

MASTER FILE

Successful Mine Rescues and Rescuer Deaths

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

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Successful Mine Rescues in January

1846 — Following a massive roof fall in the Delaware-Hudson Mine, John Hosey clambered his way through the damaged mine and managed to get out after being confined in the mine for **48 hours**. He was not seriously injured, except that his hands were lacerated from working his way through the rocks and slate.

1904 — Harwick Mine Explosion, Cheswick, Pennsylvania - Adolph Gunia was brought to the surface still alive after an **undisclosed period** following the explosion in the Harwick mine in Cheswick, Pennsylvania. He was the lone survivor of the mine blast which took 179 lives.

1914 — Cave-in at Black Diamond Mine, Luzerne, Pennsylvania - Four miners were rescued after **seven hours** by parties led by company officials. [Source document.](#)

1918 — A cave-in covering approximately 5 acres occurred at the Pennsylvania Coal Company's Barnum Mine in Pittston, PA. Two men were killed and 15 injured. Five of the men were rescued **10 hours** after the accident. [Source document.](#)

1926 — 21 miners managed to escape death's clutches after being trapped for **24 hours** in the mule stables following an explosion of the Jamison No. 8 mine in Farmington, West Virginia. 19 miners were killed in the disaster.

1926 — Eight negro miners were rescued after an **undisclosed period** from the No. 21 mine in Wilburton, Oklahoma. And in a truly heroic effort, Julius Graham, one of the first 7 rescued negroes, rushed back in and saved his step-brother, Roy Gray.

1928 — Eight miners were brought out of the Peabody Coal Company Mine No. 18 alive and uninjured. They were: Bill Reed, Alex Hamlin, Tony Strauss, Charles Peebles, Will Allen, Ruel Parks, Charles Mitchell and James Benn. Reed crawled out of an air shaft while Hamlin and Strauss were in another part of the mine and built a protecting wall to prevent the deadly gas from reaching them. W. E. Wade, another rescued miner was suffering from the effects of gas.

1931 — Seven miners were rescued after an **undisclosed period** following an explosion in the Little Betty Mine at Dugger, Indiana. The men who were rescued had barricaded themselves in an entry off one of the main corridors. Those rescued included Locie Hale, William Bedwell, Ben Snyder, Herman Brown, Charles Love and Charles Centers, all of Linton, and Jule Wellington of Sullivan.

1939 — Nineteen miners were rescued from the Clinton Coal Company's Crown Hill No. 6 Mine Fire near Clinton, Indiana after being trapped there for **10 hours**. Rescuers waded water waist-deep through another tunnel, abandoned for 20 years, broke down a barrier and reached the men from behind.

1941 — John Ryan, 28, died shortly after he had been rescued from a "bootleg" coal mine near Pottsville, Pennsylvania in which he had been trapped for **48 hours**. Joseph Slane, 30, who was trapped with Ryan was rescued after a third miner, Vincent Burns, had spread the alarm. [Source document.](#)

1942 — Wadge Mine Explosion, Mt. Harris, Colorado — Four miners who were working nearer the entrance were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. These men included Joe Gall, Bill Fickle, Elmer Everson and Mike Atansoff.

1950 — Joseph Burda was rescued after being trapped for **40 hours** in a "bootleg" anthracite mine near Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. He and his brother, Edward, became trapped following a cave-in. Rescue attempts carried on for Edward, however, it is unknown if they were successful. [Source document.](#)

1960 — Joseph Mismash was rescued after being trapped **15 hours** in a U. S. Steel Corporation iron mine near Ely, Minnesota. Mismash was trapped in a walled-in cubicle blocked by a 14 foot-thick block of ore. [Source document.](#)

1961 — Rescuers saved 15-year-old, Larry Dacek, after falling down an airshaft of the abandoned Sutro Tunnel silver mine near Virginia City, Nevada. He was trapped for **11 hours** there. Mining experts said Dacek escaped certain death by coming to rest on a rock layer supported by a few rotten timbers. Below him was a straight 1,400 foot fall. [Source document.](#)

1964 — Stanley Johnson was rescued after his **27-hour** entrapment following a cave-in at a MacKay, Utah lead and copper mine owned by Empire Copper Mines. There were no others killed or injured in the accident. [Source document.](#)

1967 — Two miners, Virgil Williamson and Harry Silman, became trapped after a roof fall in the Shannopin Mine of the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation. Williamson was found dead early on January 24 and Silman was rescued after **2 hours**. Taken to the hospital, he was listed in fair condition, suffering from shock and bruises. [Source document](#).

1969 — Twelve miners were rescued after being trapped more than **six hours** after a fire at the Christopher Coal Company, Humphrey No. 7 mine near Mount Morris, Pennsylvania. Eleven of the miners were walked out by rescuers, one man was removed by stretcher. [Source document](#).

2003 — Injured miner Aaron Meyer, three Sheriff's Deputies and a Paramedic clambered into an oversized bucket attached to a crane following the McElroy Mine Shaft Explosion at Cameron, West Virginia, which lowered them to the injured miners below. They successfully rescued Benjamin Bair, 23, and Richard Brumley, 51. On September 29, 2005, the five men were awarded the Carnegie Medal for Heroism. Included were Aaron Meyer, Jack Cain, Pat Mull, Brent Wharry and Steve Cook.

2006 — One miner, Randal McCloy Jr., is found alive after **40 hours** following the Sago Mine Explosion in West Virginia. Twelve miners died in the accident. This disaster prompted the creation of the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 (MINER Act).

2010 — Three Illinois miners were rescued from a DPOS after being trapped more than **5 hours** in the No. 29 mine of the Doe Run Company near Viburnum on January 21, 2010. Their escape was cut off when a 30-ton haul truck caught fire. The trapped miners were: Robert McClain, truck driver; Michael Byers, loader operator; and Timothy Yount, scaler operator. [See more](#).

