

# Mine explorer dies in fall

A 21-year-old Twentynine Palms man died May 26 while descending a mine shaft in the Gold Park area south of the city.

David T. Welcome Jr. and four friends hooked together several tow chains, building a 50-foot length of chain.

Welcome was in the vertical mine shaft, hanging on the chain, when two pieces came loose and he fell at

least 150 feet to his death.

It is unknown how far down Welcome was when he fell.

His friends contacted local authorities when their calls to Welcome went unanswered. All but one of the friends were juveniles.

Members of several county departments and search and rescue teams assisted in the search and re-

covery of Welcome's body from the shaft. Welcome was a volunteer firefighter for the Twentynine Palms Fire Department and a member of the California National Guard unit in Redlands.

The accident was first reported at 7:35 p.m. Sunday with the rescue operation complete before 7 a.m. Monday.

The Riverside County Coroner's office in Indio reported yesterday afternoon that a cause of death had not yet been determined.

A memorial service will be held at the fire department building, 6560 Adobe Road, Sunday, June 2 at 2 p.m. Welcome will be buried in his fire department uniform and an American flag will fly at half mast until Sunday evening.

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