

Citation for
THE ASSOCIATION FOR RESCUE AT SEA
GOLD MEDAL

TO

JOSHUA A. MARZILLI

BOATSWAIN'S MATE SECOND CLASS

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

Petty Officer MARZILLI is cited for extraordinary heroism while responding to the Western Maui Wildfires from 08 to 09 August 2023, serving as Coxswain in Charge of Station Maui Response Boat-Medium (CG-45719). Braving thick, dense smoke, flying embers, and navigating through burning vessels and debris, he and his crew rescued five individuals and assisted approximately 40 more in safely escaping the raging flames that engulfed the historic town of Lahaina, Maui.

The initial call came in as an urgent request for Coast Guard assistance, as local responders reported up to 100 people fleeing into the ocean to escape the dangerous conditions on land. Petty Officer MARZILLI courageously accepted his role, conducted a brief and thorough risk assessment with his command and crew, and set off towards Lahaina in 30-knot winds, with gusts over 50, and three-foot seas.

As he piloted the CG-45719 towards Lahaina to locate people stranded in the water along the shoreline, the crew was met with an eerie orange glow from the flames and smoke. With no discernible landmarks, they relied on their intuition to conduct a shoreline search. With one crew member on the bow keeping a sharp lookout for debris and another on the loudspeaker, they spotted flashing lights coming from the shoreline.

Despite knowing the dangers, Petty Officer MARZILLI volunteered to enter the perilous waters to swim to shore and render assistance to those in distress. After an unsuccessful first attempt due to heavy currents, he reevaluated and teamed with an off-duty lifeguard to traverse the reef with a surfboard provided by a Good Samaritan vessel. This time, he successfully overcame the winds, current, and sharp coral to paddle the final 100-yards to shore. Together they rescued two children by paddling them through the heavy surf break to an awaiting Good Samaritan vessel.

Upon returning to shore a second time, he supported the Maui Fire Department's request to assist with evacuating approximately 40 individuals, including carrying three nonambulatory

evacuees through downed electrical poles and debris to a rescue vehicle. Once back onboard the CG-45719, Petty Officer MARZILLI led his crew on a final sweep of Lahaina Harbor, rescuing two more survivors. He also coordinated with a Good Samaritan vessel to rescue a fifth individual from the water. His stamina, focus, and bravery in the face of imminent personal danger was vital to the Coast Guard's mass rescue efforts during the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century.

Petty Officer MARZILLI's courage, judgment, and devotion to duty are most heartily commended and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Coast Guard.