



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE COAST GUARD COMMENDATION MEDAL

TO

LIEUTENANT PAUL A. RICHARDSON UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Lieutenant RICHARDSON is cited for outstanding achievement while serving as aircraft commander of Coast Guard HH-3F 1437 in aerial flight on the morning of 16 December 1985 engaged in the rescue of four men from the fishing vessel PRINCESS ARLINE which had sunk in the Gulf of Alaska twenty miles south of Seward, Alaska. Dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak, Lieutenant RICHARDSON navigated Coast Guard HH-3F 1437 through total darkness, rain, fog, and severe turbulence caused by 50 knot winds. The 150 mile trip took nearly two hours because of the tremendous headwind. There was no sign of PRINCESS ARLINE upon arrival at its last known position. Lieutenant RICHARDSON estimated drift, taking into account the wind, sea currents and time delay, and programmed the Loran C computer to initiate a sector search around datum. After searching for over an hour a small liferaft containing all four crewmen was sighted. Lieutenant RICHARDSON maintained visual contact with the raft and vectored Coast Guard HH-3F 1437 to it. Because of the 20-25 foot seas, 50 knot winds, and small size of the liferaft, a no-reference hover and hoist was necessary. The tiny raft was continuously tossed about by the huge waves, making the procedure extremely demanding. Lieutenant RICHARDSON assisted his co-pilot during the hoists by closely monitoring all aircraft systems and providing directions to aid him in maintaining position over the raft. All four men were successfully hoisted and treated onboard for hypothermia by the corpsman during the flight to Seward. There the survivors were transferred to a waiting C-130 for further transport to Anchorage where more extensive medical care was available. Lieutenant RICHARDSON's attention to detail and expert aeronautical skill throughout this mission resulted in the rescue of four men. Lieutenant RICHARDSON's dedication, judgment and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

The Operational Distinguishing Device is authorized.