



**CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE
AIR MEDAL
TO
MAJOR JONATHAN BOUCHARD
CANADIAN FORCES**

Major BOUCHARD is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight while serving as copilot on HH-60J helicopter CG-6042 out of Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, on 13 November 2003. Responding to a distress call from the 45-foot sailing vessel LADY SAMANTHA, which was disabled 150 nautical miles south of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, the aircrew fought 85-knot wind gusts to find the vessel being helplessly battered by massive seas. Once located, the vessel was discovered to be severely rolling until its masts were submerged, and the wildly swinging rigging made a direct hoist from the vessel's deck impossible. The sailors were instructed to abandon ship into their life raft, but as soon as the raft was inflated, the howling winds parted the tether and it quickly disappeared downwind. Left with little choice, Major BOUCHARD and his aircrew quickly ordered the sailors to abandon ship one at a time into the raging seas so they could be hoisted from the water. Major BOUCHARD expertly briefed them on rescue procedures, and persuaded them that their only hope was to enter the ferocious sea. Maintaining a stable hover was a monumental challenge, as massive 50-foot waves passed beneath the helicopter, and 75-knot winds battered it. The air was filled with flying spray and the ocean's surface was a solid field of white caps atop huge, fast-moving wave crests. Hovering in such conditions required the concerted efforts of the entire aircrew. While the Aircraft Commander moved in for the rescue, Major BOUCHARD warned of approaching rogue waves, and assisted in determining drift direction, which was extremely difficult with the entire surface of the ocean in motion. Through a monumental effort, they overcame the incredibly difficult and dangerous conditions to deliver the rescue swimmer to the first survivor and recover both in the short span of only eight minutes. With the sailing vessel now one mile downwind, they repositioned for another rescue. The same procedures were followed for the second and third rescues, but the fourth and fifth were completed in total darkness, increasing the already enormous challenges. Major BOUCHARD's assistance became even more critical as the Aircraft Commander struggled to hold position over the darkened seas. Through extraordinary airmanship and determination, Major BOUCHARD and crew spent an exhausting 50 minutes in a hover to successfully rescue all five crewmembers from the LADY SAMANTHA. His actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of five persons. 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.