



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JOHN RICH BUTLER
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

For meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the night of 24 October 1968 while serving as pilot of a Coast Guard helicopter engaged in the attempted rescue of survivors from a Northeast Flight 946 which had crashed on Moose Mountain, New Hampshire. Advised that the plane was overdue at Lebanon Regional Airport, Lebanon, New Hampshire, Lieutenant Commander BUTLER and his crew made immediate preparations for the flight and became airborne within six minutes after determination to launch was made. Despite hazardous weather conditions and darkness, Lieutenant Commander BUTLER executed an instrument takeoff at maximum gross weight with extra fuel on an instrument flight plan into a 250-foot ceiling at altitudes up to 6000 feet. Proceeding from the Coast Guard Air Station, Salem, Massachusetts, he stopped at Lebanon Regional Airport to pick up a Civil Air Patrol observer who was familiar the crash site terrain. After landing in a farm field to obtain more current information on landing conditions at the scene, he approached the emergency clearing above the crash site at an altitude of 2300 feet and maintained an instrument hover over the site with heavy fog blowing across the ridge. Determining that landing in the restricted area was impossible, he departed and when advised that known survivors had been evacuated, returned to the airport to refuel. Lieutenant Commander BUTLER displayed expert airmanship throughout this perilous operation. His initiative, skill, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.