



NEWS



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San Bernardino County assistant fire chief recalls chaotic aftermath of Las Vegas shooting

Joe Nelson, San Bernardino Sun
Posted: October 4, 2017, 8:03 PM



San Bernardino County Assistant Fire Chief Tom Marshall.

San Bernardino County Assistant Fire Chief Tom Marshall had just fallen asleep when he received the call about 11 p.m. Sunday about the mass shooting in Las Vegas and told that some of his fellow firefighters were among the injured.

On call and tasked with responding to any critical incidents that night, Marshall sprung from bed and turned on the television. As he dressed, he watched in horror the chaos unfolding at the Route 91 Harvest country music festival, where gunman Stephen Paddock fired a volley of bullets into the crowd from a 32nd-floor window of the Mandalay Bay hotel, killing 59 people and wounding 527 other concertgoers.

Marshall hopped into his county-issued Ford Explorer and began the 2 1/2-hour drive from his Lake Havasu City home to Vegas.

“While I’m en route, I’m notifying my bosses of the incident and what my intentions were when I got there,” Marshall said in a telephone interview Wednesday. He said he was blasting out 911 texts to fire department personnel to get a read on how many of them were in Las Vegas.

“I’m finding out not only county fire personnel were injured, but family members had been injured, as well as members from other local fire departments who had people at Route 91,” Marshall said.

Among the dead and wounded were six San Bernardino County employees, including Devore firefighter Michael Kordich, who was shot in the right forearm while trying to save the life of a concertgoer standing next to him who was felled by gunfire.

Marshall’s first order of business when he arrived at Las Vegas was locating the roughly 18 to 20 county fire department personnel and their family members, check their conditions and make sure they were provided for. His first stop: Sunrise Hospital & Medical Center, which was closest to where the shooting occurred.

He walked into the ER and was overwhelmed by what he saw.

“The hallways were lined with people. There were no seats. People were sitting on the floors with various wounds,” Marshall said. “That night, I went to all six major hospitals in Las Vegas, and it was a recurring theme at all of them. They were just overwhelmed with patients.”

It took about 10 minutes for Marshall to track down Kordich and observe his injuries. The bullet pierced Kordich’s right forearm, about an inch below the elbow, and exited the opposite side.

“I could see that he obviously had a severe injury to his arm. It would require extensive treatment,” said Marshall. “The bleeding had been controlled by then, but all his clothing, which was lying on the ground, was just saturated with blood.”

Kordich underwent another surgery about 8 a.m. Wednesday and remained hospitalized, Marshall said. Marshall’s next stop was Desert Springs Hospital Medical Center to check on injured firefighter and Lake Havasu city resident Kurt Fowler of the Desert Hills Fire District in Mohave County, AZ. He was shot in the leg, Marshall said.

After learning Fowler had been stabilized, Marshall said his next stop was University Medical Center to visit the daughter of a county fire engineer who had been injured in the shooting.

“She had eight different wounds that turned out to be shrapnel wounds from fragmented bullets,” Marshall said, adding, “They were all soft tissue injuries, so no surgery.”

From there, Marshall reported to the incident command post near Mandalay Bay to offer any assistance that was needed, but Las Vegas authorities told him they had it handled.

So Marshall made another round at the hospitals, and when he returned to Spring Valley Hospital Medical Center at 6:30 a.m. Monday, he learned that Karen Smerber, the wife of recently retired San Bernardino County Fire Capt. Matt Smerber, had attended the concert with a friend, was injured, and had been admitted.

“She had a through-and-through gunshot in her abdomen. It entered her right side and exited her left,” Marshall said, adding that Matt Smerber, when notified about the incident, “made it in record time from home to Las Vegas.”

As of Wednesday, Smerber remained hospitalized, but was expected to make a full recovery, Marshall said. Marshall said Sunday’s shooting isn’t going to deter him from doing what he enjoys doing. He refuses to live in fear.

“This is an event I had gone to for the last three years,” he said of the Route 91 Harvest festival. “I had back surgery in June, so we didn’t buy tickets this year. But last year, I was there with my wife, daughter and granddaughter.”

He remains conflicted about his absence from Sunday’s event, or at least prior to his arrival following the shooting.

“The part of me that’s a family man who wants to take care of my family tells me I’m glad I wasn’t there, but the first responder part of me tells me I wish I was there to help,” Marshall said.

He said he and his family plan to attend a Kid Rock concert next month in Laughlin, Nevada, and next April it’s off to the Country Thunder Festival in Florence, Arizona. But he said he’ll never forget what he encountered Sunday.

“It was very, very dramatic, very disturbing – like nothing I’ve seen in my 27 years as a firefighter,” Marshall said.

