



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

**TO**

**LIEUTENANT LEO C. LAKE  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant LAKE is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 21 July 2012 while serving as Co-Pilot onboard Coast Guard helicopter CGNR 6013 during the rescue of two hikers - one critically injured - on Mount Rainier, Washington. While returning to base after successfully completing a separate vertical surface rescue at sea level, CGNR 6013 was diverted for a severely injured hiker who fell over 400 feet down a steep mountainside in the remote wilderness area of Mount Rainier and suffered serious injuries. After refueling, Lieutenant LAKE flew over 100 NM through unfamiliar mountainous terrain while providing valuable input to identify and articulate the hazards and operational risks of the new case. Lieutenant LAKE provided the Aircraft Commander confirmation of power calculation, fuel consumption planning, and fuel dump procedures. Simultaneously, he and the flight mechanic located the uninjured survivor during a contour search of the rugged terrain, 200 feet below the ridgeline. Once on-scene at 6,000+ feet above sea level, Lieutenant LAKE expertly piloted the aircraft between trees into a position to deploy the Rescue Swimmers. With less than an 8% power margin, and daylight quickly fading, smooth control inputs and a calm demeanor enabled him to maintain a stable hover during three demanding, high-altitude hoists. Now in complete darkness and with fuel approaching critically low levels, he positioned the aircraft to allow the flight mechanic to attempt to locate the injured survivor using the searchlight, as the Rescue Swimmers arduously belayed each other down the steep, icy ravine. With the fuel reserve gone, CGNR 6013 landed to drop off the uninjured survivor and mountain rescue personnel, before continuing to the nearest airport, landing with 7.2 hours on the two rescue missions. Lieutenant LAKE's actions and skill were instrumental in the rescue of two hikers, and the eventual rescue of the third critically injured victim. Lieutenant LAKE's courage, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.