



## **CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS**

**TO**

**LIEUTENANT WILLIAM F. ADICKES, JR.  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant ADICKES is cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on the evening of 12 December 1996 as Aircraft Commander of Coast Guard HH-60J helicopter 6018. The aircrew was engaged in the perilous search and rescue of two survivors from the Fishing Vessel OCEANIC that sank 20 nautical miles west of Craig, Alaska after encountering mechanical problems in heavy seas. Immediately after the distress call was relayed, Lieutenant ADICKES diverted from training and returned to Coast Guard Air Station Sitka to load specialized rescue equipment. Fully aware of the precariously short life expectancy of a person in 38-degree water, Lieutenant ADICKES expedited the loading procedure and quickly proceeded to the vessels last known position. While en route, Lieutenant ADICKES skillfully navigated 112 miles through gale force winds and near zero visibility in dark, icy conditions, and severe turbulence. Once on scene, Lieutenant ADICKES hover searched the massive 20-foot seas for 40 minutes, and remarkably located three persons floating in frigid waters. Two of the victims wore survival suits and a third clung to a life ring. Battling gusty winds over 40-knots and freezing rain, Lieutenant ADICKES struggled to correct an aircraft stabilization malfunction that harried the pilot. The first hoist attempts were thwarted by violent seas and winds, which blew the rescue basket and rescue swimmer wildly away from the survivors. With fuel quantity critically low and conventional methods unsuccessful, Lieutenant ADICKES increased hover altitude and donned night vision goggles to improve visual clues and aircraft controllability. The crew miraculously delivered the rescue basket and hoisted two of the survivors to safety. With fuel now below safe levels, the exhausted aircrew wrestled to recover the unresponsive third victim. Despite a Herculean effort, they were unable to get the third victim aboard the helicopter and had to depart scene for the nearest landing site. With only minutes of fuel remaining, Lieutenant ADICKES alertly located potential emergency landing sites among the ragged cliffs and prepared the aircrew for possible ditching. Helicopter 6018 reached the safety of Klawock Airport with less than five minutes of fuel remaining. The two survivors were transferred to awaiting ambulances. Lieutenant ADICKES' actions, aeronautical skills and valor were instrumental in the rescue and full recovery of two survivors who would have otherwise perished. 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.