



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

**TO**

**BRIAN E. LAUBENSTEIN  
AVIATION SURVIVAL TECHNICIAN SECOND CLASS  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer LAUBENSTEIN is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the evening of 24 September 1998 while serving as Rescue Swimmer of Coast Guard Helicopter 6014. The aircrew was engaged in the perilous rescue of two hypothermic survivors trapped on a small ledge 150 feet down a narrow rock quarry in Quincy, Massachusetts. Combating a blinding shower of jagged shale, pebbles, and sand produced from the HH-60J's rotor wash, Petty Officer LAUBENSTEIN successfully navigated through a daunting maze of trees, cables, pipes, and steep overhangs in complete darkness. Communications and signals to the HH-60J were nearly impossible due to the deafening echo of helicopter noise and the black abyss created by the quarry's overhangs. After being turned upside down and falling 20 feet into the water with a survivor, Petty Officer LAUBENSTEIN decided that the conditions were too dangerous to make more than one rescue from the depths of the quarry. Using sheer strength and determination, he supported the weight of both survivors in an exhausting ascent to a relocation point, 30 feet above, where he could effect a more normal rescue. Becoming entangled in rappelling lines that nearly pulled a victim out of his arms and severed the mid-section of the other, Petty Officer LAUBENSTEIN forcefully overcame the frantic struggles of the survivors and cut his way clear with his rescue knife. With the worst over, Petty Officer LAUBENSTEIN flawlessly executed the relocation plan and skillfully completed the 190-foot hoist of both survivors to the helicopter. Petty Officer LAUBENSTEIN's actions, aeronautical skill, and valor were instrumental in the rescue of two survivors. 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.