



THE COMMANDANT OF THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
WASHINGTON 20593

16 December 1994

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

**U. S. COAST GUARD RESPONSE FORCES
HOUSTON, TEXAS**

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For exceptionally meritorious service from 17 to 31 October 1994 while conducting disaster relief and pollution response operations following record floods that killed 19 people, left 11,500 others homeless, closed the vital Houston Ship Channel, caused \$2 billion in property damage, and created a severe environmental threat by rupturing major pipelines carrying crude and fuel oil, gasoline, and natural gas. Air Station Houston launched a massive relief effort, rescuing or assisting almost 600 people. Marine Safety Office Houston had the principle leadership role for all waterway management and pollution response operations during this disaster. Additionally, Marine Safety Office Houston, Aids to Navigation Team Galveston, and Coast Guard Auxiliary boat crews accomplished many heroic rescues and directly assisted hundreds of people. Vessel Traffic Service Houston/Galveston strictly and safely controlled all traffic in the Houston Ship Channel despite the high current, pollution, debris, shoaling, damaged aids to navigation, and sunken hazards. When pipelines ruptured and exploded, Marine Safety Office Houston, heavily augmented by Auxiliarists and Reservist, mounted a coordinated extraordinary fire and pollution response effort, containing or cleaning nearly all of the 2.5 million gallons of escaped oil that did not burn. USCGC PAPAW (WLB 308) rapidly recovered from a major maintenance status and utilized the Vessel of Opportunity Skimming System to recover spilled oil. USCGC HATCHET (WLIC 75309) and USCGC CLAMP (WLIC 75306) deployed miles of defensive oil booms which minimized environmental damage, and later rapidly restored critical aids to navigation. Because of this superb Team Coast Guard response, normal commercial traffic was restored within five days. The professionalism, dedication, and devotion to duty displayed by U. S. Coast Guard Response Forces during this period are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard."

The Operational Distinguishing Device is authorized.

For the Commandant,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. M. Loy".

J. M. LOY
Vice Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area