



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT (JUNIOR GRADE) THOMAS S. MACDONALD
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant (Junior Grade) MACDONALD is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the afternoon of 18 October 1994 while serving as Copilot aboard Coast Guard HH-65A CGNR 6558. Over a 3-day period, the remnants of Hurricane Rosa dumped 30 inches of rain into the Houston area, causing extensive flooding that overwhelmed local and state emergency resources. With hundreds of residents trapped by the rapidly rising waters, Air Station Houston initiated an unprecedented rescue campaign augmented by aviation units from the entire Eighth Coast Guard District. Arriving from Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) MACDONALD and the crew of CGNR 6558 launched into severely degraded weather conditions to assist in hard hit Montgomery County. Lieutenant (Junior Grade) MACDONALD flew three instrument approaches before breaking out of the clouds blanketing the flood area. Piloting the aircraft under cloud bases at tree top level, among unlit towers and power lines, and only quarter-mile visibility, he located and rescued victims seeking refuge in the last remaining home in an area consumed by water. For 2 taxing hours and 28 hoist evolutions, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) MACDONALD maintained precise positioning amongst 100-foot trees in gusting winds and driving rain. Lieutenant (Junior Grade) MACDONALD's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of 49 victims. 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.