



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE
MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL**

TO

**CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER MICHAEL A. AUGUSTINE
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Chief Warrant Officer AUGUSTINE is cited for meritorious achievement as Maintenance Officer and HH-65B Flight Mechanic at Air Station New Orleans from August 28 to September 6, 2005 in response to Hurricane KATRINA. His leadership was instrumental in the largest air rescue operation in Coast Guard history. Under his guidance nine assigned HH-65Bs were able to fly over 500 rescue sorties and 863 flight hours, an astonishing 900% increase from normal operations tempo with an exceptional 95% availability rate. His team's around the clock refueling, maintenance and aircraft turnaround evolutions enabled an additional 636 sorties by transient Coast Guard aircraft. His nimble and detailed management of rapidly growing aircraft flight hours against required maintenance maximized availability under incredible and unprecedented operational demands. His accomplishments are all the more remarkable given the ad hoc nature of the maintenance teams brought in from around the country and lack of advance notice or planning for the massive rescue operation. As Flight Mechanic, he innovated Urban SAR rescue techniques in high-risk scenarios for which he had no training, saving 38 survivors during 5 sorties. He expeditiously conducted multiple precision nighttime basket deliveries to a walkway hoisting a mother, two children, and a six month-old baby from a building, safely recovering the family despite the turbulent rotor wash from another helicopter passing 100 feet overhead. He expertly vectored the Aircraft Commander within 10 feet of trees and power lines to deliver the rescue device and hoist a family of five from a narrow second story porch. His speed and skill ensured the entire family was not separated at the chaotic collection points. He provided lifesaving assistance to many hundreds more survivors by hoisting critical water to rooftops. Showing extraordinary dedication and stamina, Chief Warrant Officer AUGUSTINE continued to fly rescue missions despite the complete lack of adequate crew rest facilities, and though his non-flying time was spent supervising around the clock aircraft fueling and maintenance activities. 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.