



Kwang Ping Hsu

Lieutenant Commander
Class of 1962



**The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting
the Air Medal (Gold Star in lieu of a second) to
Lieutenant Commander Kwang Ping Hsu
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

For service as set forth in the following Citation:

Lieutenant Commander Hsu is cited for extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight on 10 April 1971 while serving as pilot of Coast Guard HH-52A 1384 helicopter engaged in the rescue of four injured persons, including two children, from an aircraft crash in the mountains near Orinda, California. Departing San Francisco in early morning darkness, Lieutenant Commander Hsu navigated by road map to the crash site and found it marked by one small red flare and a few flashlights. Although the crash site was in the shadow of the mountains making it difficult to distinguish the tress, rocks, and sheer cliffs, the urgency of the evacuation dictated an attempted landing. Lieutenant Commander Hsu skillfully maneuvered the helicopter in a demanding circling approach from 2500 feet to a restricted landing on a small knoll which protruded from a sheer drop on three sides and a steep mountain wall on the other. Displaying expert aeronautical skill and aided only by the helicopter's landing lights in reaching the landing site, he airlifted the severely injured survivor to a waiting ambulance. He then made three subsequent flights to the crash scene to remove the remaining survivors to safety. Lieutenant Commander Hsu's remarkable ability, perseverance and initiative were instrumental in the timely rescue of the survivors. His courage, sound judgment and unwavering devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

Lieutenant Commander Hsu retired at the rank of Captain. Captain Hsu was born in 1936 in Shantung Province in China and immigrated to the United States with his family when he was eleven years old. In 1962, he became the first native Chinese American to graduate from the Coast Guard Academy. In 1986, forty years after his family first fled the Japanese invasion and then the Chinese Communist Revolution, as Commander of Air Station Barber's Point, Hawaii he flew a Coast Guard HC-130 aircraft to Beijing; the first visit by a U.S. military aircraft to Communist China since 1947. He led the U.S. delegation at the Beijing aerospace exhibition. Captain Hsu's last act of gallantry was battling brain cancer at the leading edge of medical technology. He lost that battle in 2007.
