



Kenneth W. Thompson

Commander
Class of 1964



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting
the Meritorious Unit Commendation to
USCGC VIGOROUS (WMEC-627)
Commander Kenneth W. Thompson, Commanding Officer
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

For service as set forth in the following summary of action:

For meritorious service on 11 October 1982 while serving as Commanding Officer of CGC VIGOROUS in rescuing survivors of the capsized sailing vessel GONZO. While proceeding to avoid a severe storm, VIGOROUS was diverted to the GONZO through the weather. The first vessel on-scene was the 870 foot tanker CALIFORNIA GETTY who was unable to retrieve the three persons but remained until the arrival of VIGOROUS, who was vectored to the scene by a Coast Guard C-130 and Canadian P-3 aircraft. Winds of forty knots and seas of twenty feet forced recovery on the forecastle using a "horse collar" from the deployed helicopter. With the CALIFORNIA GETTY stationed up-sea to create a lee, VIGOROUS positioned herself upwind and drifted down on GONZO. While the horse collar was being streamed, VIGOROUS backed down slightly, allowing GONZO to slip under the stem. Each GONZO crewmember donned the horse collar, jumped into the sea and was quickly hauled aboard the VIGOROUS, and they were all safe within thirty-nine minutes. The outstanding professional seamanship, teamwork and innovative rescue techniques performed under extremely arduous and demanding conditions by VIGOROUS are most highly commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.

Commander Thompson went on to retire at the rank of Captain.
