



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

TO

**JONATHAN D. RIVERA
AVIONICS ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer RIVERA is cited for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight from 25 August to 30 August 2017 while serving as a Flight Mechanic aboard Coast Guard MH-65D helicopters in response to Hurricane HARVEY. As one of the first aircraft airborne above the unfamiliar, heavily flooded city, he and his crew encountered flight conditions with 50 knot winds, 150 foot ceilings, ¼ mile visibility, and torrential rain. He maintained constant situational awareness, vigilantly calling out obstacles for the pilots to narrowly avoid during transits to survivor locations. On several hoists, at great risk to himself, he reached fully out of the cabin to grab anxious children to ensure they remained safe in the basket. Due to near-impossible radio communication caused by constant water intrusion into the aircraft communications systems, he expertly innovated a system of hand signals with the rescue swimmer to relay how many more survivors the aircraft could hold and whether or not the swimmer would be left on scene. Simultaneously, the crew endured multiple aircraft emergencies including a complete failure of the aircraft stabilization system, making it difficult to maintain aircraft position while hoisting. Despite this, he guided the aircraft with to within 10 feet from power lines in a confined area and hoisted 23 survivors from a steep rooftop. Petty Officer RIVERA's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of 51 people. 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.