



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

TO

**RODNEY J. GARRISON
AVIATION ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN THIRD CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer GARRISON is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the evening of 11 April 1983 while serving as Avionicsman in Coast Guard HH-3F 1473 engaged in the rescue of two survivors from the stricken fishing vessel HELEN JEAN. The vessel was taking on water and the crew had become disoriented off Cape Suckling, Alaska. The Flight Mechanic conned the helicopter to deliver the trail line using three weight bags, but because of the strong wind, it still trailed behind the helicopter. Utilizing both of the vessel's crewmembers to haul the basket on board, the Flight Mechanic conned the helicopter to a successful delivery of the basket. The position of the helicopter caused the pilot to lose visual reference with the vessel and required him to rely on timely, accurate conning from the Flight Mechanic. During this evolution, Petty Officer GARRISON kept the Flight Mechanic advised of incoming large swells and waves. This was essential in keeping the helicopter clear of those rolling hazards. Due to 30 foot pitching and the 80 degree roll of the vessel, the basket, with survivors in it began to swing in a 30 foot arc when snatched from the boat. Strapped in a safety harness, Petty Officer GARRISON reached out to grab the winch cable. Together with the Flight Mechanic, they were able to steady the basket and pull the boat crew aboard. Petty Officer GARRISON's actions, and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of two victims. His courage, judgement and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.