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*Dedicated to the Advancement of the International Helicopter Community*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Travis Christy Named HAI's Salute to Excellence  
Pilot of the Year**

*Alexandria, Virginia (January 14, 2022)* – Helicopter Association International (HAI) is pleased to announce United States Coast Guard Lieutenant Commander Travis Christy, an MH-60 aircraft commander, as the recipient of the Salute to Excellence Pilot of the Year Award. The award, presented by ROTOR Media, recognizes an outstanding single feat performed by a helicopter pilot during the year or extraordinary professionalism over a period of time. It will be presented March 7 at HAI HELI-EXPO 2022 in Dallas, Texas.

Travis Christy joined the US Coast Guard (USCG) out of a desire to help people. While attending the Coast Guard Academy, he chose to serve in the aviation community, receiving his wings in 2013. He has since helped save numerous lives at sea, inland, and in post-disaster support efforts.

One such day came on March 2, 2021. At 8 pm, a call came in to USCG Air Station Cape Cod in Massachusetts. Atlantic Destiny, a 140-foot fishing vessel with 31 onboard, had caught fire and was taking on water more than 200 nautical miles east of Cape Cod.

Facing darkness, freezing cloud layers, and turbulent winds, Christy set out for the disabled vessel. Shortly after the aircraft arrived on scene, the decision was made to evacuate most of the boat's crew. After a Royal Canadian Air Force helicopter hoisted six crew members, Christy maneuvered his helicopter into position to begin hoisting other survivors. Battling 40- to 60-kt. winds and 33-ft. waves, Christy and his crew lifted eight survivors from the dark, pitching vessel.

With a full cabin, Christy departed and flew 125 miles through pockets of unidentified precipitation to Yarmouth International Airport (CYQI) in Nova Scotia, Canada, where the survivors were transferred to awaiting rescue personnel.

Christy rose to the occasion again on May 30, 2021, when he and his crew responded to rescue an injured skier at 4,000 ft. on Mount Washington in New Hampshire. The skier had fallen 400 ft. through a boulder field and suffered severe head trauma and a spinal injury. No other aircraft in the area could support the mission due to the patient's high-altitude location and a reported visibility of 1/16 to 0 statute mile.

Christy flew under an IFR flight plan to Eastern Slope Regional Airport (KIZG) near the injured skier. From there, he identified a safe route and briefed his team on how they would transit the remaining 20 nautical miles to the injured skier, including an inadvertent-IMC plan. The aircraft followed the road, navigating around clouds and mountainous terrain at 40 to 70 kt. and altitudes of 100 to 200 ft.

Once on scene, Christy used the aircraft's direction finder to pinpoint the injured skier's position. As the helicopter hovered near its maximum available power, Christy served as the safety pilot while the patient was

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hoisted via litter. Once the skier was safely onboard, Christy and the crew expeditiously transported the patient to Maine Medical Center.

In August 2021, Christy was also instrumental in discovering and rescuing eight people and two pets from a severely damaged beach hotel on Grand Isle, Louisiana, while supporting post-hurricane rescue efforts in the wake of Hurricane Ida.

Throughout his many years with the Coast Guard, Christy has found himself in the midst of seemingly insurmountable challenges. Yet, by employing careful judgment, aviation skills, and trusted leadership capabilities, he has benefited countless lives.

The Pilot of the Year Award will be presented during HAI HELI-EXPO 2022. HAI HELI-EXPO®, the world's largest helicopter trade show and exhibition, will be held at the Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center in Dallas, Texas, March 7–10, with the exhibit hall open March 8–10. For more information on HAI HELI-EXPO 2022, visit [heliexpo.com](https://www.heliexpo.com).

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*HAI is the professional trade association for the international helicopter industry and represents more than 1,100 companies and over 16,000 industry professionals in more than 65 countries. Each year, HAI members safely operate more than 3,700 helicopters and remotely piloted aircraft approximately 2.9 million hours. HAI is dedicated to the promotion of the helicopter as a safe, effective method of commerce and to the advancement of the international helicopter community.*