



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE COAST GUARD COMMENDATION MEDAL**

TO

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DONALD K. STROTHER
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant Commander STROTHER is cited for outstanding achievement while serving as the Aircraft Commander of HH-3F CG 1430 in the early morning hours of 1 October 1992. Lieutenant Commander STROTHER was notified that the M/V ROATAN EXPRESS was sinking sixty miles west of Fort Myers, Florida, and the crew was abandoning ship. In deteriorating weather, darkness, thirty knot winds, moderate rain and eight-foot seas, the crew of CG 1430 arrived on scene and located twelve people in the water. Unable to perform an open ocean landing due to adverse sea conditions, Lieutenant Commander STROTHER directed the crew to prepare for rescue swimmer deployment and basket hoist recovery of the survivors. Fuel on the water from the sunken vessel prevented deploying hoist reference flares near the survivors. To affect the rescue, Lieutenant Commander STROTHER flew over forty-five minutes of extremely demanding night, no-reference hovering. After hoisting the initial twelve crewmembers, a separate thirteenth survivor was located and hoisted to the helicopter. Critically low on fuel, Lieutenant Commander STROTHER departed the scene and safely landed on the nearest point of land with minimum fuel. Lieutenant Commander STROTHER's dedication, judgment and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

The Operational Distinguishing Device is authorized.