



**Lawrence G. Brudnicki**

Commander  
Class of 1972



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The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting  
the Coast Guard Medal

Commander Lawrence G. Brudnicki  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

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For service as set forth in the following citation:

Commander Brudnicki is cited for heroism while serving as Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Cutter TAMAROA during the daring nighttime rescue of four survivors from a downed Air National Guard H-60 helicopter during one of the strongest storms in recorded history. On 30 October 1991, the pilot of an Air National Guard helicopter was forced to ditch his aircraft into the storm driven waves of the North Atlantic when strong winds prevent in-flight refueling. When a Coast Guard helicopter's attempts to rescue the survivors were thwarted by high winds, TAMAROA became the helicopter crew's only hope for survival. Commander Brudnicki quickly assessed the situation and recognized that TAMAROA's propulsion limitations prevented a controlled approach to the survivors in the water. Instead, he directed TAMAROA to approach the downed air crew with the ship's beam exposed to the towering waves and placed the cutter in an extremely vulnerable and unstable position. With the crew pushed to the limits of human endurance as a result of hurricane force winds, 56-degree seawater and 55 degree rolls, Commander Brudnicki skillfully orchestrated the rescue efforts of his operations, deck and engineering departments. For over two hours, TAMAROA violently pitched and rolled while Commander Brudnicki coordinated the efforts of the forecastle rescue team, conning officer, and engineering watch standers. Knowing that the waves crashing across the deck could wash the rescue team overboard, and that the extreme rolls could result in the capsizing of TAMAROA with its 80-person crew, Commander Brudnicki continually re-assessed the environmental conditions and the risks faced by the ship's crew. Under his leadership and direction, TAMAROA's crew persisted until all four airmen were safely recovered and received immediate medical treatment for hypothermia and other life-threatening injuries. Commander Brudnicki then re-focused his unit's efforts on the search for one missing helicopter crewmember and coordinated multiple search assets over a 60,000 square mile area. Commander Brudnicki demonstrated remarkable seamanship, exceptional fortitude, and daring in spite of imminent personal danger to himself and his crew. His unselfish actions, courage, and unwavering devotion to duty reflect the highest credit upon himself and the United States Coast Guard.

Commander Brudnicki retired at the rank of Captain.

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