



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE COAST GUARD MEDAL
TO
TRISTAN P. HEATON
Aviation Survivalman Second Class
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer Heaton is cited for extraordinary heroism on the afternoon of 4 April 1993 while serving as Rescue Swimmer aboard HH-65A helicopter CGNR 6504, engaged in the perilous rescue of a person trapped by pounding surf inside a sea cave at Cape Lookout, Oregon. Arriving on scene, Petty Officer HEATON was lowered to the base of a sheer, 200-foot cliff at the mouth of the cave to assess the situation. Observing a man trapped at the innermost reaches of the cave by 12-foot breakers of a flood tide, Petty Officer Heaton realized that immediate action was required. After briefing the aircraft commander via radio, showing total disregard for his own safety, he entered the boiling surf and swam to the victim. Arriving at the ledge, he calmed the man and told him of the rescue plan. After giving his survival vest to the victim, Petty Officer Heaton coaxed him into the surf for an attempt to swim to the mouth of the cave. Both men were repeatedly dashed against the vertical north wall of the cave, then forced under water by huge rollers. After several minutes, the victim was rendered unconscious, which added to Petty Officer Heaton's burden. He continued fighting the strong tidal current and, at the pint of exhaustion, reached the helicopter's rescue basket. Holding both the basket and victim, he was able to put the semiconscious victim inside. Once safely aboard the helicopter, despite debilitating fatigue, he administered aid to the victim enroute to the hospital. Petty Officer Heaton demonstrated remarkable initiative, exceptional fortitude, and daring in spite of imminent personal danger in this rescue. His courage and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.