

"I am still kind of flight instructing but not really," she said. "The FAA has inspectors, principal operator instructors that go out and check the companies that fly to make sure that they are following all the rules and procedures. Well these guys are primarily behind desks now and not flying as much. They have to be current, so to do their job they have to come and do a currency flight and a check ride. They have to do the check ride with me once a year and a currency flight the other three quarters of the year."

Gravill said it can be intimidating instructing inspectors who in reality probably have many more hours of flight time than she does, but she embraces the challenges and is confident in her ability.

"It is kind of like guys who come in for the currency flight they really don't want to be there," she said. "The challenge is to make it interesting and fun for them. In a way it is hard because they do have more knowledge than training a beginner, but it is still fun. They all have way more experience than I do, but I have much more current proficiency in flying a helicopter than they do. They might not have flown a helicopter in more than 17 years. I had to get over that they might have more experience than I do, to do my job."

While she isn't currently instructing beginning flyers, Gravill said she will always enjoy the feeling of helping someone reach their goal of becoming a pilot.



"When I was flight instructing my favorite part was getting people to their first solo, kind of like teaching a chicken how to take flight," she said. "Now, you really feel like you are part of something, making sure that those who keep everyone safe are ready to their job."

Looking back Gravill said she feels that she has been fortunate to live her dream.

"It is a blessing to do what I do," she said. "The number of people who do get to fly helicopters for a job and get paid for it are small. I guess I feel that I was always in the right place at the right time it seems like I have been very lucky. But I love what I do and am very thankful for it."

❖ By Shauna Marlette

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