



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL

TO

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER SAMUEL R. HARDMAN UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Lieutenant Commander HARDMAN is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 24 October 1982 while serving as Aircraft Commander of Coast Guard HH-52A 1455 engaged in the rescue of nine survivors of the sunken charter fishing vessel JOAN LA-RIE III. Responding to a distress call from the Brazilian freighter ITAPE eight and one-half miles off Manasquan Inlet, Lieutenant Commander HARDMAN promptly located five survivors in the water near ITAPE and commenced hoisting. While one injured victim was being secured in the cabin, the ITAPE drifted perilously close to the helicopter and four other survivors. With the survivors in danger of drowning and obviously too weak from hypothermia to climb aboard the ITAPE, Lieutenant Commander HARDMAN expertly maneuvered his aircraft to a position a mere fifty feet from the ITAPE and hoisted two more survivors. During the hoist, the aircraft was buffeted by turbulence generated by twenty knot winds burbling over the ITAPE's superstructure. Unable to hoist the remaining two victims, he then transported the three survivors safely ashore. On returning to scene, he located six more survivors who had boarded a lifeboat deployed by the freighter. The increasing wind and sea conditions made the transfer of the survivors to another vessel extremely dangerous. Due to extreme hypothermia, they were unable to climb the ITAPE's accommodation ladder. During the first hoist, a lifeboat crewman tied the trail-line to the lifeboat. As two victims were being hoisted, the trail-line parted at the weak link. When the basket was lowered again, the boat crew tied the loose end of the trail-line to the basket, creating a very grave hazard to the aircraft. Lieutenant Commander HARDMAN calmly and expertly lowered his altitude, still without visual reference to the lifeboat, while continuing to encounter turbulence from the nearby ITAPE. The aircrewman then reached out and cut the trail-line. Four more arduous no-reference hoists were completed without incident. The six survivors were then flown to Coast Guard Station Manasquan. Lieutenant Commander HARDMAN's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of nine lives. 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.