



NEWS



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UPDATE: Man killed after 'hobby plane' crashes near Hesperia Airport

Daily Press

Posted: March 7, 2017, 11:20 AM



A San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department helicopter lands at the scene of a small "hobby plane" crash near the Hesperia Airport on Tuesday. One man was killed in the crash. [James Quigg, Daily Press]

HESPERIA — Authorities said a 55-year-old man died Tuesday morning after a "hobby plane" he was piloting crashed off Sante Fe Avenue near Hesperia Airport.

Robert Alexander, of Hesperia, was identified by the San Bernardino County Sheriff-Coroner division as the man who lost his life in Tuesday's crash.

Authorities were notified of a crash just west of the airport at approximately 10 a.m., according to San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Hesperia Station spokeswoman Jackie Chambers.

Sheriff's officials said Alexander was the solo pilot of a Quickstar MXL II, an ultra light sports aircraft. Chambers described the aircraft as a "two-seater hobby plane."

After taxiing down the Hesperia Airport runway, Alexander was briefly airborne before going into "aerodynamic stall" and colliding in a field north of the airport, Sheriff's officials said. Alexander was pronounced dead at the scene.

The County Hazmat Team was called because of a fuel leak from the crash, which occurred near the railroad tracks.

Terry Herndon, who lives near the airport, told the Daily Press that he's known Alexander for 25 years and helped load him into the plane Tuesday morning.

After declining to accompany Alexander on the flight, Herndon said he watched him take off and "go about 50 feet up in the air" before the plane made a hard turn and ended up going down.

Hesperia resident Jay Carlson, who said he and his brother were a friend of the pilot, told the Daily Press he got a call from somebody who works at the airport notifying him of the crash.

Carlson said his brother helped Alexander build the plane and described him as a "guy who liked to live on the edge."

"I guess this is it, it's hard to believe," Carlson said.

Authorities shut down Santa Fe Avenue as they conducted an investigation. Chambers said the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board had been notified and were responding.

<http://www.vvdailynews.com/news/20170307/update-man-killed-after-hobby-plane-crashes-near-hesperia-airport>

Pilot killed in crash near Hesperia Airport

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: March 7, 2017, 11:23 AM



Emergency personnel stand on scene of a plane crash near Hesperia Airport on Tuesday, March 7, 2017. A hobby plane crashed near industrial warehouses in the area around 10 am. The single male occupant was pronounced dead at the scene. The cause of the crash is still under investigation. (Sarah Alvarado for The Sun)

HESPERIA >> The pilot and sole occupant of an ultralight aircraft was killed when it crashed near the Hesperia Airport late Tuesday morning, according to **San Bernardino County Fire** officials.

The crash was reported about 10 a.m. near the airport located on Summit Valley Road south of Rancho Road.

The two-seater hobby aircraft crashed in the desert off the north end of the airport about 100 feet west of Santa Fe Avenue East, according to Eric Sherwin, fire department spokesman.

Authorities confirmed the pilot was a man but could not comment on what may have led up to the crash.

Tuesday's fatal crash comes a little more than a week after three people were killed and two others injured Feb. 27 when a plane took a nosedive into a Riverside neighborhood shortly after takeoff.

The Federal Aviation Administration isn't investigating the Hesperia crash.

"The aircraft appears to be an unregistered ultralight," FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said in an emailed statement. "We do not investigate crashes of these aircraft because they don't have FAA airworthiness certificates and you don't need a pilot license to fly them."

However, you can't fly them over populated areas and you can only fly during daylight hours, Gregor added.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170307/pilot-killed-in-crash-near-hesperia-airport>

Pilot Killed When Small Plane Crashes in Hesperia

Cindy Von Quednow, KTLA5

Posted: March 7, 2017, 1:07 PM



Officials investigate a fatal plane crash at the Hesperia Airport on March 7, 2017. (Credit: Jose Gonzalez)

The incident involving a "light aircraft" was reported about 10 a.m. at the north end of the airport, apparently shortly after take off, according to the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

Video from the scene showed the mangled ultralight aircraft, described as a Quicksilver MXL II. The pilot was the sole occupant of the plane.

Hazmat crews were at the scene Tuesday afternoon cleaning up a small oil spill from the crash. Jay Carlson, a friend of the victim, told KTLA that he heard about the plane crash from a mutual friend and he got "chills down his body."

Carlson said the victim, who he identified as Robert Alexander, had been building his aircraft for a while and he couldn't wait to fly it.

He added that the victim, who was in his early 60s, built the plane as a hobby and had a "hard landing" after testing out the plane last week.

Carlson said his friend liked to "live on the edge."

"He was always gung-ho for anything," he said.

Ian Gregor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration, said in an email that the plane appeared to be an “unregistered ultralight.”

He added that his agency does not investigate those types of planes because they don’t have FAA airworthiness certificates and you don’t need a pilot license to fly them.”

