

LAX08PA259

## AERIAL PHOTOS – BURNING WRECKAGE SMOKE PLUME

Taken from 1943 to 2001 PDT on August 5, 2008

Photographs were taken from two helicopters that reached the accident site immediately after N612AZ crashed. Using cockpit voice recorder data and witness observations, 1942 PDT was identified as the time of eruption of the postcrash fire. Both cameras that were used to take these photos were not date or time set correctly. Automatic Flight Following (AFF) data was correlated with picture metadata in order to determine the time at which the photos were taken. The accuracy of the times determined is approximately plus or minus one minute. The first ship in was N420RL, a Bell 206 L4, which was approaching H44 prior to the accident. It was being piloted by Nicole Ludwig. The photographs were taken by US Forest Service employee Michael Reid. He took 12 pictures:

1. Photos 1, 1943 PDT, taken at approximately 8 miles from the site, inbound.
2. Photos 2, 1945 PDT, taken at approximately 5 miles from the site, inbound.
3. Photos 3, 1946 PDT, taken at approximately 2 miles from the site, inbound.

The remaining nine pictures (Photos 4 - 12) were taken over the site. Michael Reid was interviewed by Jim Struhsaker, NTSB IIC, on August 4, 2009. A summary of this interview is attached.

The second helicopter, a Bell 206 B3, N90301, approached the site at approximately 1949 PDT, and photographer Ty Miller took three pictures (Photos 13 - 15). The first picture appeared to be taken about two to three miles from the site, and the other two pictures were taken over the site.

James F. Struhsaker  
Senior Air Safety Investigator  
Western Pacific Region



## RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**James F. Struhsaker**  
**Senior Air Safety Investigator**  
**Western Pacific Region**

**August 4, 2009**

---

**Subject:** LAX08PA259, N612AZ

**Witness:** Michael Reid

**Address:** Cedar City, Utah

During a telephone conversation, Mike Reid, a US Forest Service employee, reported that he was in the first helicopter (N420RL) to arrive over the accident site, approximately 3 to 4 minutes after the event. He took 12 aerial photographs of the smoke and burning wreckage. Mike said the pilot of N420RL flew as low as 200 to 300 feet over the accident site, and the smoke was raising straight up for about 400 to 500 feet. It then bent over and drifted to the northwest.