



CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE AIR MEDAL

TO

SENIOR MASTER SERGEANT DANA M. BEACH

Senior Master Sergeant Dana M. Beach distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight as a Pararescue Recovery Superintendent in the Atlantic Ocean, 275 miles east of Patrick Air Force Base, Florida on 30 December 1997. On that date, Sergeant Beach voluntarily left the safety of a rescue helicopter and entered the extremely dangerous ocean to save the lives of seamen in their futile attempts to swim clear of the rapidly sinking merchant ship "Merchant Patriot". The ship was pitching wildly, as high gale-force winds drove waves onto the deck repeatedly, preventing a hoist recovery from the ship. With complete disregard for his own safety, and swimming dangerously close to the pitching ship in near hurricane force seas, Sergeant Beach's skillful application of water life-saving techniques saved sailors from drowning or being sucked under the hull of the ship as it heaved out of the water. He made this exhausting cycle three times, with little or no rest periods. The professional skill and airmanship displayed by Sergeant Beach reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

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