



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT J. WATTERSON
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

For meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 9 September 1966 while serving as pilot of a Coast Guard H-52 helicopter engaged in recovering a crewman from USCGC SPENCER. The crewman had been stricken with acute appendicitis and required immediate evacuation for surgery. Lieutenant Commander (then Lieutenant) WATTERSON departed Coast Guard Air Station Brooklyn at 0328 in H-52 1353 to rendezvous with the SPENCER at a point 130 miles southeast of New York. Heavy thunderstorms and lightning complicated homing and navigation, and on arrival of the helicopter in the rendezvous area, the SPENCER could not be seen. LCDR WATTERSON commenced a visual search in adverse weather conditions and finally succeeded in locating the SPENCER 150 miles southeast of New York. Despite his then critical fuel state, LCDR WATTERSON and his crew completed a successful night hoist in high winds and heavy seas with the SPENCER pitching heavily. With the patient safely aboard the helicopter, he departed immediately for Coast Guard Air Station Brooklyn and arrived there with approximately 16 minutes of fuel remaining. The patient was quickly transferred to another helicopter and delivered to USPHS Hospital, Staten Island, New York. Any delay in the evacuation or delivery of the patient would have adversely affected his already serious condition. LCDR WATTERSON's innovative actions and expert aeronautical skill, courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty reflect great credit and distinction upon himself and 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
(GOLD STAR IN LIEU OF A SECOND)**

TO

**COMMANDER ROBERT J. WATTERSON
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Commander WATTERSON is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight during the afternoon of 6 April 1979 while serving as pilot and aircraft commander of Coast Guard HH—52A 1443 engaged in the perilous rescue of two men from the windswept, listing decks of the sinking Canadian Motor Vessel LABPLADOC in Lake Erie, 18—miles north of Ashtabula, Ohio. Dispatched from Coast Guard Air Station Detroit, Commander WATTERSON piloted the helicopter to the scene despite 50—knot winds and moderate to severe turbulence. Upon arrival, the master of the vessel decided to remain on board with 4 crewmen in an attempt to save his ship. Commander WATTERSON then proceeded to Lost Nation Airport to refuel and stand-by to assist if LABRADOC's condition deteriorated. When notification was received that LABRADOC was to be abandoned, Commander WATTERSON again piloted the aircraft to the scene. As another Coast Guard helicopter hoisted 3 of the remaining crewman, Commander WATTERSON maneuvered his aircraft over the wildly tossing vessel, enabling the hoist operator to hoist a crewman from a confined area between a lifeboat and the superstructure near the stern of the vessel. Commander WATTERSON then positioned the helicopter for the rescue of the master of LABRADOC. This hoist was further complicated by the vessel broaching and wallowing in the 20—foot seas, resulting in a loss of visual reference and an increase in both rate and degree of roll to approximately 45—degrees. Following the guidance and direction of the hoist operator, Commander WATTERSON maintained position over the vessel while the hoist was completed. Commander WATTERSON's innovative actions and expert aeronautical skill throughout this mission resulted in the rescue of the two men. His courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.