<http://www.sbsun.com/2017/10/04/san-bernardino-county-assistant-fire-chief-recalls-chaotic-aftermath-of-las-vegas-shooting/>

Sheriff's Helicopter aids in the rescue of a victim of an off-road vehicle collision

Highland Community News

Posted: October 4, 2017, 3:33 PM

On Tuesday, October 3rd at approximately 2:37 p.m., Air Rescue 06 was requested to assist **San Bernardino County Fire Department** with an off-road traffic collision on the Cleghorn Truck Trail. Initial reports indicated the driver of an off-road vehicle had rolled his vehicle approximately 200 feet off the side of the trail and was injured.

With the assistance of 40King6, the victim was located on the road where his vehicle left the trail. It was later learned that witnesses had assisted him from his vehicle and transported him back to the trail.

Once on scene, Air Rescue 06 performed on offsite landing and Firefighter Captain Murphy and Firefighter Deshon made contact with the victim. After assessing the victim for injuries, it was determined that he needed to be transported to a local hospital for treatment.

The victim, identified as Robert Knapp of Glendora, was loaded on board Air Rescue 06 and transported to Loma Linda University Medical Center for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

http://www.highlandnews.net/news/public_safety/sheriff-s-helicopter-aids-in-the-rescue-of-a-victim/article_120fe314-a954-11e7-8eab-7bb6be4635b5.html

Sheriff's helicopter crew, good Samaritans rescue Glendora man following Lake Silverwood crash

Beatriz E. Valenzuela, San Bernardino Sun

Posted: October 4, 2017, 11:01 AM

The San Bernardino County sheriff's aviation crew and a group of good Samaritans helped rescue a Glendora man who flipped his off-road vehicle near Lake Silverwood on Tuesday afternoon, officials said.

San Bernardino County Fire personnel called to the crash on Cleghorn Truck Trail asked for help from the helicopter crew, Air Rescue 06, according to a sheriff's statement.

According to initial reports, the off-road vehicle's driver, later identified as Gregory Knapp, was hurt when he rolled his vehicle about 200 feet off the side of the trail around 2:30 p.m., officials said.

After witnesses helped him from the crash scene and assisted him back to the trail, the crew from Air Rescue 06 landed nearby and flew him to Loma Linda University Medical Center.

<http://www.sbsun.com/2017/10/04/sheriffs-helicopter-crew-good-samaritans-rescue-glendora-man-following-lake-silverwood-crash/>

Wonder Valley fire station closed for now

Kurt Schauppner The Desert Trail

Posted: Wednesday, October 4, 2017 8:44 AM



San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle addresses community meeting in Wonder Valley Monday morning, Oct. 2.

WONDER VALLEY — Water contamination issues have temporarily closed the Wonder Valley fire station on Amboy Road and relocated its firefighters to the Twentynine Palms station on Adobe Road.

That was the word given to residents during an informal meeting at the Wonder Valley Community Center Monday morning, Oct. 2.

San Bernardino County Fire Battalion Chief Scott Tuttle was on hand to explain that after testing of the station's well water showed contamination by more than a dozen substances the station was evacuated on Sept. 22.

"You still have the same staffing level, they are just out there in Twentynine Palms," he told residents. Contaminants, he said, included arsenic, Chromium 6 and fluoride levels thousands of times too high.

When residents protested that they have been living with the same water for decades Tuttle repeated that he can not force employees to remain in a situation which is considered unhealthy.

When residents suggested putting in a water tank and hauling water to the station, Mark Lundquist, field representative for County Supervisor James Ramos, stepped forward to say this was not possible.

"There is an ordinance, you cannot haul water in the unincorporated area of San Bernardino," he said. "That became a county ordinance six months ago."

He added that the same issue is not also covered by state law.

"The state came in and passed the same law, they trumped the county," he said. He added that there is a grandfather clause allowing residents with preexisting tanks to continue to have water hauled.

Teresa Sitz, who represents the community on the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council, reminded residents that water issues also closed the kitchen in the community center where they were meeting.

"We cannot use our kitchen here," she said.

When residents suggested putting a reverse osmosis filtration system in at the station, Tuttle said this was one of the solutions county fire was examining.

Before county officials move forward with installation of a filtration system, he said, they need to make sure it will fix the contamination problem

“Why were we not notified immediately,” resident Mary Lindsley protested.

Deputy Fire Chief John Chamberlin stepped forward and said he was the one who decided to pull firefighters out of the station after most recent water testing results were released on Sept. 21.

“It has been getting increasingly contaminated over the years,” he said.

He added that the only piece of furniture that was taken out of the station was a reclining chair.

“The station is still intact,” he said, adding that this shows the county’s resolve to reopen the station.

http://www.hidesertstar.com/the_desert_trail/news/article_f8783ca0-a91a-11e7-b50c-23be0ed675bd.html