

# PHPA Main Rotor



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## LA County FD Welcomes Home First Firehawk

Main Rotor editorial staff  
Professional Helicopter Pilots Association

On Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Air Operations section received some of the very newest technology to fight one of mother nature's oldest threats - fire. With funds approved last year by the LA County Board of Supervisors, the first of two Sikorsky S-70A Firehawks, N190LA in LA CO FD colors, was delivered to Barton Heliport at the Whiteman Airport in Pacoima. The LA CO FD Air Operations section is managed by Battalion Chief Gerald Cosey under the direction of LA CO FD Chief P. Michael Freeman.

"... And the Winner Is..."

The Sikorsky S-70 was selected after research was completed during an intensive 100-day evaluation program. Based on the research findings a two-ship acquisition program was developed, sent to and approved by Los Angeles County Supervisors last year. With the delivery of the first Firehawk the

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## NYPD Air Ops: Where Heroes Live.

Main Rotor Editorial staff  
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### **NYPD Aviation Unit during the WTC Attacks**

For most aviation groups connected with law enforcement, training for the day they hope never arrives is a big part of the job. For the NYPD Aviation Unit that day was Tuesday, September 11th when terrorists slammed two Boeing airliners into the World Trade Center collapsing the signature twin towers into the heart of Manhattan.

One of the early adopters of aviation in law enforcement, the NYPD has been flying since 1929. Based at Brooklyn's Floyd Bennett Airfield since 1939 the Manhattan skyline is a major part of their horizon and a quick six-minute hop to the WTC. The Air Support unit is currently under the command of Capt. Joseph Gallucci. Lt. Glenn A. Daley, a long time Professional member of the Airborne Law Enforcement Association is also a member of the unit Command Staff.

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*"...Until the second aircraft we had no idea this could get any worse - we had no idea ..."*  
*Lt. Glenn A. Daley*  
*NYPD Air Ops*

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Lt. Daley recounts that their crew was on scene immediately after the 1<sup>st</sup> impact in the South Tower. "Like everyone else, we felt it had been an accident and the personnel on duty were doing the initial evaluation of the damage planning to execute High

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department becomes the first municipal public agency in the nation to use this type of 'heavy', TYPE 1 helicopter - the latest derivative of Sikorsky's immensely popular UH-60 Blackhawk airframe.

Lee Benson, Senior Pilot for Los Angeles County Fire Dept. / Air Ops, is a 20 year veteran of fighting fires in the unique Southern California environment. Also a key member of the Firehawk evaluation team, Benson notes that the diversity of local conditions provide the perfect laboratory in which to evaluate any new fire fighting equipment. "... Southern California encompasses the best and worst of fire conditions," Benson said. "By testing the Firehawk here we were able to gain a confidence that the [ Firehawk] equipment and tactics can pass muster anywhere." Based on a proven airframe, the Blackhawks' popularity owes much to the initial U.S. Army design specs which called for an aircraft that could haul equipment and troops across harsh topography in just about any climate with high reliability - a mission strikingly similar to that of LA CO. FD / Air Ops. "The twin engine FIREHAWK brings an operating simplicity and a power surplus we simply don't have with the current fleet," Benson admits. "Our Bell 412, with it's 360 gallon water tank, is a powerful weapon, but the same pilot flying a Firehawk can deliver a fifteen man fire crew along a ridge line where they may be critically needed and then, with it's larger tank and snorkel system, deliver triple the water volume compared to our - 412's."

Benson points out that the diverse mission profile of the LA CO. FD / Air Ops. includes not just fire suppression but high altitude and swiftwater rescues, emergency medical evacuation and transport from rugged, impromptu landing sites and the Firehawk has been configured to handle all these missions to make sure it isn't just a one trick pony.

Shortly after it's delivery from Sikorsky, the FireHawk went to Cheyenne Airmotive in Cheyenne, Wyoming for a custom paint job featuring the traditional yellow, black and white design of LA CO FD aircraft. Next stop for the aircraft was Denver, Colorado where Air Methods equipped and flight-tested the Firehawk with advanced avionics and customized interiors for crew-haul, SAR and EMS missions. Air Methods also

installed the external hoist equipment from the Breeze-Eastern Company based in New Jersey .

Last stop for the Firehawk was in Chico, California where Aero-Union installed the drop [water] tanks and snorkel system. Recently upgraded with a retractable snorkel, the system can acquire 1,000 gallons of water from a host of sources in less than 45 seconds.

At the end of the day when both Firehawks are sitting on the Barton Heliport ramp, they will be identically configured - both providing the 'big stick' for use in firefighting, emergency response and Medivac / Rescue for the Southern California community.