2016 — Cargill Salt Elevator Incident, Lansing, New York — Rescue crews freed 17 miners in upstate New York after they spent a terrifying **10 hours** down in one of the world's deepest salt mines. The first four of the Cargill Salt miners emerged to the surface in a basket around 7 a.m. The rest were rescued from the salt mine over the next two hours.

Rescuer Deaths in January

1904 — Harwick Mine Explosion, Cheswick, Pennsylvania — Of 175 mine workers underground at the time, the single survivor was the severely burned 16-year-old, Adolph Gunia. Other casualties included Daniel A. Lyle and the mine engineer, Selwyn M. Taylor, who both gave their lives in rescue attempts after responding to the scene. Greatly touched by Taylor's

and Lyle's sacrifice, Andrew Carnegie had medals privately minted for their families, and within two months had established a \$5 million Carnegie Hero Fund as a result.

1906 — Haverstraw Clay Pit Collapse, Haverstraw, New York — After a house was toppled into a pit cut by clay diggers in Haverstraw, NY, five men went to the rescue to aid their neighbors. After the first house fell, twelve other houses went crashing over the precipice. The wreckage quickly caught fire, and those who were in the mass were either crushed or burned to death. Seventeen persons were killed.

1909 — Northwestern Mine Asphyxiation, Ashford County, Washington — After a miner fired shots in the Northwestern coal mine, an explosion occurred. Another victim (Dinkler), with others, went to rescue the shotfirer, but was overcome by after damp before he could.

1912 — Cherry Valley Mine Fire, Cherry Valley, Pennsylvania — John Ferrell of the U.S. Bureau of Mines was killed while exploring a mine in which a fire was raging. Ferrell had been in charge of the Bureau of Mines Rescue Car No. 5 since October 1911. At a mine rescue a few weeks earlier at Briceville, Tennessee, Ferrell rescued five men. It is unknown if any others were killed or injured in the Cherry Valley Mine Fire.

1943 — Pursglove No. 15 Mine Fire, Pursglove, West Virginia — During the fire at the No. 15 mine of the Pursglove Mining Company, an act of heroism cost the life of Guy Quinn, 38-year-old night-foreman, who escaped after the fire but returned to open two ventilating doors in an effort to save his trapped comrades. He had managed to open one door but was overcome while working on the other.

For more information, see the [Mine Disaster Calendar](#) at usminedisasters.com. Download the master file containing all 12 months.

Note: In all, 197 successful mine rescues, and 95 incidents of rescuer deaths have been identified. If others are known, please contact Rob at usmra.rob@gmail.com and I'll research them further.

Successful Mine Rescues in February

1891 — 13 miners died in Jeanesville, Pennsylvania after they were trapped by water in the Spring Mountain No. 1 Mine operated by J. C. Hayden and Company on February 4, 1891. Four others were rescued **19 days** later. They were John Tomaskusky, Joe Mautchwitch, Bosso Franko, and John Berno. [Source document](#).

1891 — Following the firing of a blast, water rushed into the Susquehanna Colliery at Grand Tunnel, Pennsylvania trapping Michael Schilling, William Cragel, and John Riner. Freedom from the flooded mine came for the trio when rescuers found them after **115 hours**. They had to wait out the 4 days perched on a piece of timber 3 inches wide. When found, the men were almost completely exhausted and would require care to bring them through. [Source document](#).

1908 — All but one of 28 men and boys who were entrapped in the Mid-Valley Colliery near Shamokin, Pennsylvania were rescued after **1 day**. Frank Orloskie, fell down a chute after the accident and was killed. [Source document](#).

1910 — Ernest No. 2 Mine Explosion, Ernest, Pennsylvania — Andy Kragear was overcome by the gas arising from the explosion. A rescue party using an oxygen helmet rescued and brought him to the surface about **8 hours** after the explosion. Shortly afterward he gained consciousness and was able to tell where he boarded. He was the only man in the mine in the vicinity of the explosion that escaped.

1912 — With 140 rescuers tearing at the rock and earth blocking the shaft of the Bunker Hill Mine at Sutter Creek, California, freedom came at noon on February 8 for sixty-two miners trapped for **23 hours**. Wives and daughters of the trapped men held torches through the nights while rescuers assailed the jam. [Source document](#).

1914 — Cannon Mine Inundation - Andrew Churnick, 50, was killed by a inrush of water and gravel in No. 11 chute on the water level in the Gem seam. His body was recovered **4 days** later near the first crosscut in the No. 12 chute. His partner, Mike Bobchurnick, was rescued after being imprisoned for **7 days** near the 6th crosscut in the same chute.

1915 — Explosion at Carlisle Mine, Carlisle, West Virginia – Twenty-one men were killed and four were rescued by parties led by company officials. [Source document](#).

1916 — Davis No. 42 Mine Explosion, Kempton, Maryland — Those not directly in range of the blast hurried to the main entries and started for the foot of the shaft in which the cages were still operating. There they were met by rescue parties from the surface and quickly hoisted. Other rescuers made their way into the mine and located other miners who had been unable to reach the main lines of communication. These men were brought out after an **undisclosed period**.

1918 — Amasa-Porter Mine Inundation, Crystal Falls, Michigan — Following an inundation of water in the Amasa-Porter Mine at Crystal Falls, Michigan,

one miner was found unconscious by rescuers after an **undisclosed period** and brought to the surface. Three others managed to escape unaided.

1927 — Joseph Schultz, a miner at the Henry Clay Colliery near Shamokin, Pennsylvania was entombed **4½ hours** in a blind heading after a pillar crumbled when disturbed by a shot. He was penned behind hundreds of tons of coal and rock in a space about 3 feet wide and 6 feet long. Rescuers found him exhausted. [Source document](#).

