



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

TO

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

Lieutenant CAPPS is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 12 December 1994 while serving as Aircraft Commander aboard Coast Guard HH-65A CGNR 6523 during the evacuation of 27 crew members from the motor vessel HYUNDAI SEATTLE, which was foundering in storm force winds and mountainous seas. The weather and vessel status required that each crew member from the HYUNDAI SEATTLE be individually hoisted from the ship and onto USCGC MUNRO. Lieutenant CAPPS briefed the Master of the HYUNDAI SEATTLE on hoist procedures and utilized lessons learned from prior heavy weather launches to safely launch in the severe weather conditions. With incredible skill and superior airmanship, Lieutenant CAPPS maneuvered the helicopter into position, and despite winds aloft of 50-60 knots, quickly began the hoisting of the stranded crew from the HYUNDAI SEATTLE's obstructed and heavily rolling foredeck, from hoist altitudes of 150 to 200 feet. Crew members were then lowered one by one to the wildly gyrating flight deck of MUNRO. The 3-hour evolution was interrupted only once to complete a planned in-flight refueling. After safely hoisting all 27 crew members off the disabled vessel and onto MUNRO, Lieutenant CAPPS accomplished possibly the most dangerous portion of the rescue, guiding the helicopter to safe recovery aboard MUNRO despite rapidly worsening sea and weather conditions. Lieutenant CAPPS' actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of 27 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.