



THE COAST GUARD MEDAL

TO

CHARLES M. DEWEY
AVIATION MACHINIST'S E THIRD CLASS
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Petty Officer DEWEY is cited for heroism on the afternoon of 27 March 1973 while serving as Sea Air Rotary Wing Evacuation Team (SARWET) aircrewman of Coast Guard HH-52A 1389 helicopter engaged in the perilous rescue of two adults from the surf off Ocean Beach, California. The helicopter, dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station, San Francisco, arrived on scene and observed a 25-foot sailboat capsized on the rocks and two persons foundering in the turbulent surf approximately 1,000 yards offshore. Four persons had been aboard the boat when it capsized and two of them had managed to swim ashore. The other two survivors, who had been in the water at least 30 minutes, were without any type of personal flotation gear and were being inundated every 10 seconds by the high seas. The eight-foot seas and 30-knot winds precluded the helicopter from making a platform pickup and basket hoist rescue. Realizing that the survivors could not remain afloat in their weakened condition, Petty Officer DEWEY and a fellow Coast Guardsman volunteered and immediately jumped into the raging 51-degree water to assist the helpless victims. Although disappearing completely beneath the breaking surf every 8 to 10 seconds, Petty Officer DEWEY and his companion kept the exhausted survivors afloat while the helicopter made a quick search for other possible survivors. When the helicopter returned, Petty Officer DEWEY aided the victims into the rescue basket for transportation to the nearest hospital facility. He and his companion were subsequently picked up by another helicopter which had arrived on scene. Petty Officer DEWEY demonstrated remarkable initiative, exceptional fortitude, and daring in spite of imminent personal danger throughout this rescue mission. His unselfish actions and unwavering devotion to duty were instrumental in saving the lives of the survivors and reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Coast Guard.