1928 — One miner was found alive after an explosion at the Kinlock underground coal mine of the Valley Camp Coal Company in Parnassus, Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh. The rescued miner was trapped for nearly **1 day**. 12 miners were killed in this accident. (Parnassus was later renamed New Kensington).

1930 — Standard Coal Company, Standard Mine Explosion — Five were rescued by crews from nearby mining communities. The five, taken out after an **undisclosed period**, had bratticed themselves from the deadly gas fumes, far back in the workings and had left notes directing their rescuers where to find them.

1937 — Robert Johnson spent **eight days** without food in utter darkness in an abandoned Flemington, West Virginia coal mine. Guided by his weak cries, Bill McDonald, Minor Cleavenger and Lon Smith found the man and brought him out on a stretcher. [Source document](#).

1949 — Fifteen miners were rescued after being trapped for **seven hours** by a fire which occurred in the engine room of the Kittoe Mining Works near Benton, Wisconsin. The fire cut the men off from their 167-foot escape shaft to the mine head. Except for one miner who suffered a slight heart attack, all the men remained calm throughout their ordeal. [Source document](#).

1958 — Glenn Burchett was rescued after a **6 hour** roof fall entrapment in the Amherst Coal Company's Lundale Mine at Morgantown Post, West Virginia. Rescue workers using hydraulic jacks slowly and methodically lifted the fallen slate to a point where Burchett could be extricated. Sadly, Burchett later died from his injuries.

Rescuer Deaths in February

1899 — Diamondville No. 1 Mine Asphyxiations, Diamondville, Wyoming — Ten brave men were risking their lives endeavoring to reopen the Diamondville No. 1 coal mine. They were all knocked down, one by one, by blackdamp. When help arrived, two were already dead, and the others were

resuscitated with great difficulty. The names of the dead are John L. Russell and Lee Wright. [Source document](#).

1907 — Thomas No. 25 Mine Explosion, Thomas, West Virginia — A rescue party of 7 men entered the mine and were exploring for survivors. They had penetrated as far as the third heading when suddenly the current of air died away. The motor which operated the large fan above the entrance had burned out. Now exposed to the blackdamp, 4 of these men were quickly overcome. **Dan R. Jones** died from asphyxiation and the other 3 were removed by re-enforcements and revived under the treatment of physicians.

1911 — Cokedale Mine Explosion, Trinidad, Colorado — On February 9, 1911, E. A. Sutton, assistant superintendent of the Cokedale mine of the Carbon Coal & Coke Company, Carbondale, Colorado, lost his life while wearing a Dräger helmet-type oxygen breathing apparatus after an explosion in this mine in which 17 men were killed. It is believed that this was the first instance in the United States, wherein a person died while wearing oxygen breathing apparatus.

1911 — Belmont Mine Fire, Tonopah, Nevada — William A. "Big Bill" Murphy, a 28-year-old cage operator, twice successfully descended into the Belmont Mine inferno to bring confused and unconscious co-workers to the surface. Said to say "he was nearly done in," he made his third descent into the mine. This would be his last. In 2006, a statue was erected and dedicated in Tonopah to "Big Bill," the hero of the Belmont Mine Fire.

1916 — Pennsylvania Mine Fire, Butte, Montana — Approximately 195 men were hoisted to the surface in less than 45 minutes after the discovery of the fire. Six men escaped through the 1,000-foot level to the Tramway mine. Subsequently, two men lost their lives while wearing Dräger apparatus during rescue and recovery work.

1918 — Carthage Fuel Company, Mine Exploration Fatality, Carthage, New Mexico — On February 26, 1918, David Murphy, an experienced mine rescue volunteer from Dawson, New Mexico, lost his life while wearing a Fleuss mouthpiece-type oxygen breathing apparatus during an exploration trip in the Government mine of the Carthage Fuel Company, Carthage, New Mexico.

1921 — Sahara No. 8 Mine Explosion, Illinois — Three men lost their lives by suffocation in oxygen apparatus while opening a fire sealed area to see if the fire was extinguished. The oxygen of one of the three man crew was fully consumed and the two other men used up all their oxygen in attempted rescue of the one man who went down.

1926 — Nelson Mine Explosion, Nelson Creek, Kentucky — Immediately after the blast, Cecil Fulkerson, manager, led a squad of rescue men into the pit. With him were Archie and Leonard Huter and George Brandon, Jr., whose fathers were killed in the explosion. Archie Huter, Brandon, and two others were asphyxiated by black damp. Fulkerson and Leonard Huter were overcome by the gas and their condition was serious.

1930 — Standard Mine Explosion, Standardville, Utah — The three men in the connected No. 3 mine were killed by the forces, and 17 of those in No. 1 mine died in the afterdamp. Five of the men in No. 1 mine successfully barricaded themselves and were rescued. Three men of a fresh air crew were killed by a falling roof slab on February 7. [Source document](#).

1943 — C. F. H. (Mulcaby) Mine Cave-in, Shullsburg, Wisconsin — Two of the victims were buried in an initial collapse, which occurred while they were preparing to shoot down a section of the rock suspected of being weak. Six others were buried in a second cave-in, which occurred while they were attempting to dig out the bodies of the first two men.

1943 — Smith No. 3 Mine Explosion, Bearcreek Mountain, Montana — One rescuer later succumbed from the toxic gas, after spending days looking for the miners.

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Successful Mine Rescues in March

1912 — Following an explosion and cave-in, a total of 25 workmen were rescued after an **undisclosed period** from the San Bois No. 2 coal mine near McCurtain, Oklahoma. Of the last 14 rescued, three had to be removed by stretcher. They were located in a small area where they had placed a curtain to exclude foul air. Tapping sounds through a water pipe led to their discovery. 73 miners perished in the disaster. [Source document](#).

