



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT (JUNIOR GRADE) BRYAN T. WELCH
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WELCH is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 25 and 28 October 1985 while serving as co-pilot of Coast Guard HH-3F helicopter 1485 engaged in the medical evacuation of a crewman from the research vessel PELICAN, 360 miles south of New Orleans, Louisiana. Dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WELCH navigated the helicopter to the scene, circumnavigating severe weather which included 45-knot winds, 25-foot seas, rain, and thunderstorms. In spite of the severe weather, the injured person was safely hoisted aboard the helicopter. One-half hour after leaving the vessel, the helicopter's windshield began to leak as a result of the heavy rain, leaving the aircrew with no electronic navigation aids while still more than 250 miles from the nearest point of land. Demonstrating exceptional professional expertise, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WELCH maintained a dead-reckoning plot while the aircraft made numerous turns to avoid severe weather. After the navigation equipment was repaired, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WELCH reprogrammed the Loran-C and navigated the helicopter to an oil platform for refueling. The patient was then flown to a hospital in Houma, Louisiana. Just after midnight on 28 October, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WELCH responded to five additional search and rescue cases in a 10-hour period which resulted in the rescue of 40 survivors from two motor vessels and two capsized oil rigs. Lieutenant (Junior Grade) WELCH's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of 41 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.