



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

TO

**JOSHUA J. HARRIS
AVIONICS ELECTRICAL TECHNICIAN SECOND CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer HARRIS is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while serving as Flight Mechanic aboard Coast Guard helicopter CG6010 on 25 January 2012. After being launched in night blizzard conditions to assist a grounded vessel, CG6010 was diverted to the F/V HERITAGE, which was taking on water and listing 20 degrees in Alitak Bay, Kodiak Island, Alaska. Arriving on scene, CG6010 found that the vessel had sunk, leaving five survivors in a life raft and two crew members in survival suits treading water in 25-foot breaking seas, 60 knot winds, and minus 32 degree air temperature. Petty Officer HARRIS expertly conned the pilots into a stable position over the first survivor despite direct exposure to gale force winds and significantly reduced visibility due to the crashing waves, blowing spray, snow and ice. He expertly managed the wildly swinging hoist cable so as not to endanger the Rescue Swimmer in the turbulent waves. Petty Officer HARRIS used his gloved hand to strip ice from the hoist cable as the Rescue Swimmer and survivor were hoisted from the water, preventing binding in the hoist drum due to sub-zero temperatures. When his hands became too numb to feel the hoist control, Petty Officer HARRIS called for the Copilot to utilize the cyclic hoist control while he pulled the Rescue Swimmer and survivor into the cabin. Petty Officer HARRIS again conned the aircraft into position for delivery of the Rescue Swimmer, battling the extreme wind, waves and cold to safely recover the second hypothermic survivor. During the return flight to Kodiak, Petty Officer HARRIS teamed with the Rescue Swimmer to treat the hypothermic survivors, while he simultaneously assisted the pilots in their response to a critical engine emergency. Petty Officer HARRIS' actions were instrumental in the rescue of seven 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.