1915 — On March 2, 1915, an explosion occurred at the Layland No. 3 Mine in Layland, West Virginia. The explosion occurred at 8:30 a.m., resulting in the deaths of 114 men inside the mine and 1 outside. Fifty-four men afterward escaped alive from the mine. Seven came out from **2 to 5 hours** after the explosion; 5 more escaped unassisted at 8 a.m. on March 6 (**4 days** later), and 42 others were rescued **an hour** later. Of those killed, 44

died from suffocation. The store porter passing the drift mouth at a distance of 100 feet at the time of the explosion was hurled against a post and killed.

1926 — In Eccles, West Virginia, ten miners were imprisoned in the Crab Orchard No. 5 mine for **26 hours** following an explosion there. The men credited their rescue to the experience and coolness of P. J. Davis, night foreman and the leader of the little band. He had the men build a wall of lumber, stones and soft mud, which experts said, would have successfully repelled the foul air indefinitely.

1930 — New Peerless Mine Explosion, Helper, Utah — Eight men escaped alive after the blast. A. L. Ross and L. S. King were burned about the face and hands and badly gassed. They owe their lives to Vic Bain and Tony Canrinker, who placed the injured men in a mine car and signaled to have it drawn from the mine, but the apparatus was damaged by the explosion and failed to function. Bain and Canrinker then carried Ross and King toward the entrance of the mine until they encountered fresh air. Others rescued were B. W. Hall, Ole Swenson, Roy Story and Frank Hensley.

1930 — Wolf Run Mine Fire, Amsterdam, Ohio — Owing their lives to the desperate work of the Steubenville Fire Department and mine rescue squads, 87 miners were brought out of the mine after an **undisclosed period**. About a dozen of them were unconscious when carried to the surface. Two rescuers, Sidney Wales and Arnold Horton, collapsed from exhaustion after trampling for miles searching for workmen. Two other miners died in the accident.

1933 — Bootleg anthracite miner, John Cheslock, was rescued from the abandoned Sayre colliery near Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania. In a state of collapse, but conscious, Cheslock was rescued following a **4 day** entrapment. [Source document](#).

1936 — Gus Brown and his three husky sons rescued "Fannie," their pet pony from the family coal mine in Louis Hollow near Crooksville, Ohio. Fannie, trapped **19 days** due to a cave-in, emerged sleepily and appeared none the worse for her experience. The pony, led through hastily-driven shafts was taken into the Brown home and given a warm place by the kitchen stove. [Source document](#).

1940 — Willow Grove No. 10 Mine Explosion - An explosion in this mine resulted in the death of 72 miners. Twenty-two others were overcome by afterdamp, rescued and taken to the surface. Seventy-nine uninjured men were temporarily imprisoned and rescued **five hours** later. Investigators believe that the explosion was caused by the firing of a shot charged with black powder.

1942 — Teddy the mule was rescued following an **8-day** entrapment after a roof fall occurred in the Cracker Jack mine near Boulder, Colorado. Teddy survived the ordeal by nibbling on bark from pine roof props and drinking from pools of water in the damp mine. The owner, Joe Robertson, turned Teddy out to pasture to rest for a month following his ordeal. [Source document.](#)

1947 — Centralia No. 5 Mine Explosion, Centralia, Illinois — Rescue workers kept digging in a gaseous, clogged-up passage 540 feet underground. The picking and the toiling slow work in the thick of the lingering fumes, in about **20 hours** had accounted for only nine survivors of the 131 who were caught in the blast just a few minutes before quitting time.

1957 — Abandoned Coal Mine, Harlan, Kentucky — 50-year-old, Cantrell Owens, was rescued from an abandoned Kentucky coal mine near Harlan after spending more than **2 days** lost in mine. Rescuers had to give up the search once because of the foul air they encountered.

1969 — William "Buck" Jones was rescued **8 days** following a cave-in at the Deep Lark lead, zinc and silver mine near Lark, Utah. The elderly miner was tired but able to laugh following his ordeal. He was greeted on the surface by his wife and 11 children. [Source document.](#)

1977 — Ronald Adley survived after being trapped for nearly **6 days** following an inundation of water at the Porter Tunnel Mine owned by the Kocher Coal Company in Tower City, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. Nine miners were killed in the accident.

1979 — Trapped for **6½ hours** by a rockslide at the Upper Taggart Coal Mine at Oven Fork, Kentucky, Larkin Napier was rescued. Two other miners, Grant Sturgill and Ernest Stetzer, were crushed by the falling rock. [Source document.](#)

Rescuer Deaths in March

1905 — Rush Run and Red Ash Mine Explosions, Red Ash, West Virginia — Five hours after the mine ceased operations for the day, an explosion occurred in the Rush Run mine, in which 8 men lost their lives. The explosion extended into the Red Ash mine, where 5 more men lost their lives. To rescue these men, 11 men entered the Rush Run mine and were lost in a second explosion. [Source document.](#)

1907 — Seattle Electric Company, Renton County, Washington — Victim's little son was waiting for his father to finish work so that he might ride the

horse to the barn. As the father was dumping his last car, the boy fell into the hot ashes. The father jumped to rescue him and both were so badly burned that they died a few days later.

1908 — Hanna No. 1 Mine Explosions, Hanna, Wyoming — Mine Superintendent, Alexander Briggs, along with 19 volunteers were killed by an explosion in the Union Pacific Coal Company's Hanna No. 1 mine. This group had gone into the mine to fight a fire that had been raging there since the previous Saturday. A short time later, a second explosion occurred in the mine, killing 39 others, including State Mine Inspector, D. M. Elie, who had gone into the mine with hopes of rescuing the first group. In all, 59 were killed in this disaster.

1915 — At Black Hawk, Utah, Grant S. Miller, a member of the Black Hawk Coal Company's rescue crew, was overcome while fighting a mine fire, and died in spite of courageous efforts of his comrades to save his life. [Source document](#).

