



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

TO

**MICHAEL R. WALLACE
AVIONICS ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN THIRD CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer WALLACE is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 11 February 2011 as Flight Mechanic aboard Coast Guard MH-60J helicopter CG 6007. CG 6007 was dispatched at approximately 01:00 a.m. to assist the fishing vessel MIDNITE SUN, which was reported aground and taking on water near Tanaak Cape on Afognak Island, Alaska. During taxi to the runway, CG 6007 experienced erratic winds, blowing snow, and an icy ramp. These severe conditions nearly caused the helicopter to spin off the taxiway prior to takeoff. Once airborne, CG 6007 transited in the darkness through mountainous terrain while encountering icing conditions, 45 to 50 knot headwinds, and turbulence that rocked the aircraft several hundred feet vertically from its intended flight path during the transit. Arriving on scene, the MIDNITE SUN was found aground, taking on water, and listing severely with breaking seas washing over the entire vessel. As 25 foot seas continued to rock the stricken vessel, the captain radioed they were breaking up and preparing to abandon ship. Due to the vessel's tangled rigging and the extreme environmental conditions, Petty Officer WALLACE recommended a direct hoist of each mariner in the rescue basket to minimize the aircraft and survivors' exposure to the breaking surf and rigging. Petty Officer WALLACE then expertly coned CG 6007 into position over the vessel. Despite severe downdrafts, 60 knot gusts, a fouled deck, and a steep cliff directly behind the aircraft, Petty Officer WALLACE successfully hoisted the entire crew from the vessel while avoiding the swinging masts and rigging. Petty Officer WALLACE's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of five mariners in distress. 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.