



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

TO

**SHAWN P. WHALEY
AVIATION SURVIVALMAN SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer WHALEY is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 13 March 1993 while serving as Rescue Swimmer aboard Coast Guard HH-3F helicopter CGNR 1497. The aircrew launched during the height of the "Storm of the Century," in gale force winds, to assist the fishing vessel ERIN MOORE, which was sinking with three people on board, 60 miles west of Sarasota, Florida. Shortly after arriving at the last known position of the stricken vessel, the aircrew located an overturned hull. Several minutes later, three severely hypothermic people were located in the water, tied to a life raft, and being battered by 20-foot seas. Because the victims were too weak to enter the rescue basket unassisted, Petty Officer WHALEY volunteered to be deployed into the tumultuous seas to affect their rescue. Petty Officer WHALEY demonstrated great resolve and tremendous valor as he struggled through 60-knot winds and mountainous waves to reach the barely conscious victims. Utilizing his survival knife, Petty Officer WHALEY cut the first survivor free from the raft and assisted him into the rescue basket while continuing to be battered relentlessly by the violent seas. Petty Officer WHALEY returned to the raft two more times, disentangled the remaining survivors, and ensured they were safely hoisted into the aircraft. Petty Officer WHALEY'S actions and skill were instrumental in the rescue of three persons. 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.