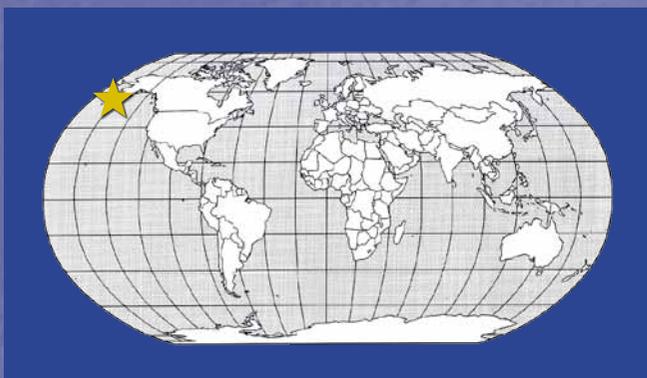




Brian J. McLaughlin

Lieutenant
Class of 1999



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting
the Air Medal to
Lieutenant Brian J. McLaughlin
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

For service as set forth in the following Citation:

Lieutenant McLaughlin is cited for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on 23 March 2008 while serving as Aircraft Commander aboard Coast Guard MH-60J helicopter CGNR 6007 while responding to the sinking of the F/V ALASKA RANGER, 125 miles west of Dutch Harbor, Alaska. Forward-deployed to St. Paul Island, the crew conducted an early morning launch in response to a distress call reporting uncontrolled flooding on the 192-foot, catcher-processor with 47 persons on board. Battling 30-knot winds, heavy snow squalls and near zero visibility, Lieutenant McLaughlin witnessed an epic scattering of dimly lit strobe lights from the mariners who had abandoned ship into the frigid sea. Exhibiting superior leadership, Lieutenant McLaughlin directed the crew to jettison the aircraft's dewatering pump and crew raft, maximizing space for survivors. Faced with the heart wrenching reality of facing more people in the water than could fit into his aircraft, Lieutenant McLaughlin skillfully triaged the scene, selecting to recover those survivors drifting furthest from the life rafts. Demonstrating exceptional leadership, Lieutenant McLaughlin expertly synergized his crew's efforts to safely execute 40 open-sea hoist evolutions through periods of vertigo-inducing snow squalls and minus 24-degree wind-chill. Making the difficult decision to cease recoveries when the aircraft reached capacity, Lieutenant McLaughlin skillfully navigated CGNR 6007 back to USCGC MUNRO, where all of the survivors were safely delivered. After conducting a hazardous night in-flight refueling evolution with USCGC MUNRO, Lieutenant McLaughlin and his crew returned to scene where they recovered three more survivors from the wind-swept seas. Lieutenant McLaughlin's actions and aeronautical skill were instrumental in saving 15 people from certain death in the Bering Sea. 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.

Lieutenant Commander McLaughlin remains on active duty.
