

A first-person perspective from a pilot's helmet. The view is through a dark visor, looking out at a white and blue California Highway Patrol helicopter. The helicopter's registration number '1341HR' is visible on its side. The pilot's nose and a black oxygen mask are in the foreground, partially obscuring the view. The background shows a clear blue sky and a tarmac.

CALIFORNIA
HIGHWAY PATROL
GOLDEN GATE DIVISION
A I R O P E R A T I O N S



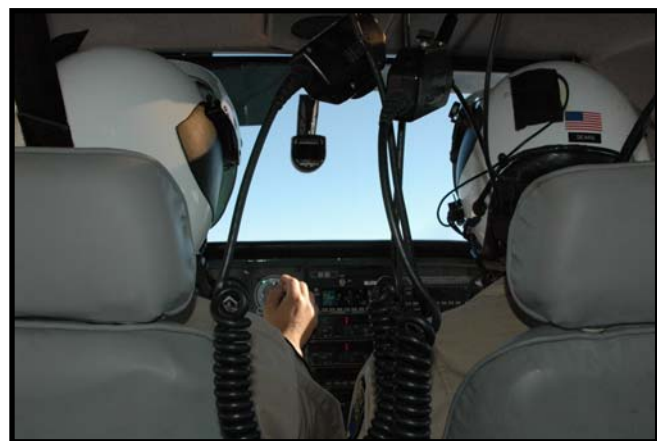
The Golden Gate Division's Air Operations unit regularly patrols over 6,900 square miles of the bay area that incorporate a residential population of more than six million people. In 2009 the Air Operations program faced concerns about the continuing budget crisis, having extra demands placed on it in order to accommodate local police departments that could no longer afford to fund their own air operations units.



The Unit is based at the Napa County Airport and operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The unit operates two airplanes and two helicopters: a Cessna T206H, a Cessna 182S and 2 Eurocopter AS 350B3s.

The Air Operations unit is made up of a captain, lieutenant, three sergeants (aerial supervisors), 13 Pilot/Officers, 13 Flight Officers (seven of which are Paramedics) and a contract helicopter mechanic.

The unit has five Certified Flight Instructors (three airplane and two helicopter) that provide on-going flight training and professional pilot development. Each member of the unit has additional assigned responsibilities which aid in the unit's safety goals. During 2009, the Air Operations unit logged more than 2,950 accident and incident free hours.





The Air Operations unit also participates in community outreach events such as the Travis Air Force Base Air Expo, Hiller Aviation Museum's Vertical Challenge, the Napa County Airport Open House, Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Young Eagles, Napa Chamber of Commerce Fly-A-Leader and the FAA Wings Programs. Additionally, unit personnel have been selected to speak at local community college aviation and criminal justice programs. The unit strongly encourages CHP and allied agency ride alongs for familiarization and to improve inter-agency operability within the air program.

The Golden Gate Division's Air Operations unit patrols over 6,900 square miles of metropolitan areas, rural county roads and critical waterways. The aircraft crews are tasked with listening to over 100 channels of communication at any given moment. By monitoring CHP radios as well as local police department frequencies, the aircraft can respond to an incident in a matter of seconds. Flight Officers routinely monitor several events at one time and need to prioritize those events to best utilize the aircraft for assistance of the officers on the ground.

During 2009, the Air Operations Unit utilized LoJack to track and help recover over 35 stolen vehicles, both occupied and unoccupied, including heavy construction equipment.



The Bay Area contains over 100 different allied agencies. Each agency has its own unique mission and role in the community they serve. CHP aircraft crews are tasked with assisting those agencies (sometimes unsolicited) as a part of their daily flight roles and responsibilities. Golden Gate Division aircraft assist CHP Areas and allied agencies with several different roles such as: pursuits, suspect searches, protests, rescues, medevacs, marijuana eradication, traffic enforcement, congestion relief, stolen vehicle recoveries, surveillance and backup support.





The unit's aircraft have also been utilized during the Tour of California bicycle race, the Bay Bridge collapse, Bay Area oil spills, monthly civil protests, Critical Mass bicycle rallies, assisting Civil Air Patrol and FAA in conducting searches for aircraft accidents, Operation Impact (crime suppression in Oakland, Richmond and San Francisco) and the Every 15 Minutes DUI awareness program; a two-day program focusing on high school juniors and seniors, which challenges them to think about drinking, driving, personal safety, the responsibility of making mature decisions, and the impact their decisions have on family, friends, and many others.



As part of the program, one of the unit's helicopters lands at the scene of a staged collision, complete with student actors made up to look like accident victims, and medevacs one of students to a local trauma center.

During 2009, the Golden Gate Division Air Operations unit assisted in over 725

officer back-ups, 47 pursuits, 796 suspect searches, 296 arrests, 74 medevacs and 64 speed missions (362 citations with an average speed of 92 MPH and top speed of over 145 MPH). The unit also provided over 8,000 CHP and allied agency assists.

