



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MARK W. TURNER
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant Commander TURNER is cited for meritorious achievement while in aerial flight while serving on the Coast Guard helicopter CG-6033 on the night of 7 September 2008. As Aircraft Commander, he led his crew into the ferocious winds of the category IV Hurricane IKE to rescue four people from the stricken fishing vessel MIDNIGHT SUN. The vessel was located only 50 miles from the eye of the storm, after they reported that they were taking on water and would not survive the night. He skillfully piloted the aircraft through deteriorating weather conditions, extreme darkness, unpredictable wind shear, gusts reaching 75 knots, and harsh turbulence that made the flight instruments nearly impossible to read. He located the vessel despite hurricane driven rain that severely limited visibility. Demonstrating exceptional piloting skills, he cautiously executed a visual approach to the vessel which was sinking from the effects of 40-foot swells, extreme winds, and churning seas. He quickly assessed that the vessel did not offer a safe hoisting area due to extensive rigging and framework that littered the deck. He made the difficult decision to have the survivors abandon ship and leap into the hurricane whipped waters. Undaunted by the foreboding weather, he skillfully positioned CG-6033 and accurately delivered the rescue swimmer into the violent seas. In the face of 40-foot swells imparting massive side-to-side rolls upon the vessel, he meticulously maintained position during four challenging hoists. His extraordinary flying abilities allowed the newly designated flight mechanic to complete his first operational hoist and safely deliver the rescue swimmer to the survivors. Lieutenant Commander TURNER's actions and aeronautical 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.

