



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

**TO**

**LIEUTENANT CHRISTOPHER A. MARTINO  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant MARTINO is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 13 May 1993 while assigned as aircraft commander 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 MARTINO briefed his crew and ensured all maintenance and outfitting of the helicopter was safely completed. As a result, the helicopter launched in only 16 minutes. Through heavy fog, 75-foot ceiling, and 400-yard visibility, Lieutenant MARTINO skillfully piloted the helicopter, solely on instruments, to the vessel's reported position. Within eight minutes the vessel was located, its stern, stack, and pilot house fully engulfed in flames with the crew huddled on the bow. On-Scene conditions placed the flight crew in extreme danger. Heavy fog and smoke obscured the vessel. Flames launched into the air and acetylene bottles stored below deck threatened to explode. With incredible skill and in the face of immense personal danger, Lieutenant MARTINO piloted the helicopter into the smoke and over the burning vessel 11 times, each resulting in the successful recovery of a survivor. His superior airmanship and quick reactions during two emergencies prevented damage to the helicopter, as well as certain injury to two survivors. Lieutenant MARTINO'S 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.