



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE
MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL**

TO

OMAR ALBA

AVIATION SURVIVAL TECHNICIAN THIRD CLASS

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Petty Officer ALBA is cited for heroic service in the performance of duty as Rescue Swimmer on board CGNR 6531 in response to the massive explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling platform in the pre-dawn hours of 21 April 2010. Despite nearing the end of his workday, Petty Officer ALBA expeditiously prepared an aircraft to respond to the request for assistance from the District Eight Command Center for the urgent evacuation of 115 rig personnel and search for 11 missing persons in the water, approximately 100 miles offshore. Arriving on scene to find the entire rig engulfed in 300 foot flames, he proved essential in identifying numerous obstacles as the crew combated the degraded performance of their night vision goggles due to the flames from the burning rig. After completing the initial search, Petty Officer ALBA readily accepted a challenging deployment to an offshore supply vessel located just 1000 yards from the fiery rig and began triaging recovered survivors and prepared them for medical evacuation battling oil slicked decks, intense heat, billowing smoke and flaming debris being hurled into the air from residual rig explosions. Amid the disorderly scene, he displayed superior judgment creating a safe hoisting area for aircrews with chem-lights aboard the crowded supply vessel deck. Petty Officer's ALBA quickly assessed the situation as he prepared three critical survivors for hoisting and transport as the aircraft was nearing a dangerously low fuel state. Despite the chaotic scene, he provided treatment for over 100 survivors with wounds ranging from lacerations to compound fractures. The medical workload proved intense as he and another rescue swimmer depleted three emergency medical technician kits of dressings and supplies in preparing a total of 17 critical survivors for medical evacuation. Petty Officer ALBA's dedication 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.