



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

TO

**Lieutenant DANIEL J. MOLTHEN
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant MOLTHEN is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 17 December 2000, while serving as Aircraft Commander aboard Coast Guard HH-60J, CG6031, engaged in the rescue of 34 crewmen onboard the sinking cruise ship M/V *Sea Breeze I* 220 miles east of Cape Henry, Virginia. The 605-foot cruise ship foundered in 30-foot waves and 50 to 70-knot winds and was listing twenty degrees as seawater poured into her engine room. A severe line of thunderstorms moving east directly for the vessel's position lay between Elizabeth City and the *Sea Breeze I*. Lieutenant MOLTHEN skillfully piloted CG6031 through the 20-mile thick violent storm front, which had earlier spawned numerous tornadoes, encountering winds in excess of 50-knots, heavy rains, zero visibility and lightning. Upon arriving on-scene the captain of the *Sea Breeze I* radioed that the vessel would roll over at any time. Lieutenant MOLTHEN immediately established a hover 20-feet above the aft deck of the *Sea Breeze I*. Assessing the dire situation and determining time was of the essence, Lieutenant MOLTHEN decided to hoist two people at a time while hovering as close to the deck as possible. While hoisting the Rescue Swimmer to the deck, Lieutenant MOLTHEN encountered gusts up to 70 knots as the ship rolled and pitched in the violent seas. In the ensuing 14 hoists, exceptional airmanship was required as Lieutenant MOLTHEN hovered dangerously close to the ship's deck, railing and wires. The aircraft's stabilization system kicked off numerous times worsening the situation. Within 25 minutes the crew had rescued 26 survivors in 15 hoists, a Coast Guard record. Lieutenant MOLTHEN's actions and aeronautical skills were essential in the success of the rescue and resulted in saving 26 lives. His courage, judgement 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
THE AIR MEDAL**

TO

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER DANIEL J. MOLTHEN
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant Commander MOLTHEN is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the night of 28-29 October 2008 as Aircraft Commander aboard Coast Guard helicopter CG-6003. The crew launched from Air Station Elizabeth City and flew through a severe winter storm packing gale force winds to a position 280 nautical miles to the northeast, where the Sailing Vessel FREEFALL had been severely damaged. Demonstrating superior aviation skills, he established a hover with no visual horizon or the assistance of the helicopter's altitude or heading hold functions due to 40-foot seas and 55-knot wind gusts. Exercising remarkable situational awareness and planning, he discussed and prepared his junior crew for an exceptionally demanding hoist evolution. Applying precise timing with critical altitude and wave interval input from the Safety Pilot, he directed the Flight Mechanic to lower the Rescue Swimmer between the towering waves into the frigid water. As the rescue basket was lowered for the first survivor hoist, waves crashed down on the empty basket and frayed the hoist cable, rendering it useless. Recognizing the life threatening conditions faced by the Rescue Swimmer and survivor in the water, he initiated the first operational use of the Emergency Recovery Device to save them both. The device's lightweight line sailed uncontrollably in the high winds leaving an insufficient length to reach the water from a safe altitude above the waves. Undaunted, he made the difficult decision to lower the aircraft between the immense waves to effect the recovery mere feet above the surface. Exhausted and physically drained, he expertly navigated CG-6003 through 120 nautical miles of intense weather to obtain immediate medical assistance for his injured and hypothermic Rescue Swimmer. Lieutenant Commander MOLTHEN's actions and aeronautical skills were instrumental in the difficult recovery of the Rescue Swimmer after the rescue hoist failed. His courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.