<http://ktla.com/2017/03/07/pilot-killed-when-light-aircraft-crashes-in-hesperia/>

Pilot killed when light aircraft crashes near Hesperia Airport

Veronica Rocha, LA Times

Posted: March 7, 2017, 3:30 PM

A pilot was killed Tuesday when his ultralight aircraft crashed near Hesperia Airport, fire officials said.

The crash was reported about 10 a.m. near the north end of the airport, about 100 feet west of Santa Fe Avenue East, said Eric Sherwin, a spokesman for the **San Bernardino County Fire Department**.

When firefighters arrived, they found the mangled aircraft and the pilot, who was the sole occupant. He suffered fatal injuries, Sherwin said.

It is unclear if the man had just taken off from the airport.

The aircraft appeared to be an unregistered ultralight, according to Ian Gregor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration in Los Angeles.

The FAA does not investigate crashes involving ultralight aircraft, he said.

Hazmat crews remained at the scene Tuesday morning to clean up a small oil spill from the crash, he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-pilot-killed-aircraft-crash-hesperia-airport-20170307-story.html>

Coroner identifies man killed in Hesperia Ultralight crash

Doug Saunders, Press Enterprise

Posted: March 7, 2017, 10:19 PM



San Bernardino County Coroner officials released the identity of the man who perished Tuesday when his Ultralight aircraft crashed in the desert.

Robert Alexander, 55 of Hesperia, was pronounced dead at the scene, according to a Coroner's news release.

He was piloting a Quickstar MXL II Ultralight. Nobody else was on board.

"After taxiing down the Hesperia Airport runway he became airborne for a short period of time before going into aerodynamic stall," the release states.

The two-seater hobby aircraft crashed in the desert off the north end of the airport about 100 feet west of Santa Fe Avenue East, according to Eric Sherwin, fire department spokesman.

Tuesday's fatal crash comes a little more than a week after three people were killed and two others injured Feb. 27 when a plane took a nosedive into a Riverside neighborhood shortly after takeoff.

The Federal Aviation Administration isn't investigating the Hesperia crash.

"The aircraft appears to be an unregistered ultralight," FAA spokesman Ian Gregor said in an emailed statement. "We do not investigate crashes of these aircraft because they don't have FAA airworthiness certificates and you don't need a pilot license to fly them."

However, you can't fly them over populated areas and you can only fly during daylight hours, Gregor added.

<http://www.pe.com/articles/identity-827020-bernardino-tuesday.html>

1 Dead in Hesperia “Hobby Plane” Crash

Victor Valley News Group

Posted: March 7, 2017



Gabriel D. Espinoza, Victor Valley News)

HESPERIA, Calif. (VVNG.com) A small ultralight aircraft crashed near the Hesperia Airport killing one person on board Tuesday morning.

The crash was reported around 10:00 a.m. just west of the airport landing strip. The airport, located on Sante Fe Avenue and Rancho Road is a public-use and privately owned airport.

Deputies from the Hesperia Station and the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** arrived on scene and located the two-seater “hobby” aircraft, according to Hesperia Spokeswoman Jackie Chambers.

When authorities arrived they determined the aircraft sustained major damage during the incident.

Chambers said a white male adult was the sole occupant of the aircraft and was pronounced deceased on scene.

It’s unclear if it was attempting to land or depart from the airport.

FAA does not require ultralights to have any proof of airworthiness. It is the responsibility of the owner to make sure the ultralight is safe. A pilot license is not required for those flying an amateur-built single-seat aircraft, however, a two-seater requires a Sport Pilot Certificate or higher to fly.

Hazmat has been requested to respond to the area for approximately 10 gallons of fuel that leaked from the hobby plane.

The FAA and the NTSB have been summoned to the site of the accident and will be further handling the investigation.

More information will be updated as it becomes available.

<http://www.vvng.com/1-dead-hesperia-hobby-plane-crash/>

Plane goes into aerodynamic stall, pilot perishes

Inland News Today

Posted: March 7, 2017



HESPERIA - (INT) - The crash of a small plane near the Hesperia airport Tuesday killed the pilot.

The coroner reported that Robert Alexander, was piloting an ultralight sports aircraft and had just taken off when it went into an aerodynamic stall.

The **San Bernardino County Fire Department** said the plane went down around 10am at the north end of the airport near Summit Valley Road.

Alexander, 55, of Hesperia was the only occupant and died at the scene.

No one on the ground was hurt and no homes were endangered in the sparsely populated area south of Rancho Road.

The cause of the crash will be investigated by the National Transportation Safety Board.

<http://www.inlandnewstoday.com/story.php?s=45395>

Interim chief making strides to improve Yermo/Calico Fire Department

Jose Quintero, Desert Dispatch

Posted: March 3, 2017, 2:00 PM



The Yermo Fire Department swapped out the old decals and put new decals on a fire engine it recently acquired from the Monrovia Fire Department. The 1997 engine is in perfect shape, according to interim chief Don Simard. [James Quigg, Desert Dispatch]

YERMO — Yermo/Calico Fire Department interim Chief Don Simard has put the department in "better shape" in just four months at the helm, Fire Commissioner Gary Yearsley said.