1924 — Castle Gate No. 2 Mine Explosions, Castle Gate, Utah — Two helmetmen were overcome, and late Saturday, George Wilson, head of a crew from Standardville, died from asphyxiation when the nose piece of his helmet became detached several hundred feet inside the main portal.

1937 — Kramer Mine Explosions, DuBois, Pennsylvania — A spark from a locomotive ignited a body of methane in the first explosion, a fire ignited the 2nd. Two were killed in the first explosion and 7 were killed in the second explosion. The others died in an effort to rescue their fellow man, when a second explosion of gas took place. [Source document](#).

1940 — Willow Grove No. 10 Mine Explosion, Neffs, Ohio — On this Saturday morning 176 men were in the mine, when an explosion killed 66 by burns and violence and 3 by burns and afterdamp. Two others attempting rescue were asphyxiated, and 1 rescued man died 6 days later from the effects of afterdamp.

1944 — Katherine No. 4 Mine Explosion, Shinnston, West Virginia — Firefighting crews were formed after all miners were withdrawn from the Katherine No. 4 mine to fight a fire discovered there at 11:00 p.m. A subsequent explosion of methane and coal dust occurred, killing everyone in the mine fighting the fire at the time. Windows were shattered in homes 2 miles away and buildings were rocked.

1971 — Nemacolin Mine Fire, Nemacolin, Pennsylvania — On April 16, 1971, at about 1:30 p.m., William L. Groves, State Deep Mine Inspector, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, was accidentally drowned during the firefighting operations.

1976 — Scotia Mine Explosions, Ovenfork, Kentucky — On March 11, 1976, at the time of the second explosion, 13 men were underground near the entrance of 2 Southeast Main; 11 died as the result of the explosion and 2 repairmen working a short distance outby escaped without injury. Among the 11 killed on March 11 were 3 Federal Mine Inspectors: Kenneth Kiser, age 45; Richard Sammons, age 55; and Grover Tussey, age 45. This disaster gave birth to the Health and Safety Act of 1977, including new rules for mine rescue teams, stations, and training.

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Successful Mine Rescues in April

1905 — Cabin Creek Mine Explosion, Kayford, West Virginia — Nine men were still within the mine when the explosion occurred. Of these four reached safety with the assistance of friends. Three of the number were so seriously injured that they are not expected to live. Those rescued were William Jacobs, George Eastman, Morrey Darby and William Robinson. The last three men were seriously injured.

1910 — Nazareth Limestone Quarry Explosion, Nazareth, Pennsylvania — A large force of men made every effort to reach the victims, but it was some time before the first man was found. He was still breathing, but unconscious and that he might die at any moment. All the victims were Hungarians and Italians and were known about the quarry only by numbers.

1913 — Sixty-seven miners escaped from the Cincinnati Mine following the explosion that claimed 98 lives on April 23, 1913, including one apparatus wearing rescuer. Two miners were rescued after **60 hours**. [See more.](#)
[Source document.](#)

1914 — Eccles Nos. 5 and 6 Mine Explosions, Eccles, West Virginia — A rescue party was rushed to the scene of the disaster from Beckley, which is only two miles away, but after removing two men from the debris of No. 6 their activities were checked by the deadening fumes of coal gas. Later the party were more successful in bringing forty more men to the surface. Two of the men, P. M. Ellison and N. Jones, were seriously injured.

Supt. Donaldson, an experienced miner, with an expert rescue crew, was lowered down the shaft of No. 6 mine. For a time the steadily growing crowd of frightened women and children waited in suspense, but soon the signal came to hoist away and the cage responded. It bore two men badly hurt, a few of the rescue party, and two bodies.

1934 — Sinclair Mine Fire, Switz, Indiana - Five miners escaped death in the Sinclair mine after fire broke out there. They walled themselves into a space 24 by 12 feet for an undisclosed period more than 100 yards away from the blazing wooden shaft, and awaited rescue. The rescued miners were Jack Hineman, Dennis Combs, Thomas Barnett, Henry Johnson, and Roll Himebrook. [Source document.](#)

1937 — Toiling for **27 hours**, rescue squads removed Anthony Vinscavage, 48, from a "bootleg" coal hole near Tamaqua, Pennsylvania. Vinscavage was trapped while working with son, John, who had escaped and called for rescuers. [Source document.](#)

1946 — Great Valley Mine Explosion, McCoy, Virginia — A rescue squad from Radford donned gas masks and made its way to the site shortly after the explosion. Eleven were found dead of burns. The twelfth miner, Paul Price, was brought to the surface but died without regaining consciousness at a hospital here.

1956 — A roof fall at the Kaiser Coal Company mine near Sunnyside, Utah occurred trapping 4 miners. Three of the miners were rescued after **44 hours**. The rescued were Lavell Golding, Joe Archuletta and Lloyd Allen Heath. Deceased in the accident was Joseph Otterstrom. [Source document.](#)

1968 — Two Carlsbad, New Mexico miners trapped over **34 hours** were rescued by workers using their bare hands and chisels. They became trapped when a 50-foot potash slab collapsed in the Southwest Potash Company mine. The two miners rescued were Fred Crabtree and Arnold Delso. [Source document.](#)

1980 — Clyde Waddell was rescued **13 hours** after a roof fall at the Florence Mine near Huff, Pennsylvania. The mine was owned by the Florence Mining Company. [Source document.](#)

1985 — Trapped for **37 hours** following a roof fall accident, Curtis Sanders was rescued and walked out of the Powderhorn Mine in DeBeque Canyon, Colorado. [Source document.](#)

Rescuer Deaths in April

1887 — Old Savanna No. 2 Mine Explosion, Savanna, Oklahoma — Thirteen miners were overcome by toxic gas and suffocated while attempting to rescue the 6 victims of an explosion which occurred in the Old Savanna No. 2 mine near Savanna, Oklahoma.

