



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

**TO**

**LIEUTENANT THOMAS B. BAILEY  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant BAILEY is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight from 30 August 2005 to 05 September 2005, while serving as aircraft commander aboard Coast Guard HH-60J helicopters during Hurricane Katrina rescue operations. Lieutenant BAILEY flew over 38 hours of arduous day and night rescue missions in a rural disaster environment. Arriving with the first wave of aircraft responding in New Orleans, Lieutenant BAILEY fearlessly led his crew into an unknown situation, breaching innumerable obstacles while surging to the core of the devastation. Recognizing there was no mass evacuation plan for the city, and overwhelmed with the number of desperate survivors, Lieutenant BAILEY assessed the devastation, hovering house to house, prioritizing the urgency of each situation based on flood levels. With natural gas fires erupting around him, Lieutenant BAILEY hoisted 22 survivors from a flooded church and surrounding neighborhood, delivering survivors to the unlit Superdome parking lot. On a subsequent sortie, Lieutenant BAILEY hoisted another 24 survivors, threading the basket, the rescue swimmer, and multiple survivors through countless obstacles to lift entire families from their completely submerged homes. On two separate occasions, with utmost skill and precision, Lieutenant BAILEY maneuvered his aircraft around and between obstacles to directly deploy his swimmer through small holes in damaged rooftops to rescue trapped survivors. On August 31st, Lieutenant BAILEY launched again, delivering 50 cases of water to several drop off sites, ultimately encountering a distraught nurse reporting a desperate situation at the University of New Orleans. After recognizing her concerns, Lieutenant BAILEY flew to another makeshift landing zone, exited his aircraft and boarded one of two Army CH-47s, and then directed both heavy lift assets to evacuate the abandoned survivors from the university. Lieutenant Commander BAILEY's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in saving 294 lives. His courage, judgment and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Coast Guard.