

Coast Guard Aviation Association



The Association President,

IN RECOGNITION *of important contributions advancing
Coast Guard aviation history programs,
takes pleasure in presenting the*

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

to

*Lieutenant Commander James M. Loomis
U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)*

December 11, 2021

Michael D. Emerson
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

President's Award

to

Lieutenant Commander James M. Loomis

The President of the Coast Guard Aviation Association (CGAA), takes pleasure in presenting the President's Award to Lieutenant Commander James M. Loomis, U.S. Coast Guard (Retired), in recognition of his extraordinary role in single-handedly developing appropriate recognition for Lieutenant Jack C. Rittichier, a volunteer U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) exchange helicopter aviator with the U. S. Air Force's 37th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Service (ARRS) Squadron, flying out of Da Nang Air Base, Republic of Vietnam. Unfortunately, LT Rittichier perished in theatre on June 9, 1968, while attempting the rescue of a downed U.S. Marine Corps Aviator, flying an HH-3E "Jolly Green" helicopter, during a perilous mission under withering groundfire. LCDR Loomis, as a member of that same elite, volunteer Viet Nam USCG exchange aviation cadre, initiated the project to memorialize his teammate, LT Rittichier, with an appropriate memorial, destined for the new, upcoming Coast Guard Museum, in New London, CT. Appropriately coordinating with the Executive Board of CGAA, particularly its PTreasurer, and, oftentimes using his own treasure, LCDR Loomis commenced a nationwide search to find a suitable sculpture artist to create a life-size bust of LT Rittichier, in that era's flight clothing. Working from several photographs and his memories of his tour in the 37th ARRS, LCDR Loomis worked with the artist through several iterations of the sculpture – from clay to final bronze patina application. In addition, LCDR Loomis called upon another retired Coast Guard Aviator woodworking artist to construct a fabulous stand for the completed Rittichier bust that places the bust at Rittichier's exact height. The Rittichier bust and stand was unveiled at the Summer 2021 Coast Guard Combat Veterans' Association annual convention, where LCDR Loomis had constructed an easel-based information poster of LT Rittichier, with details of his career and rescue attempt. After the convention, LCDR Loomis made arrangements for the LT

Rittichier stand and bust to be displayed at the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, FL, awaiting its final display location at the Coast Guard Museum. LCDR Loomis' initiative and leadership, in addition to his keen sense of preserving CG Aviation history, are most heartily commended, and in keeping with the highest traditions of the Coast Guard Aviation Association and the United States Coast Guard.