



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT WALTER F. CAPPS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant CAPPS is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 13 May 1993 while assigned as copilot aboard Coast Guard HH-65A CGNR 6541, during the rescue of 11 crewmen from the fishing vessel RESPONSE. While 18 miles from Kodiak, the RESPONSE made a desperate plea for assistance when attempts to control an onboard fire failed. Lieutenant CAPPS gathered all information and preflighted the helicopter, launching in just 16 minutes. Through heavy fog, 75-foot ceilings, and 400-yard visibility, Lieutenant CAPPS maintained a meticulous navigational plot keeping the helicopter clear of mountainous terrain. The aircrew located RESPONSE in eight minutes, finding its stern, stack, and pilot house fully engulfed in flames and the crew huddled on the bow. Onscene conditions placed the flight crew in extreme danger. Heavy fog and smoke obscured the vessel, flames launched into the air, and acetylene bottles below deck threatened to explode. With incredible skill, and in the face of immense personal danger, Lieutenant CAPPS flawlessly carried out his duties, vigilantly monitoring aircraft systems and keeping the helicopter clear of the many hazards. During each recovery, he provided critical advisories enabling the helicopter to safely hoist in the extreme conditions. His superior airmanship and quick reactions during two emergencies prevented damage to the helicopter, as well as certain injury to two survivors. Lieutenant CAPPS' actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of 11 persons. 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.