

GARDEN GROVE

Chemical tank blast risk drops

Threat of most serious explosion has changed impact, official says

By Brian Rokos, Tony Saavedra, Sean Emery, Sierra van der Brug, and Jason Henry
STAFF WRITERS

The most serious threat of a catastrophic explosion of the malfunctioning chemical storage tank at a Garden Grove aerospace company no longer exists, the

incident commander said Sunday, but the danger of an uncontrolled blast remains.

"That changes the trajectory of everything and reduces its potential impact on the earth," Incident Cmdr. Craig Covey of the Orange County Fire Authority said in an interview with freelance news organization OnScene TV.

"I'm not saying it can't explode," he said. "The difference is, like, a gas explosion in a building versus a bomb hitting it. So, once we remove that, that really decreases the impact footprint that we're managing right now, and we can

reevaluate our current evacuation."

Earlier Sunday, Interim Fire Chief TJ McGovern said in a video posted to OCFA's X account that a crack in the tank may be relieving enough pressure to prevent a massive explosion that could damage buildings and release a toxic vapor cloud.

McGovern said a team inspected the tank at GKN Aerospace on Western Avenue on Saturday night and discovered the crack.

Officials are still examining it, he said.



A pressurized tank filled with methyl methacrylate is sprayed with water at GKN Aerospace in Garden Grove on Saturday.

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JEFF GRITCHEN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MEMORIAL DAY

A mom's mission to honor Gold Star families



Cheryl Rex, mother of U.S. Marine Dylan Merola, who was killed while serving in Afghanistan on Aug. 26, 2021, holds his Purple Heart in Rancho Cucamonga on Thursday. **PHOTOS BY WILL LESTER — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER**

Cheryl Rex's son was among the 13 Americans killed during a 2021 bombing in Afghanistan

By Erika I. Ritchie
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Cheryl Rex hasn't planned what she'll say during her speech at the unveiling of a Gold Star memorial monument in Rancho Cucamonga today, but said she's confident her son, Lance Cpl. Dylan Merola, will help her.

Merola, 20, was among the 13 service members killed on Aug. 26, 2021, when a suicide bomber attacked the Abbey Gate at the Hamid Karzai International Airport as the last U.S. troops withdrew from Afghanistan. The attack also killed about 170 civilians waiting to pass through the gate.

Nine of the dead, and many of the other injured Americans, were part of the 2nd Battalion/1st Marines at Camp Pendleton. Also from Southern California were Cpl. Hunter Lopez, 22, of Indio, and Cpl. Kareem M.



A two-paneled black granite monument dedicated to Gold Star families, spearheaded by Cheryl Rex, will be unveiled today in a 9 a.m. ceremony at Central Park in Rancho Cucamonga.

Nikoui, 20, of Norco. Staff Sgt. Taylor Hoover, 31, who grew up in Daggett County, Utah, lived with his fiancée in Aliso Viejo.

Rex has since spoken publicly, even before Congress, as investigations into the attack have unfolded.

"Dylan does guide my speeches," Rex said. "I'm not a public speaker,

but somehow, some way, I've gained the strength to talk about my son."

Her speech today will be at Rancho Cucamonga's Central Park, where she was first faced speaking to hundreds during a candlelight memorial for Merola.

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UC RIVERSIDE

University cited over death of bird in research

Incident marks third federal animal welfare infraction in 3 years

By Rachel Fobar
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The death of a hummingbird used in research has landed UC Riverside in hot water with the federal government for a third time in three years over evidence of animal welfare abuses.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which enforces the Animal Welfare Act, cited the university in March for the Jan. 15 death of the hummingbird, one of six that had been captured in the wild two days earlier.

Another hummingbird death resulted in a citation from the USDA in August, as did the deaths of nine voles used in research that provoked a citation in August 2023.

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MIDDLE EAST

Officials say deal close on Iran war's end

Trump says not to rush as details emerge of a potential agreement

By Samy Magdy and Melanie Lidman
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO — The United States is close to reaching a deal with Iran that would end the war, reopen the Strait of Hormuz and see Iran give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium, regional officials told The Associated Press on Sunday, though President Donald Trump said he told representatives "not to rush into a deal."

Trump said negotiations were "proceeding in an orderly and constructive manner," and the relationship with Iran was becoming "much more professional and productive." He pushed back against criticism by some fellow Republicans seeking a tougher approach.

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2026 ELECTIONS

Riverside County assessor facing opponent for first time

Peter Aldana is seeking reelection vs. Jared McBride from Aguanga

By Jeff Horseman
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To once again win reelection, Peter Aldana will have to do something he's never done — beat an opponent.

For the first time since

becoming Riverside County's assessor/county clerk/recorder in 2014, Aldana will need to defeat a challenger — Aguanga resident Jared McBride — to win another four-year term. He's been unopposed in prior elections.

Aldana and McBride are on the ballot in the June 2 statewide primary election. They are the only two listed candidates in the race.

"It's a lot better to run for reelection when you don't have an opponent," said

Aldana, 62, who lives in Riverside. "But I respect anybody who wants to throw their hat in the ring to run for public office."

McBride, 38, did not respond to phone calls and emails seeking comment. He describes himself as a business owner, though it's unclear what business he owns.

Responding to a Southern California News Group candidate questionnaire, McBride, who served on the Elsinore Valley Municipal

Water District board from 2018 to 2021, said he would bring "a unique blend of private-sector efficiency and high-level policy training."

"I've served on public boards, run successful businesses, and I know how to spot waste and inefficiencies from a mile away," he said. "I'm not coming in to manage a 'tax machine,' I'm coming in to audit it."

A department within Riverside County

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Riverside County Assessor/County Clerk/Recorder Peter Aldana, left, and Jared McBride are on the ballot in the June 2 primary election. **COURTESY PHOTOS**

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