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**Additional research and contact information:**

- Los Angeles CO. Fire Dept:  
<http://www.lacofire.org>
- Sikorsky web site: [www: sikorsky.com](http://www.sikorsky.com)
- Additional photos of UH-60 BLACK HAWK I FIREHAWK: - [www.helispot.com](http://www.helispot.com)
- Additional photos of helicopters from LA CO. FD Air Ops and other Southern California agencies can be found at: [www.heroes-airshow.com](http://www.heroes-airshow.com)

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## Ventura CO. Sheriffs Restores Air Support Capability with New Aircraft

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Ventura County Sheriffs Aviation Unit, based at Camarillo Airport, reports that funding by county supervisors has allowed them to get underway with the acquisition of two additional helicopters.

Currently under the command of Captain Arve Wells, these aircraft will restore much of the capability the department lost when they grounded two of their UH-1's acquired previously via the Federal Excess Property Program. Instrumental in the program to recover their aviation capabilities are Dan Shea, Chief Pilot and John Davitz, Chief of Maintenance. Dan has over twenty years with Ventura County Sheriffs after acquiring his flight training as a U.S. Army Warrant Officer while John Davitz, who earned his maintenance wings with the U.S. Navy, has been with the Sheriffs department for ten years and also serves with U.S. Navy Reserve Sqd. HCS-5 based at Pt. Mugu.

Currently the two aircraft are undergoing repair and upgrades at HeliPro in Vancouver, Canada. Both helicopters were acquired and will be built up under a \$6.4 million funding package delivered to the department by Ventura County Supervisors interested in maintaining the region's response levels.

First to be completed will be COPTER 8, a Bell 205-B featuring an upgraded Lycoming T53 - 17B engine and a 212 drive train. Dan Shea feels this aircraft will be complete in late 2001. "The airframe is 90% complete and both aircraft will have the standard Ventura CO SD paint scheme," he noted. Shea also indicated that both aircraft will be built up to a fully commercial-qualified status and have standard Airworthiness Certificates.

Following close behind in the flight schedule is COPTER 9, a Bell 212 HP / IFR also undergoing repairs and upgrades at HeliPro.

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## NYPD Air Ops - Where Heroes Live - continued from page 1

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Rise Rescue protocols - our Bell 412 and 206 helicopters were both on-scene." Daley explains the Bell 412 is really the work-horse of the department with equipment for hoist rescues, medevac and other gear for special operations while the Bell 206 B&L aircraft performs a command and control function.

Thinking this was an accident, the orbiting crews were closely watching the roof areas for signs of any people. While there are landing pads on both of the towers they are used very rarely. "The crews didn't report seeing anyone that made it to the roof - in spite of the smoke I know our guys would have made the attempt if they'd seen people to rescue," Daley noted.

The NYPD flight crews like all Americans watching the tragedy unfold, felt the first impact was simply a tragic accident - however unlike anyone else they had a front row seat when the true nature of the circumstances became clear. "Until the second aircraft we had no idea this could get any worse - we had no idea ..." , Daley recalled. The first indication that a second plane was bearing down on the WTC was hearing the pilot of the -412 shouting, '... Turn, Turn, Turn... ' .

Coming in from the South at 900 feet the high jacked 767 barely avoided a mid air collision with the circling NYPD air units. "The guy flying it had the throttles wide open - the rate of closure on the building was astonishing. Our guys had only split seconds to react," Daley said.

Lt. Daley reports that offers of assistance were rolling in immediately after the disaster. " It was incredible. We had immediate offers of personnel and aircraft, anything really we needed, from LAPD, San Diego - really the entire community of aviation law enforcement was willing and ready to support us."

Since the disaster and the imposition of a 25 mile TFR around ground zero, Lt. Daley's crews have been busy with strategic support and coordination, aerial resupply and air space management.

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**Ventura CO Sheriffs Department from page 3**

Configured similarly to COPTER 8, the -212 HP will feature Pratt and Whitney 3-DF engines and its schedule is currently on time. "We're expecting -9 to follow by 2-3 months, "Shea noted. "That would deliver it here in late Spring 2002 - just in time to get training flights in before fire season."

To support the multi-mission role of the Aviation Unit, both of the aircraft will be outfitted for mountain SAR / EMS medivac as well as general / tactical transport and fire suppression. In addition to the Lucas external hoist, both aircraft will feature FLIR, Nightsun searchlights and NVG capability. A Simplex 375-gallon drop-tank [water] and snorkel system will also be installed by HeliPro.

Shea admits the decision to purchase previously owned aircraft was considered long and hard. "With our limited budget, buying the used aircraft and going the upgrade route allowed the department to get two aircraft into service for roughly the price on one new one"

Sounds to us like a clear approach for Ventura county taxpayers. -- End

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