



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

**TO**

**AMT3 RICHARD L. AMELIO  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Petty Officer AMELIO is cited for heroic achievement in aerial flight on 31 August 2005, while serving as flight mechanic aboard Coast Guard Helicopter CG 6597 during Hurricane Katrina rescue operations. Demonstrating exemplary aeronautical skill and superlative physical stamina, Petty Officer AMELIO flew multiple night search and rescue missions in a hazardous urban disaster environment. Arriving in metropolitan New Orleans just after midnight, Petty Officer AMELIO was given the monumental task of beginning the evacuation of more than 250 patients from the stricken Baptist Memorial Hospital. As the first aircraft to arrive at the storm ravaged building, Petty Officer AMELIO conducted a thorough reconnaissance of the rooftop landing pad and ensured that it was capable of handling the approaching swarm of rescue aircraft. Upon landing at the unlit pad, he identified survivors ready for immediate evacuation and over three trips rescued 13 medically critical patients, providing stabilizing care enroute to operating hospitals. Recognizing the desperate conditions at the hospital, Petty Officer AMELIO loaded the aircraft to its weight limit with water and MRE's, delivering hundreds of pounds of critical supplies on each return trip. After refueling, Petty Officer AMELIO located 15 survivors signaling frantically from the balcony of their home. Conning the aircraft inches at a time to within one rotor discs distance from three 50-foot trees surrounding the home, Petty Officer AMELIO deployed the rescue swimmer. Over an exhausting three trips, he delivered the rescue basket with precision to the tiny second story balcony 15 times rescuing the entire family. At a nearby home, Petty Officer AMELIO threaded the rescue swimmer down a 75 foot hoist, directly through a hole in the roof and into the attic to extract a trapped elderly couple. On his final sortie of the night, he hoisted four additional survivors from balconies at a demolished apartment complex. Petty Officer AMELIO's actions and skill were instrumental in saving 34 lives. 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.