



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON 20593

FEB 18 2009

The Commandant of the United States Coast Guard takes pleasure in presenting the
COAST GUARD UNIT COMMENDATION to:

US AIRWAYS FLIGHT 1549 INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

For service as set forth in the following:

CITATION:

For exceptionally meritorious service from 15 to 20 January 2009 in the execution of the unprecedented rescue of all 155 passengers and crew onboard US Airways Flight 1549 and the flawless salvage of the sunken aircraft from the Hudson River. Immediately upon the notification that a passenger plane had ditched in the Hudson River, local Coast Guard units, demonstrating unparalleled preparedness and exemplary response execution, mobilized into an Incident Response Team and seamlessly coordinated with emergency responders and passenger vessels to rapidly rescue the survivors. While the people on board, which included an infant, had survived the crash landing and safely evacuated the plane, they were still in peril from exposure to the 36° water temperature and the 20° air temperature. In addition, the plane was rapidly flooding as it was drifting down the river far from either shoreline with all of the passengers and crew balancing on the wings or crammed into life rafts. Within minutes, passenger vessels and small boats dispatched from the Coast Guard Stations arrived and pulled all of the survivors to safety, many of whom were starting to show the effects of the extreme temperatures. At the same time the Incident Response Team directed port traffic throughout the harbor to keep any vessel traffic from hindering the rescue efforts and provided on scene coordination of the rescue vessels. While the rescue operations were still ongoing, Coast Guard personnel, cutters, and aircraft were dispatched to the final resting place of the plane to ensure port and waterway safety. Once it was confirmed that all persons on board the aircraft were safe, the Incident Response Team focused all of its efforts towards the recovery of the aircraft and the containment of the 2,600 gallons of jet fuel still onboard the plane. Even with the below freezing temperatures, icing conditions and fast river current the aircraft was safely salvaged two days later with no fuel spilled into the Hudson River while preserving vital evidence for the National Transportation Safety Board's investigation. The success of the Incident Response Team which was made up of 3 cutters, 3 boat stations, 1 air station and Sector New York was a result of their hard work and commitment to emergency preparedness, training and ability to coordinate with all of the port partners and first responders. The superb performance and devotion to duty demonstrated by the personnel of US Airways Flight 1549 Incident Response Team are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

The Operational Distinguishing Device is authorized.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T.W. Allen", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

T.W. ALLEN
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant