

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Gunman checked each aisle, shot babies at point-blank range

SUTHERLAND SPRINGS, Texas — The gunman who killed 26 people at a small-town Texas church went aisle to aisle looking for victims and shot crying babies at point-blank range, a couple who survived the attack said.

Rosanne Solis and Joaquin Ramirez were sitting near the entrance to the First Baptist Church on Sunday when they heard what sounded like firecrackers and realized someone was shooting at the tiny wood-frame building.

Solis said congregants began screaming and dropped to the floor. She could see bullets flying into the carpet and fellow worshippers falling down, bloodied, after getting hit.

For a moment, the attacked seemed to stop, and worshippers thought that police had arrived to confront the gunman. But then he entered the church and resumed "shooting hard" at helpless families, Solis said.

The gunman checked each aisle for more victims, including babies who cried out amid the noise and smoke, Ramirez said.

The couple survived by huddling close to the ground and playing dead. Solis was shot in the arm. Ramirez was hit by shrapnel.

"The lord saved me because I know it was my last day," Solis told the station.

About 20 other people were wounded. At least five were still hospitalized today.

Investigators collected at least 15 empty magazines that held 30 rounds each at the scene, suggesting the assailant fired at least 450 rounds.

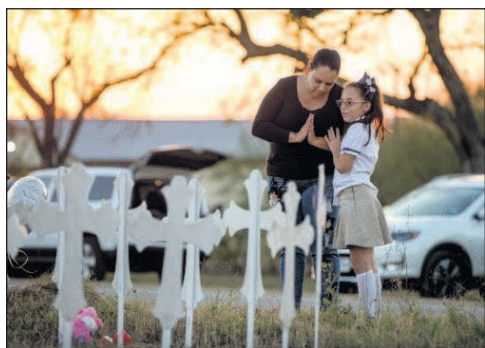
The gunman, Devin Patrick Kelley, had a history of domestic violence that spanned years before the attack and was able buy weapons because the Air Force did not submit his criminal history to the FBI as required by military rules.

If Kelley's past offenses had been properly shared, they would have prevented him from buying a gun, the Air Force acknowledged.

Trump says tougher gun laws not answer after Texas shooting

SEOUL, South Korea — President Donald Trump says tougher gun laws would not have prevented a mass shooting at a south Texas church, arguing that more restrictions might have led to more casualties.

Trump spoke at a news conference in South Korea today where he was asked about "extreme vetting" for gun purchases. Trump said: "If you



Jay Janner/Austin American-Statesman
Meredith Cooper, of San Antonio, Texas, and her 8-year-old daughter, Heather, visit a memorial of 26 metal crosses near First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs.

did what you're suggesting, there would have been no difference three days ago and you might not have had that very brave person who happens to have a gun or a rifle in his trunk."

As he did following last month's Las Vegas massacre of 58 people, Trump pushed back against the question, calling it a "situation that probably shouldn't be discussed too much" and noted that he was "in the heart of South Korea."

Trump added that if the Good Samaritan didn't have a gun, "instead of having 26 dead, you would have had hundreds more dead."

The dead ranged in age from 18 months to 77 years old.

In Seoul, Trump calls for N. Korea to 'make a deal'

SEOUL, South Korea — In a striking shift of tone, President Donald Trump abandoned his aggressive rhetoric toward North Korea today, signaling a willingness to negotiate as he urged Pyongyang to "come to the table" and "make a deal."

Trump, in his first day on the Korean peninsula, again pushed Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program, but sidelined apocalyptic threats for an optimistic note, saying confidently, if vaguely, that "ultimately, it'll all work out." And while he said the United States would use military force if needed, he expressed his strongest inclination yet to deal with rising tensions with Pyongyang through diplomacy.

"It makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and make a deal that is good for the people of North Korea and for the world," Trump said during a news conference alongside South Korean president Moon Jae-in. "I do see certain movement."

Trump said he's seen "a lot of progress" in dealing with North Korea though he stopped short of saying whether he wanted direct diplomatic talks.

Fire department: Will need to officially secure location before applying for grants

Continued from Page 1A

be able to respond to it, which we wouldn't be able to do if the fire station was under 8 feet of water here," Fennerty said at an October meeting at the current station. "It's kind of a no-brainer from our point of view to find a place we can operate from, in comparison to a place that is going to be destroyed."

But the department will need to officially secure the location before it can apply for grants.

Multiple court challenges

The new station would occupy roughly 2 acres owned by Gary Aspmo, of Astoria, and his family.

In 2005, Aspmo received a waiver to move forward with a 30-lot housing development. The waiver was based on Measure 37, approved by Oregon voters in 2004 to allow property owners to claim compensation for reduced property value as a result of environmental or land use regulations.

Voters largely repealed it, though, in 2007 by passing Measure 49. That measure eventually forced Aspmo to seek permission from the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners for a Measure 49 vesting. Commissioners approved the vesting in January 2016, offering a nod for development, but limiting the number of housing lots to 15.

Throughout the process, the development has been challenged multiple times in court by the state Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition — a nonprofit that seeks to preserve land on the coast.

Aspmo, in an email to state officials in 2016, said he would lose money on his more than \$500,000 investment if he is not allowed to sell at least 15 lots, plus one for the fire department.

"I'm in it so deep now, I'm trying to get myself out of it," Aspmo said at the October meeting.

But the state and the conservation coalition have argued that the county did not have the legal right to alter the number of lots and that Aspmo is only entitled to build on a maximum of three lots.

"We are very in favor of development and developing in the cities, but outside of the cities, that's where the conservation comes in," state Land Conservation and Development Manager Matthew Crall said.

The state Court of Appeals is the latest to hear the case, which was dismissed by

Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge Cindee Matyas in March.

Since the legally awkward transition between the two ballot measures, the state has challenged a number of similar cases, and the Aspmos' development plans represent the final part of the fallout.

"It would have never been allowed prior to the Measure 37 ruling," Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition Executive Director Phillip Johnson said. "They're trying to do something wrong because forestlands should remain forestlands, but the issue gets down to whether you have vested rights."

Both Johnson and Crall said the fire department's relocation is unrelated to their legal arguments in the ongoing court case.

County exemption needed

Aspmo's most recent solution came soon after the county commissioners' ruling last year. He reached out to the fire department to gauge its interest in developing on the property, which turned out to be strong.

The department's move there may be a basis for arguing that the land could be legally switched from forestry to residential agricultural, which would require an exception from the county.

"The bar for rezoning is set very, very high because the state is committed to preserving resource lands, agriculture and forestlands and so on," County Planning Manager Will Caplinger said, adding that an argument involving the fire station could also be tricky.

"You need to demonstrate that there's no other location in the county that can accommodate this kind of a use," Caplinger said. "That's very, very tough to do."

After Aspmo submits a lengthy application to the county planning department, a monthslong review will require approval from the county Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners.

Since very little land is available that is centrally located and not in a designated tsunami zone, the fire department hopes development will be allowed, Fire Chief Jeff Golightly wrote in a May 2016 email to conservation coalition Director Jim Ruc.

"If the state is truly concerned with mitigation of potential tsunami damage, we hope you will reconsider your opposition to this development," Golightly wrote.

But whether development will be allowed even after the county's process is still unclear.

"We will be scrutinizing that with a gimlet eye," Johnson said.

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