



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE COAST GUARD COMMENDATION MEDAL**

TO

**DARRELL M. GELAKOSKA
AVIATION SURVIVALMAN FIRST CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer GELAKOSKA is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight, on the night of 18 March 1973, while serving as SAR Aircrewman aboard a Coast Guard helicopter engaged in the medical evacuation of a severely injured seaman from the M/V ASTRID BAKKE, 70 miles southwest of Astoria, Oregon. Hovering over the vessel's stern, ASM1 GELAKOSKA fought the gale force winds trying to put the litter on the tossing deck. On one attempt, the weak link in the trail line snapped as the wind whipped the litter in 40-foot arcs, below the helicopter. After several tries, the ship's crew grabbed the litter and unhooked it. When the patient was ready for pickup, the helicopter moved back into position. Without a guideline to assist him in getting the hook to the ship, ASM1 GELAKOSKA coiled about 80 feet of the hoist cable, and after guiding the pilot over the ship, tossed the cable to the pitching deck. Crewmen on the ship clipped the hook to the litter and attached trail lines to guide it during pickup. ASM1 GELAKOSKA hoisted the litter from the deck battling the winds which sent it spinning and swinging beneath the helicopter. When he had the litter aboard, ASM1 GELAKOSKA cut the guidelines loose and immediately began treating the patient for shock and administering first aid. He continued to monitor the patient's condition on the return flight to Astoria. ASM1 GELAKOSKA's professionalism, resourcefulness, sound judgement and perseverance were instrumental to the success of this mission and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

The operational distinguishing device is authorized.