



Donald E. Bader

Lieutenant Commander
Class of 1994



**The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting
the Distinguished Flying Cross to
Lieutenant Commander Donald E. Bader
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

For service as set forth in the following citation:

Lieutenant Commander Bader is cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on the day and night of 8 May 2005 while rescuing three people from the sailing vessel AL MEISAN. The vessel had been severely damaged and was sinking in a strong nor'easter 465 miles northeast of Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina. After rendezvousing with and refueling aboard the USS TRENTON, Lieutenant Commander Bader executed a demanding launch with the ship at maximum pitch and role limits. Battling heavy rains and 50 to 70 knot winds, he bravely flew into the heart of the nor'easter toward the foundering vessel. Confronting a navigational computer failure, he wisely used the standby compass to dead reckon toward scene until the co-pilot was able to regain use of the onboard computer systems. Once on scene and unable to hoist directly to the vessel due to the violently pitching mast and angry sea state, he deployed the rescue swimmer into the turbulent seas near the vessel to aid in the rescue attempt. With winds in excess of 50 knots and 40 foot seas preventing the swimmer from reaching the vessel, he quickly recovered the swimmer to formulate an alternate plan. He again deployed the swimmer as one survivor at a time abandoned the stricken vessel. Demonstrating exceptional aeronautical skill, he recovered the first victim from the violent seas with a basket hoist. With the fuel state becoming critical, and the length of time required for a similar hoist in the deteriorating weather conditions, it was decided to use the rescue strop to recover the remaining two victims. Lieutenant Commander Bader twice again deployed the swimmer into the roiling seas, expertly recovering the survivors. With all three survivors and crew safely onboard, he adroitly flew through the stormy conditions for another 265 miles to Nantucket Island. Although hampered by darkness, fog and unrelenting rain, he landed safely with only 30 minutes of fuel remaining, accumulating over 12 hours of crew mission time and having flown over 800 nautical miles. Lieutenant Commander Bader's actions, aeronautical skill and heroism were instrumental in the rescue of three people. His courage, judgment, and devotion to duty in the face of hazardous flying conditions are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

Lieutenant Commander Bader remains on active duty.
