



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

TO

**JOHN P. RIVERA
AVIATION ELECTRONIC'S TECHNICIAN SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer RIVERA is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the afternoon of 27 October 1983 while serving as avionicsman aboard Coast Guard helicopter HH-3F 1470 engaged in the rescue of the lone survivor from the tug EAGLE which had capsized 65 miles southeast of Yakutat in the Gulf of Alaska. Dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station Sitka, the helicopter was flown 140 miles through severe turbulence, heavy rain, and 70-knot winds to the scene. Throughout this flight Petty Officer RIVERA acted as a second navigator and continually passed accurate and timely positions and situation reports to Air Station Sitka. Upon arrival on scene, the aircraft was maneuvered at low altitude in an attempt to locate survivors, and after an hour of searching the sole survivor was located. Petty Officer RIVERA immediately shifted his communications responsibilities to the co-pilot and assisted the flight mechanic in the demanding hoist. As the basket approached the survivor, a breaking wave caught it and pulled the hoist cable taut, trapping the flight mechanic between the cargo door frame and the hoist cable, partially pulling him out the cargo door. Petty Officer RIVERA immediately grabbed the flight mechanic and pulled him away from the cable. As the hoist continued, it became obvious that the exhausted man was unable to get completely into the basket. Petty Officer RIVERA assisted the flight mechanic in monitoring the seas and the survivor to minimize the chances of the survivor's loss as he clung to the basket being retrieved. When the survivor approached the cabin door, Petty Officer RIVERA assisted in preventing him from falling back into the sea. Once the survivor was safely aboard, Petty Officer RIVERA immediately returned to his regular position in the helicopter as the search for other survivors was resumed. Petty Officer RIVERA's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in this rescue. 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.