

# heliweb

SEPTEMBER 2016 VOL 32

MAGAZINE



**ENLOE**  
**FLIGHT CARE**  
HOSPITAL PROGRAM FOCUSED  
ON SAFETY WITH NEW H130T2

**ZIMBABWE'S  
ONLY FEMALE  
HELI PILOT**

**SAN GABRIEL FIRE RESPONSE**

**INSTRUMENT CHECKRIDE**

**BOEING AH-6i**

INSIDE  
THE  
SEPTEMBER  
ISSUE



44

COVER STORY:  
ENLOE FLIGHT CARE  
RESPONDS WITH THE LATEST  
IN HELICOPTER TECHNOLOGY  
*By Ryan Mason*



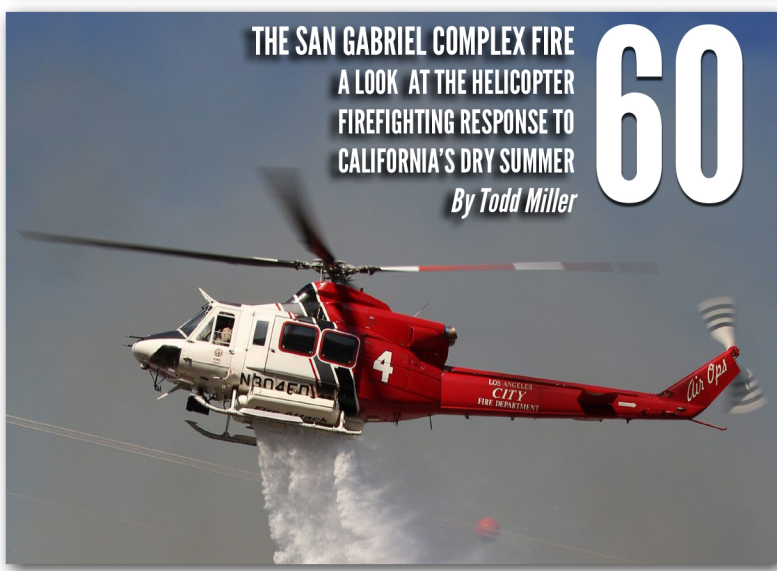
THE LOW DOWN, ON  
GOING DOWN BELOW  
INSTRUMENT CHECKRIDES  
*By Matt Johnson*

38



MEET ZIBAWE'S ONLY FEMALE  
HELICOPTER PILOT  
FIGHTING AGAINST THE ODDS,  
ELIZABETH VIVASHE TRIUMPHS  
*By Sherri Spagnola*

56



THE SAN GABRIEL COMPLEX FIRE  
A LOOK AT THE HELICOPTER  
FIREFIGHTING RESPONSE TO  
CALIFORNIA'S DRY SUMMER  
*By Todd Miller*

60



TEACHING AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS  
MEET BOEING'S AH-6i  
*By Steve Valinski*

64

heliweb  
MAGAZINE

COLUMNS  
&  
FEATURES

Helipix	6
From the Desk of	16
The Toolbox	18
Whirly Girls	20
Straight & Level	22
The Instructors Station	24
United States Helicopter Safety Team	26
Helinews	28
Rotorheads	70
Behind the Lens	76



BU

Story and Images | **Todd Miller**

# CALIFORNIA BURNING

Wildfires scorched the California landscape this summer like many in years past. On June 20th, 2016, the Azusa and Duarte fires merged to form the San Gabriel Complex Fire. Fought by more than a dozen air assets over 11 days.



**W**hat was expected to be a scorching June 20th in Los Angeles quickly escalated into a crisis, as wildfires broke out on the hills to the North of the city. Fanned by winds the “Azusa” (Reservoir Fire) and “Duarte” (Fish Fire) fires quickly spread east, uphill and towards each other threatening to merge.

Given their proximity, both fires ultimately managed as one, the San Gabriel Complex fire. Firefighting crews quickly positioned themselves on the ground between neighborhoods and the hillsides where the fires raged. With early afternoon temperatures of 101F, those on the ground clothed in hot, heavy protective gear knew they were in for an exhausting day.

Resources positioned for the ground fight that was likely in the evening when winds often shift west towards densely

populated areas.

While possible the ground crews conserved energy in the shade – waiting for their turn to be called into action.

A homeowner, his house bordering the brush looked on nervously. In spite of the real possibility of property loss, it was impressive to witness the overwhelming resources fighting the fire.

These conditions are not unusual in California, the State, and surrounding Cities and jurisdictions remain well prepared. Within a short time, aviation resources of all types were mobilized to protect homes, property, and infrastructure.

Helicopters and aircraft activated like a military operation water bombing the fires in waves, from every possible

angle and altitude.

Firefighting resources from many agencies and private operators were present to fight the fire with assets from rotary and fixed wing aircraft, including a DC-10, C-130, BAE 146, Grumman S-2 and several bird dog aircraft. The helicopter contingent fighting the fires included three Erickson Skycranes, two LA County Fire Sikorsky S-70A's a Bell 412EP and two Bell 205's.

The aerial coordination of so many aircraft flying continual sorties speaks to the organization that handles everything from logistics, maintenance, piloting, command and air traffic control. Recognition is well due to those professionals that fly, and support on every level.

The San Gabriel Complex fire burned for 11 days until it was considered 100% contained. 