1905 — Zeigler Mine Explosions, Zeigler, Illinois — 49 miners died as a result of two explosions in the Zeigler Mine. In an effort to recover the entombed men, five rescuers were overcome by afterdamp. The rescuers were let down by hand. In two instances, the men above were nearly overcome by gas. [*Source document.*](#)

1911 — Price-Pancoast Mine Fire, Throop, Pennsylvania — Two pipeline men noticed smoke coming from the direction of the shaft and discovered that the North Slope engine room was on fire. When the fire in the engine room was under control, the crew noticed that the timbers and a large number of mine cars on the passing branch were also burning.

Victims included 69 miners and four rescue worker who fell victim to poisonous gas, including Joe E. Evans, who was the Foreman of Federal Rescue Car No. 1. Also killed while attempting to help others were: Walter Knight, mine foreman; Isaac Dawe, fire boss; and John R. Perry. These men rushed beyond the flames to warn others farther in the workings.

1913 — Cincinnati Mine Explosion, Finleyville, Pennsylvania — An explosion occurred in which 97 men were killed and subsequently one of the rescue party wearing breathing apparatus lost his life. About 167 men were in the mine at the time of the explosion. About 67 escaped uninjured through old workings, and three were rescued alive - one by the first rescue parties and 2 some sixty-hours later by exploring parties.

1917 — Hastings Mine Explosion, Hastings, Colorado — On May 6, 1917, Walter Kerr, a member of a mine rescue team of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company, died wearing a Dräger 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus, while helping to recover bodies, after an explosion in the Hastings mine of the Victor-American Fuel Company, Hastings, Colorado, in which 121 men were killed. The explosion was caused by a mine inspector striking a match to relight his safety lamp about 120 feet from the face of 7 South entry.

1917 — Mountain King Mine Asphyxiation, Mariposa County, California — Two men obtained permission from the mine foreman to investigate the results of blasting on the 1,400-foot level. When they did not return, the foreman went to investigate, returned, and with two others climbed down to the 1,400-foot level, where all three were overcome. Before proper supervision could be obtained and rescue work begun, three others had attempted to help by going to the 1,400 foot level (all at different times).

Only one was able to return to safety. Seven men lost their lives from asphyxiation.

1927 — Connellsville By-Product Company Mine Asphyxiation, Morgantown, West Virginia — Two mine rescue men sacrificed their lives in a fruitless effort to save a fellow rescuer from deadly gas in the Connellsville By-Product Company mine near Morgantown, WV. The three victims were part of a crew from Parnassus, PA. Crews of helmet men were sent in to explore sealed workings to determine whether flooding of the mine had extinguished a fire. C. Roy Rushton, Frank Burns and William Heagy formed this crew. For some unexplained reason, Rushton removed the mouthpiece of his breathing apparatus. He soon collapsed, a victim of carbon monoxide.

1971 — Barnett Complex H₂S Poisoning, Rosiclare, Illinois — Two brothers, William and Philip Long, entered an area of the mine and were subsequently overcome by Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) gas. An additional 5 employees made several attempts to reach the Long brothers and bring them to fresh air. After finally reaching the downed brothers and loading them onto a locomotive to bring them out, they too were overcome and killed by the toxic gas.

1978 — Moss No. 3 Portal A Inundation, Duty, Virginia — Two of the four miners who were advancing the drainway when the inundation occurred successfully retreated to the surface (one dragged the other). However, the other two miners perished. The blackdamp also killed three other men who went underground without protective equipment or adequate gas testing equipment to search for the missing men. Similarly unequipped during rescue attempts, two other men were also overcome by blackdamp, but were successfully assisted to the surface. The deceased included the Mine Superintendent, the MSHA Sub-District Manager and a Service Manager from National Mine Service. Posthumously, Willis D. Ison was bestowed a Valor Award for bravery.

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Successful Mine Rescues in May

1890 — Jersey No. 8 Cave-in and Explosion, Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company, Ashley, Pennsylvania - Three badly injured miners: Anthony Froyne; fire boss John Allen; and Robert W. Roberts were rescued from the
property of the United States Mine Rescue Association

Jersey No. 8 mine of the Lehigh and Wilkes-Barre Coal Company following a cave-in and explosion. Their entrapment ranged from **9 to 14 hours**. Sadly, all three men died from their extensive injuries after their rescue. Ironically, it was asserted that John Allen's lamp caused the explosion. Had he not done so, all could have been rescued alive, as there was a current of air going through the chamber where the men had taken refuge, after the cave-in had taken place. [See more](#).

1907 — Seven miners were rescued **after 100 hours** in the flooded Mine No. 38 of the Berwind-White Operations at Foustwell (near Johnstown), Pennsylvania. Their rescue was made possible by the bravery of Stiney Rodon and Charles Ream who located the men by swimming 50 feet through a water-filled heading. Earlier, four others made a similar attempt, but were unsuccessful and returned half-drowned. Mike Bolya, a mine contractor, took charge of the group of trapped men and led them to the highest point in the heading where they waited for rescuers. [Source document](#).

1912 — [Norrie Mine](#), Oliver Iron Mining Company, Ironwood, Michigan - A party of 10 miners and 3 trammers on the night shift was walking home from the boundary of the property above the twentieth level of the mine. Hearing ground dropping, they retreated to what they thought was a safe place, the main drift, which was securely timbered and had 35 to 40 feet of solid ore above it. The cave, however, did not occur at the place where the men had been working, but in the very place of refuge to which they had retreated, crushing in the drift timbers over a length of about 80 feet. Six men were rescued alive after about **24 hours**, but one died about a week later. In all, 7 miners were killed. [See more](#).

1913 — [Imperial Mine Explosion](#), Belle Valley, Ohio — After an **undisclosed period**, rescuers found Roy Yeager about 300 feet from the scene of the explosion. Yeager, who was alive, was unable to rise on account of a broken leg, and he probably owes his life to the broken leg. Lying on the floor, he did not inhale the fumes of the afterdamp. The rescue party carried him to a mine car and started toward the entrance.

1919 — After almost **10 hours** of tunneling, Andrew Coshosky, trapped under a fall of slate in the Old Colony Mine, Ligonier, Pennsylvania, was rescued and expected to recover. Covered to a depth of 30 feet, the only way to reach him was to drive a tunnel under the fallen mass of rock. [Source document](#).

1928 — Frank Bucsha was found alive and said to be in good condition after he was found **55 hours** following the [Mather Mine explosion](#) in Mather, Pennsylvania on May 19, 1928. 195 miners were killed in the blast of the mine owned by Pickands-Mather and Company. Another miner, John Wade, was rescued from the same mine after 147 hours. Mine officials said he

must have been wandering around in the mine and was missed by the rescuers. [Source document](#).

1939 — Robert Galligan was rescued from a "bootleg" anthracite mine near Shenandoah, Pennsylvania after a cave-in trapped him in the mine for **65 hours**. During the rescue, he was heard joking and singing. [Source document](#).

1939 — Rescuers worked for **15 hours** to free sixty year old Joseph Babatsky after a fall of clay in a "bootleg" anthracite coal mine near Shenandoah in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. Thirty rescuers began the work shortly after the fall and as they neared him, he instructed them how to proceed. [Source document](#).

1943 — [NuRex Mine Explosion](#), LaFollette, Tennessee — Eighteen coal miners, huddling behind a hastily erected canvas barrier nearly 2,000 feet underground, survived an explosion that rocked the Etna Coal and Coke Company mine and suffocated ten of their companions. The miners, fighting against the deadly fumes of "black damp" for more than **eight hours**, stumbled and crawled from their barricaded cell as rescue parties freed them.

1948 — Edward Heck and Peter Gorton were rescued from a "bootleg" Anthracite mine near Shamokin, Pennsylvania following their **60-hour** entrapment from an inundation of water from an adjoining abandoned mine. The men said they believed their companion, Charles Bashore, was trapped in the lowest part of the mine and had no chance to escape. [Source document](#).

1957 — 50-year-old, Cantrell Owens, was rescued from an abandoned Kentucky coal mine near Harlan after spending more than **2 days** lost in mine. Rescuers had to give up the search once because of the foul air they encountered. [Source document](#).

1958 — 24 miners, trapped for more than **15 hours**, were rescued from a flooded Boone County Coal Corporation mine in Logan, West Virginia. There were no deaths reported in this accident. [Source document](#).

1968 — Inundation of water at the [Saxsewell No. 8 Mine](#) in Hominy Falls, WV. Fifteen men were rescued **5 days** later and six others were rescued **10 days** after the inundation occurred. [Source document](#).

1972 — Two men, Tom Wilkinson and Ronald Flory, were rescued and found to be in good condition after being trapped for **8 days** following the [Sunshine silver mine fire](#) in Kellogg, Shoshone County, Idaho. 91 miners were killed in the disaster. The four men responsible for the rescue were

Wayne D. Kanack, Frank J. Delimba, and Don Morris from the U. S. Bureau of Mines, and Sonny Becker, a Sunshine miner. [Source document](#).

2006 — Darby No. 1 Mine Explosion, Holmes Mill, Kentucky — Paul Ledford, roof bolter, was rescued after more than **2 hours** following the explosion. Ledford had traveled approximately 1,050 feet in the No. 5 Entry where he collapsed and lost consciousness. He regained consciousness at approximately 3:05 a.m. and crawled into the No. 6 Entry, where he was discovered by rescuers. He was then taken out of the mine on a battery-powered personnel carrier and transported to Lonesome Pine Hospital in Big Stone Gap, Virginia, where he was treated.

Rescuer Deaths in May

1911 — Hartford Mine Fire, Negaunee, Michigan — Within 1 hour after the discovery of the fire, an attempt was made to begin rescue operations without the aid of breathing apparatus. Three bodies were discovered. However, because of the reversal of the air current while erecting a stopping, the smoke became so dense that the shift boss ordered the men to return to the surface. One man attempted to remain and finish the stopping but was overcome. It was several hours before rescuers reached him, but he was dead. Three of the others attempted to go out to the Cambria shaft but were overcome and were revived with great difficulty.

1913 — Taylor Mine Asphyxiations, Hartford, Kentucky — Five men were killed by black damp in a deserted shaft of a coal mine belonging to the Taylor Mining Company. The men were working near the shaft when C. F. Frazier went to explore the abandoned digging. He fell into the water and with the four others who went to his rescue succumbed to black damp. The miners attempting to rescue Frazier included John Killers, J. P. Ramer, F. Tourk, and Jim Porter.

1913 — Imperial Mine Explosion, Belle Valley, Ohio — Henry Fairhurst, a member of the first rescue party to enter the Imperial mine following the explosion, was overcome by gas and died soon after being brought to the surface.

1915 — Smokeless Valley No. 1 Mine Explosion, Johnstown, Pennsylvania — Apparatus man succumbed during recovery work. Mr. Gomer Phillips was an employee of the Cambria Steel Company of Johnstown, PA. Mr. Phillips was a voluntary rescue man in the Johnstown explosion and came to his death while wearing the apparatus in attempting to rescue the men in the explosion. Mr. Phillips was the captain of the rescue team.

1920 — Mullan Tailing Plant Electrocution, Idaho — A miner was electrocuted and instantly killed at a sub-station of the Washington Water Power Plant, when he was endeavoring to rescue a patrol man of the company, whom he found burned and unconscious upon going to the sub-station to investigate the cause of the power being shut off at the plant in which he was working.

