Lieutenant Junior Grade HOWE is cited for meritorious achievement during aerial flight from 30 August 2005 to 1 September 2005, while serving as copilot aboard Coast Guard HH-65B helicopters during Hurricane Katrina rescue operations. Demonstrating noteworthy aeronautical skill, Lieutenant Junior Grade HOWE served as pilot at the controls in a challenging urban environment and directly saved 37 survivors from treacherous floodwaters that had engulfed New Orleans. Rescue missions required continuous operation at the edge of the HH-65B’s performance envelope and meticulous hover flight among downed power lines, damaged telephone poles, broken tree limbs, and collapsed buildings. Most notably, Lieutenant Junior Grade HOWE located and led the rescue of residents from a nursing home and convalescent care facility near downtown New Orleans. After a pinpoint delivery of the rescue swimmer to a small courtyard surrounded by structures and power lines, the rescue swimmer found 70 residents in dire need of immediate medical assistance. It was determined that eight of the elderly inhabitants had already expired and without immediate medical attention two critical residents would not survive the afternoon. Without delay, the rescue swimmer recovered two ambulatory survivors while heavy aircraft were coordinated to assist with resident evacuation. While retrieving a rescue litter, visibility deteriorated to a quarter mile, making this unfamiliar urban area extremely dangerous with over 40 aircraft in a tight working region. Lieutenant Junior Grade HOWE’S bravery allowed a critical dialysis patient and many other elderly residents the opportunity to receive the immediate medical care they desperately needed. Lieutenant Junior Grade HOWE’S actions and skills were instrumental in the rescue of almost 100 lives. 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.
CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
(GOLD STAR IN LIEU OF SECOND)
THE AIR MEDAL

TO

LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE DANIEL B. HOWE
UNIVERSAL STATES COAST GUARD

Lieutenant HOWE is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while serving as copilot on board CGNR 6531 in response to a massive explosion of the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil drilling platform in the pre-dawn hours of 21 April 2010. After fielding a request for assistance from District Eight Command Center, he expeditiously assembled a SAR crew to respond to the urgent evacuation of 115 rig personnel and search for 11 missing persons in the water, approximately 100 miles offshore. He expertly utilized the transit time to coordinate rig refueling logistics and MEDEVAC triage locations for seven multi-agency aircraft via the airborne HC-144. Lieutenant HOWE then directed the HC-144 crew to deploy a Self-Locating Data Marking Buoy in order to determine drift currents near the platform. Arriving on scene to find the entire DWH rig engulfed in 300 foot flames, he quickly determined the highest probability search areas for the reported 11 missing people. To mitigate risk and overcome severe degradation of the NVGs due to the flames, he set up aided and unaided search sectors for his crew to maximize obstacle avoidance and survivor detection. After completing the search and realizing they could provide greater benefit to survivors, he and his crew began MEDEVAC operations of critical patients from an offshore supply vessel to a central triage point on a nearby oil rig. During the challenging approach to the supply vessel, with no visible horizon, to hoist critically injured survivors, he astutely recognized the onset of spatial disorientation by the pilot at the controls and called for a wave-off. During the subsequent approach, he provided continuous expert back-up power limitations to the pilot flying who completed the demanding hoists near the aircraft's maximum gross weight. Lieutenant HOWE's courage, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.