Yearsley, who sits on the Yermo Community Service District's board of directors, said the Fire Department was in bad shape until Simard stepped in as interim chief in October.

A Pinon Hills resident who works as a full-time fire captain with the Marine Corps Logistics Base Fire Department, Simard doesn't even have any real ties to the Yermo area.

But since taking on the role of a volunteer fire chief, the department has seen numerous changes and is as busy as ever.

"We know the Fire Department does not have a good record and we are changing that," Simard said. "Yermo can actually be relied on. I can tell you the relationships with our other local fire departments are improving every day."

Simard said Yermo Fire was never relied on by other local agencies. Now they are running mutual aid calls with the Daggett Fire Department, MCLB Fire Department, **San Bernardino County Fire Department** and Barstow Fire Protection District, he said.

Yermo firefighters ran on 471 calls for service last year, yet they are on pace to run 700 calls for service this year due to the increase in mutual aid calls.

"This is something we've never done before," Simard said. "Yermo would never leave Yermo. But now we are very aggressive with mutual aid and being good neighbors."

The department currently has a staff of 24 volunteer firefighters and is staffed with at least two people roughly 90 percent of the time, Simard said. That helps with the significant number of calls for service and ensures quicker response times.

The department recently purchased a 1997 emergency E-ONE engine out of Monrovia. Simard said the engine is in "perfect shape" and the only thing wrong was a dud light bulb.

"It was an awesome purchase for the community," Simard said. "The engine has a 500-gallon water tank and can pump 1,500 gallons of water. It's a quality first-run rig that can get to a scene quickly and be relied on to work."

Simard said the department has added Yermo decals to the engine. Next is the insurance process and changing the radio system from a Los Angeles County program to a local program.

Then volunteers can begin the training process.

"We have a great group of volunteers and they are the true backbone of this department," Simard said. "These volunteers really want to learn and serve the community. I enjoy coming to work every day to see these young guys prosper in their jobs. It's going to really take time to build this Fire Department up. The department will never be a paid department but that doesn't mean it could never be a good department."

Earlier this month the Yermo Community Service District was advertising for volunteer fire command staff positions. The positions listed were for fire chief, assistant fire chief and captain.

Fire experience was required for the recruitment, which closed Feb. 15.

According to Yearsley, two candidates inquired about the fire chief position, including Simard. A decision is expected within two months.

"(Simard) has done a great job as our chief along with still working his full-time job and having a family," Yearsley said. "Everything he does really speaks volumes (to) his character, work ethic and dedication to serving the community. The department has been brought a long way under him and it seems to be strengthening every day. It's hard to run a department on such a small budget but he is finding ways to make it happen."

<http://www.desertdispatch.com/news/20170303/interim-chief-making-strides-to-improve-yermocalico-fire-department>

Search continues for Hesperia 2-year-old five days after crash into aqueduct

Beatriz Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: March 7, 2017, 8:50 AM



San Bernardino County Fire Department and the San Bernardino County Sheriff Department investigate the scene Thursday after retrieving a vehicle that veered off eastbound Main Street for unknown reasons and crashed into the California Aqueduct in Hesperia. A 31-year-old mother and her 3-year-old died in the crash. A 2-year-old is still missing. An older sibling survived. DAVID PARDO — THE DAILY PRESS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



The San Bernardino County sheriff's dive team members enter the California Aqueduct in Hesperia on Saturday to search for Noah Abbott, 2, who went missing after his family's car crashed into the waterway on Thursday. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

HESPERIA >> The sheriff's dive team is on standby as the search for the body of 2-year-old Noah Abbott continued Tuesday, five days after the car he was riding in crashed through a fence and into the California Aqueduct in Hesperia.

The toddler's mother, Christina Eileen Estrada, 31, and 3-year-old brother, Jeremiah Abbott, were also killed in the Thursday evening crash. An older sibling, Elijah Estrada, 10, survived.

"Dive Team is on standby in event Noah Abbott is located. Ground crews & aqueduct employees continue searching the 7 mile waterway," Lt. Doug Wolfe, the San Bernardino County sheriff's dive team commander, posted to Twitter on Tuesday morning

Twice since the crash, divers had to be pulled from the waterway due to safety concerns.

The crash was reported 6:45 p.m. Thursday near Main Street and the California Aqueduct, according to a California Highway Patrol log entry.

Around 7:30 p.m., the **San Bernardino County Fire Department** tweeted that the car had been found submerged, and the dive team was “making entry for rescue.”

The dive team pulled the boys’ mother from the aqueduct, and she was pronounced dead at the scene.

Authorities say Estrada was traveling west on Main Street when for unknown reasons she drove through the fence and ended up in the water.

About two hours after the vehicle went into the aqueduct, authorities pulled it from the waterway.

<http://www.sbsun.com/general-news/20170307/search-continues-for-hesperia-2-year-old-five-days-after-crash-into-aqueduct>