



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

TO

**THOMAS J. MOUW
AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer MOUW is cited for outstanding achievement while serving as the Sensor Systems Operator aboard Coast Guard aircraft CG-1503 on 2 October 2015. That morning, CG-1503 was directed to launch after a brief distress beacon was received from the M/V EL FARO, a 791-foot freighter with 33 souls on board, which had earlier reported it was disabled and taking on water in the midst of Hurricane JOAQUIN. This mission required flight into the heart of the Category Four hurricane, battling wind speeds up to 115 knots, heavy wind shear, airspeed fluctuations of 50 knots, and uncommanded altitude deviations in excess of 800 feet. Despite this combination of weather factors, which shook screws from the overhead and caused a significant fuel leak discovered after the aircraft landed, Petty Officer MOUW masterfully manipulated CG-1503's camera turret while seamlessly coordinating with the Navigator to visually investigate all potential targets identified by radar. As CG-1503 plunged through the hurricane's violently churning feeder bands, Petty Officer MOUW displayed exceptional technical ability in rapidly filtering through possible targets while constantly recalibrating the camera system's computer, which had become overwhelmed by the changing light and visibility conditions. At the height of this perilous mission, CG-1503 flew at the aerodynamic and structural limits of the aircraft as close as 15 miles from the hurricane's eye wall. His exceptional skill in this most daring and expertly executed fifteen-hour search effort provided invaluable information to planners for subsequent rescue and recovery efforts. Petty Officer MOUW'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.