THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
HAS AWARDED THE

COAST GUARD MEDAL

TO
SHAWN D. SULLIVAN
SEAMAN
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD
FOR

EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM ON 30 OCTOBER 1991

GIVEN THIS 9th DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2002

THOMAS H. COLLINS
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF

THE COAST GUARD MEDAL

TO

SHAWN D. SULLIVAN

SEAMAN

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Seaman SULLIVAN is cited for extraordinary heroism on 30 October 1991 while serving as a member of the rescue team on board CGC TAMAROA during the daring rescue of four survivors from an Air National Guard (ANG) H-60 helicopter in what became known as "The Perfect Storm." The ANG H-60 was forced to ditch because it could not refuel from a C-130 tanker due to the violent turbulence caused by the worst weather in more than 100 years. When a USCG H-3F helicopter could not hoist the ANG crew because the force of the wind was so strong the basket did not go down to the water, but went almost straight back into the tail rotor, the TAMAROA became their only hope. Seaman SULLIVAN volunteered to be a member of the rescue team knowing the grim fact that he could lose his own life if he was washed overboard. As the seas towered above the bridge of the TAMAROA and the weather buoys reported wave heights of 100 feet, the TAMAROA did not have enough power to fight the storm and make a controlled approach to the men in the water. By turning beam to the seas and using their power, the TAMAROA was able to approach the ANG crew, but at a cost of taking 55-degree rolls. The rescue team could not even walk out to the bow; they crawled on their hands and knees. For almost two hours, Seaman SULLIVAN and the others held their breath, as they were completely submerged in 56-degree water as the waves crashed on deck. With an incredible display of teamwork, all survivors were snagged in a cargo net and hauled aboard the TAMAROA. If Seaman SULLIVAN had not risked his life during the worst storm of the century, the survivors of the ANG H-60 would certainly have died. His courage and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.