



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

TO

**LIEUTENANT COMMANDER CHRISTOPHER M. CHASE
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

Lieutenant Commander CHASE is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight from 29 August 2005 to 05 September 2005, while serving as aircraft commander aboard Coast Guard HH-65 helicopters during Hurricane Katrina rescue operations. Demonstrating exemplary aeronautical expertise, Lieutenant Commander CHASE flew over 36 flight hours, flying 13 hours at night, while operating in an urban disaster environment. Before the storm passed, Lieutenant Commander CHASE battled low visibility and 40 knot winds in the outer bands of Hurricane Katrina to reach the devastated Mississippi coastal region. Arriving on scene in an obliterated neighborhood, Lieutenant Commander CHASE skillfully hoisted three survivors from an altitude of 175 feet while narrowly avoiding power lines which surrounded the helicopter. Later that day, with storm force winds buffeting his aircraft, he demonstrated exceptional airmanship by deploying his rescue swimmer from 125 feet to a car roof among a tangled web of downed power lines and debris. While recovering eight survivors, Lieutenant Commander CHASE simultaneously vectored four additional rescue aircraft to a ten unit apartment complex resulting in the rescue of over 200 additional survivors. On the night of 30 August, Lieutenant Commander CHASE hoisted 24 survivors from highly obstructed windows and balconies. Lieutenant Commander CHASE conducted these hoists with no pilot back-up while his aircraft commander provided decisive control over the first wave of Department of Defense helicopters entering the area. On 01 September, after hoisting 19 survivors, Lieutenant Commander CHASE displayed superior airmanship while conducting multiple medical evacuations from the Baptist Memorial Hospital. Each approach and departure required a series of dangerous maneuvers beneath the level of power lines. Lieutenant Commander CHASE's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in the rescue of 119 lives. 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.