



Fresno County Sheriff's Office

Margaret Mims, Sheriff

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News Release

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Deputies Recover Body of El Salvadorian Man from Pine Flat Lake

On Wednesday, July 28th, deputies assigned to the Fresno County Sheriff's Boating Enforcement Unit recovered the body of a 47 year old man who was presumed to have drowned on July 17th. The victim has been identified as Gabriel Anibal Larreynaga Orellana. He served as a lieutenant colonel in El Salvador's military who was here in Fresno County visiting family members.

Around 1:00 am on July 17th, deputies responded to Pine Flat Lake for a report of a missing boat passenger. According to the men who were with Larreynaga, he was sitting on the ledge of the ski boat when he suddenly fell overboard. He was not wearing a life jacket. His relatives jumped into the water to try and get him back into the boat, but were unable to find him in the dark conditions. The men returned to the dock and placed a 911 call.

Deputies responded to the area by boat, but could not locate the man. The search continued each day with more and more resources being dedicated to the recovery effort. The following sheriff's offices assisted with their personnel and equipment: Butte, Alameda, Madera, Tulare and Kern Counties. The U.S. Coast also contributed resources.

On July 28th, sonar equipment and an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) which were being used continuously, was redeployed in the general area where Larreynaga was last seen. Alameda's sonar system eventually lead Butte's ROV camera to capture images of a body, which was situated slightly northeast of the dam. Deputies recovered the body from the bottom of the lake and turned it over to the Coroner's Office. It was later confirmed to be Gabriel Larreynaga.

The Fresno County Sheriff's Office would like to extend a special thank you to all of the involved outside agencies for their help during this lengthy, difficult operation.