



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

TO

**JASON A. MENEZES
AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN THIRD CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer MENEZES is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight aboard the Coast Guard helicopter CG-6033 on the night of 7 September 2008. CG-6033 was tasked with navigating through the ferocious winds of Hurricane IKE to rescue four people on the stricken fishing vessel MIDNIGHT SUN, located only 50 miles from the eye of the storm, when they reported that they were taking on water and would not survive the night. Upon locating the vessel, he provided precise directional commands to the aircraft commander while hovering in 75 knot gusts, rain squalls, severe turbulence, and pitch-black darkness. When CG-6033 arrived on scene, it was readily apparent that the hurricane whipped seas would make his first operational hoist very challenging. Realizing the conditions would not allow for standard hand signals, he and the rescue swimmer developed a thorough hoisting plan, to include the survivor's retrieval from the water, using only a head nod vice the standard signal, anticipating that the rescue swimmer would need both hands for the rescue. Displaying incredible hoist management skills, he completed four direct deployments of the rescue swimmer into the violent seas, recovering all four survivors from the chaotic water while facing extreme winds and 40-foot swells that were imparting massive side-to-side rolls upon the vessel. Demonstrating extraordinary situational awareness, he quickly realized that the enormous swells were wildly swinging the mast of the vessel dangerously close to the aircraft, survivor and rescue swimmer. He immediately advised the pilot to climb and provided essential conning commands, ensuring the aircraft, survivor and rescue swimmer stayed clear of the vessel's superstructure. Petty Officer MENEZES's actions and skill were instrumental in the rescue of four 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.