment into the raging sea. Once deployed, Petty Officer MATHERS navigated the 25-foot seas to reach the raft, then quickly assessed the condition of the survivors and formulated a recovery plan. Using hand signals, Petty Officer MATHERS skillfully coordinated each hoist with the helicopter, escorting each survivor away from the raft and quickly assisting them into the rescue basket. After 40 strenuous minutes under the most challenging of environmental conditions, Petty Officer MATHERS executed his recovery plan flawlessly. Once onboard CG 6510, Petty Officer MATHERS administered medical attention to each survivor. Petty Officer MATHERS' actions directly resulted in the saving of three lives. 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.