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News Release

For Immediate Release

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Panamint Valley Recovery

PANAMINT VALLEY/ DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, June 25, 2019 – On June 18 at 2:40pm the Lone Pine Sheriff's Substation had a walk-in report of an overdue hiker. According to the reporting party and camping companion, 85-year old Neil Malloch of San Francisco, CA hiked to the Defense Mine from their camp location near the Minietta Mine on June 17 around 2:30pm and had not returned.

The reporting party said that he strongly advised Malloch not to hike in triple digit weather; however, Malloch did not listen. Malloch did not return from the hike. The reporting party attempted to search along the trail the morning of June 18, but could not locate Malloch.

An aerial search was initiated on June 18 by the Inyo County Sheriff's Office and was provided by the Civil Air Patrol. On June 19 search efforts were provided by Bureau of Land Management Desert District Rangers (out of Ridgecrest), and the Inyo County Sheriff's Office. Aerial support on June 19 was provided by CHP-Inland Division Air Operations. Ground search efforts were difficult due to extreme heat.

On June 20, China Lake Naval Weapons Center helicopter VX-31 joined in the search operation. At about 5:30pm, China Lake VX-31 located the subject deceased in Thompson Canyon. Due to the terrain and time of day the VX-31 was unable to recover Malloch.

The morning of June 21 CHP- Inland Division Air Operation and Inyo County Sheriff's personnel conducted a hoist operation and recovered Malloch. He was flown to the Lone Pine airport where the Lone Pine Coroner took custody of his remains.

Death Valley National Park has summer temperatures that are well over 100°F (38°C), and often exceed 120°F (49°C).

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