

**AFRAS Silver Medal Winner:
Toby A. Ducote, USCG Auxiliary**

Auxiliarist DUCOTE is cited for meritorious service in the performance of duty while serving as a member of Flotilla 47 from 31 August to 7 September 2005 following the devastating landfall of Hurricane KATRINA. This category four Hurricane resulted in the largest domestic Coast Guard response in U.S. history, saving or assisting some 24,000 lives providing more than 9,000 medical evacuations and coordinating the response to over 6,000 oil and hazardous material pollution cases along the Gulf of Mexico.

With all communications destroyed by the hurricane, Auxiliarist DUCOTE, under his own initiative, deployed his flatboat to begin search and rescue efforts within the flooded waters of New Orleans immediately after the hurricane made landfall. Areas within the city of New Orleans were plagued by violence that threatened the safety of first responders attempting to rescue citizens trapped inside and on the roof of their flooded homes. After working tirelessly by himself for the first five days, he obtained the assistance of the National Guard to provide needed protection for his boat and assistance in rescue activities for the next three days. After three days of rescuing survivors with armed National Guard escorts, the National Guard Commander came to the conclusion that Auxiliarist DUCOTE and the National Guard soldier assigned to protect him were in too much danger in the area and stopped the mission.

Auxiliarist DUCOTE, working over 100 hours in only eight days, affected the rescue of 250 individuals from their flooded homes. These survivors owe their accelerated evacuation, and in some cases, their lives, to Auxiliarist DUCOTE's bravery, initiative of responding even while not on duty and his obvious humanitarian instincts. Auxiliarist DUCOTE's dedication and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary.