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**WILLIAMSPORT MAN SENTENCED TO 33 MONTHS FOR ASSAULTING
POLICE HELICOPTER PILOT WITH A LASER**

PHILADELPHIA - James Gautieri, 54, of Williamsport, PA, was sentenced today to 33 months in prison for interference with an aircraft or aircraft facilities, announced United States Attorney Zane David Memeger. Gautieri was convicted at trial on September 30, 2010 of his involvement in an April 30, 2008 incident during which he shined a laser into the cockpit of a Philadelphia Police Department helicopter during routine patrol, striking a pilot in the eyes.

“As a direct result of his reckless and irresponsible behavior, the defendant will now have several years to think about how he endangered public safety by shining a laser into a helicopter pilot's eyes,” said Memeger. “But for the pilot's skill in the air, the consequences for the citizens on the ground could have been tragic. Unlike a video game, simply hitting the reset button would not have made things okay.”

“The sentencing in this investigation today demonstrates the serious danger these criminal acts pose to aircraft safety,” said Special Agent-in-Charge George C. Venizelos of the Philadelphia Division of the FBI. “The public needs to be aware that the FBI will continue to aggressively pursue those who aim laser devices at aircraft and interfere with the safe operation of those aircraft.”

“There is simply no excuse for this type of behavior,” said Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey. “This defendant could have caused a serious and deadly accident. Let the sentencing today send a message that this behavior will not to be tolerated.”

In addition to the prison term, U.S. District Court Judge Eduardo Robreno ordered Gautieri to pay a fine in the amount of \$10,000.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Philadelphia Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Salvatore L. Astolfi.

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