



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT TIMOTHY J. BARELLI
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant BARELLI is cited for heroic achievement in aerial flight from 29 August 2005 to 31 August 2005, as Aircraft Commander aboard Coast Guard HH-65B helicopters during Hurricane Katrina rescue operations. Demonstrating exceptional aeronautical skill and judgment, and innovating rescue techniques for which he was not trained, he saved 108 survivors from treacherous conditions during 10 sorties over 19 flight hours. He repeatedly and expertly pushed the power-limited HH-65B to the very edge of its performance envelope, in close proximity to unlit hazards, despite continuous reports of violence and shots fired, thousands of distressed survivors needing rescue, and the constant threat of midair collision in the highly congested and uncontrolled airspace. As one of the first aircraft back in the storm-ravaged area, he fought to keep the aircraft under control as the aircrew transited through 50 knot storm winds and reduced visibility. Most notably, he skillfully hovered within several feet of trees and power lines and conducted a nighttime pinpoint 75-foot vertical surface rescue swimmer deployment through a maze of damaged trees to an attic ventilation window rescuing two survivors. Exhibiting exceptional poise and skill while hovering within feet of a tree and power lines, Lieutenant BARELLI rescued 24, including several dehydrated children and critical elderly patients. He kept his crew focused in the face of an overwhelming disaster and the stress of repeated life or death decisions about who to rescue and who to leave behind. He intrepidly continued hoisting and saving lives after being warned by authorities about a toxic cloud of hydrogen sulfide in the area, refusing to abandon the mission. Lieutenant BARELLI was instrumental in the direct rescue of 108 storm survivors and assisted hundreds more with critical food and water deliveries. He played a critical role in the most significant air rescue operation in Coast Guard history. 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.