



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF  
THE COAST GUARD MEDAL  
TO  
Lieutenant GARY F. VAN NEVEL  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD RESERVE**

For heroism on the afternoon of February 25, 1968, while serving as copilot of a Coast Guard HH-52A helicopter engaged in the perilous rescue of a 23-year old unconscious woman from the waters of Potato Patch Shoals off Point Bonita, California. Three survivors attempting to stay afloat amid heavy swells and breakers were sighted in the vicinity of the debris of a capsized motorboat. Observing one of the persons floating motionless face down in the water, Lieutenant VAN NEVEL inflated his life vest, quickly donned the helicopter sling, and with the aircraft in a low hover, plunged into the sea and swam toward the unconscious woman. While handicapped by a male survivor who swam to him and grasped hold, Lieutenant VAN NEVEL reached the woman and clasped her, raising the head out of the water. He was then towed, along with the two survivors, back to the helicopter where he assisted in getting them through the hatch of the aircraft. Lieutenant VAN NEVEL immediately began mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on the unconscious patient, who had no sign of life, and successfully restored her natural breathing as the helicopter was proceeding to shore for release of the survivors to medical authorities. Lieutenant VAN NEVEL demonstrated initiative, fortitude, and courage in spite of imminent personal danger. His unselfish actions and unwavering devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Coast Guard.