



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE AIR MEDAL  
(GOLD STAR IN LIEU OF A THIRD)**

**TO**

**LIEUTENANT JOSHUA H. MITCHELTREE  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant MITCHELTREE is cited for heroic achievement in aerial flight while serving as an Aircraft Commander deployed in response to Hurricane FLORENCE from 14 to 21 September 2018. The catastrophic storm caused extensive damage, record flooding, and led to the evacuation of over 1.5 million people. Among the first to respond, he led the crew of Coast Guard Helicopter 6503 through tropical storm force winds, extreme precipitation, and near-zero visibility, accumulating over 24 flight hours to successfully complete 12 urban rescues. On 16 September, Lieutenant MITCHELTREE located a survivor in desperate need of medical care who was trapped by rising floodwaters. While preparing to deploy the rescue swimmer, a sudden rain squall caused the complete loss of all visual references. Without hesitation, Lieutenant MITCHELTREE entered a tight right-hand orbit to regain visual contact with the survivor, while simultaneously de-conflicting the airspace with nearby traffic. He determined the aircraft was too heavy to hoist the survivor and commenced a fuel jettison when, without warning, both cockpit navigational displays failed due to water intrusion. Undaunted by a severely degraded aircraft, extreme weather, and limited fuel, Lieutenant MITCHELTREE continued with the rescue and safely recovered the survivor. Lieutenant MITCHELTREE's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental to the rescue and assistance of a total of 42 people. 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.