

Publication: Jnl Final Edition 8/2005-today; Date: Aug 18, 2008; Section: News; Page: A4



Man Rescued After Tumbling 100 Feet Into Gold Mine

The Associated Press

SONORA, Calif. — A man was rescued from an abandoned gold mine Sunday after tumbling more than 100 feet and spending two nights at the bottom of the dark shaft, authorities said.

A search-and-rescue team pulled Darvis Lee Jr., 34, from the mine around 6 a.m. after lowering a rescue worker and a mesh basket into the chasm, the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Department said. He was treated at a hospital for back and leg injuries and released.

Lee, of Sonora, fell down the 100-foot shaft while exploring the mine Friday night. Authorities were contacted Saturday after a friend who went with him realized Lee had not returned home.

His rescue was briefly delayed while authorities waited for a search team to arrive from Los Angeles, about 300 miles to the southeast, with the right equipment and experience for the job. In the meantime, local authorities lowered Lee a helmet, food and water.

Lying in the back of a pickup truck, Lee apologized.

"I walked in there, and I fell. It was dark, and I didn't know when I was going to stop," he told the Union Democrat newspaper. "I'm so sorry; I'm so sorry."