1920 — Submarine Mine Explosion, Clinton, Indiana — Following an explosion in the Submarine mine at Clinton, Indiana, James Smith, Art Thompson and Frank Hughes were victims of afterdamp while attempting to recover the body of John Howe. Jimmie Needham, also a member of the rescue party, was injured.

1940 — Anthracite "Bootleg" Operation, Eastern Pennsylvania — On May 16, 1940, Andrew Wolfgang, a foreman of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Co., and captain of a mine rescue team, lost his life while wearing a McCaa 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus, in an attempt to rescue a miner at the bottom of a 50-foot, almost vertical, shaft at a "bootleg" mining operation.

1975 — Deer Creek Mine Roof Fall, Huntington, Utah — A roof fall occurred in the Deep Creep mine that resulted in the death of two men. During recovery operations later the same day, another man was killed and two more injured. In an effort to help their friends, Alfred Willis of Huntington was killed and two other men were injured and hospitalized.

1982 — Magma Mine Cave-in, Superior, Arizona — At about 2:40 a.m., as two miners were barring down some loose ground near timbers, a cave-in suddenly occurred without warning. One of the miners was trapped in the collapse. After unsuccessfully attempting to free the trapped miner, the other miner summoned three miners who were working in an adjacent area. Their rescue attempts went awry when one of the rescuers removed a steel bar near the trapped miner, triggering a second cave-in. This collapse fatally injured another miner. Shortly thereafter, a third cave-in occurred. This collapse killed the trapped miner as well as a fourth individual.

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Successful Mine Rescues in June

1901 — Port Royal No. 2 Mine Explosion, Port Royal, Pennsylvania — A temporary rescue party entered the shaft after an **undisclosed period** and started toward the spot where it was thought some of the entombed men may be found. Lying at the bottom of the shaft were Lawrence Settler and John Stakes. Unconscious and covered with dirt, the men quickly were taken to the top of the mine.

1903 — Hanna No. 1 Mine Explosion, Hanna, Wyoming — About **3 hours** after the explosion, four men were taken out alive and a half hour later they were followed by forty-two others. Many were unconscious and had to be carried from the workings. Several were in a serious condition, but it was believed all would recover.

1909 — Lackawanna No. 4 Mine Explosion, Wehrum, Pennsylvania — Twelve miners were unconscious when rescued on the 23rd but were revived through the use of oxygen. They were placed in the temporary hospital, a machine shop, and at 3 p.m. were sent to Spangler on a special train provided by Trainmaster Henry Taylor, of Cresson.

1912 — Hastings Mine Explosion, Hastings, Colorado — Rescuers who entered the Hastings mine early on June 19 returned soon afterward with a Greek, who was badly burned.

1915 — Rush of Mud and Water into the Longacre-Chapman Zinc Mine, Neck City, Missouri - Six men were imprisoned. Four were rescued alive after **120 hours** of difficult work by company men, volunteers, State mine Inspectors, and Bureau of Mines men. Two men found were dead on the fourteenth day following the accident. [Source document.](#)

1917 — Twenty-five of 29 miners imprisoned on the 2400-foot level of the Speculator Mine of the North Butte Mining Company were brought to the surface after being trapped for **36 hours**. They owed their lives to crew member, Manus Duggan, a 20-year-old nipper boy, who didn't make it out himself. According to Nyrja Johnson, the first man to the surface, Duggan directed all the work in their effort to barricade themselves from the gases. He had the men strip naked and use their clothes to block out the toxic gas. Duggan became lost when he went ahead of the crew to test for gases. 163 miners were killed in this disaster. [See more.](#) [Source document.](#)

1929 — Three miners became ensnared in a cave-in at the 750-foot level of the South Eureka Mine, Sutter Creek, California. George Carevich escaped unaided and reported the accident. After **several hours**, Thomas Rodovich, who was entombed with Mike Matlick, was taken out alive but badly lacerated. While no further news about Matlick could be found, it was agreed by company officials that his chances of survival were slim. [Source document.](#)

1933 — Joseph Terescavage, a 51-year old miner, from Shamokin, PA was rescued after having been entombed for **two days** in the collapsed Madeira Hill mine near Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania. [Source document.](#)

1936 — Caught by crumbling rock and fallen timbers in a Helena, Montana mine, Ed Moore became held firmly by the jam. One of the owners, John Brophy, who was working with him, managed to get out and get help. Despite being warned by Moore not to come down, rescuers worked for **four hours** to free him and return him to his wife and daughter, who were waiting on the surface. [Source document.](#)

1938 — [Butler Slope Explosion](#), Pittston, Pennsylvania — Rescuers were successful in bringing six miners to the surface after an **undisclosed period**. Seriously injured were John Waskiewicz and Peter Morgantini. They were treated at the Pittston Hospital for skull fractures and severe burns. Others hurt were Warner Posdzych, Peter Wasluk, Patrick Nardone, and Joseph Lusto. Lusto was the only one who reached the surface unaided. Clutching an injured wrist, he staggered out of the mouth. His wife, screaming, darted from the crowd and into his arms.

1952 — June 2, 1952: Three of five miners were rescued after being trapped for **24 hours** by a cave-in at Republic Steel Corporation's [Penokee Iron Ore Mine](#) near Ironwood, Michigan. The rescued miners were Victor Cox, Christopher Hocking, and Mack Kreckler. The body of Jerome Olkonen was later found by rescuers, lying beside his machine. The fate of the 5th miner, Serafim Zackarzewski, and is not known, although mine officials feared he would have been crushed to death in the fall of rock. [See more.](#)

1957 — Five miners were rescued from the Betsy No. 3 coal mine operated by the Powhatan Mining Company at Fernwood, Ohio. Released from their tomb after their entrapment of **14½ hours** were Hank Horvath, Martin Kovalski, Fred Sabol, Joseph Supinski, and Kenny Hamilton. The Betsy No. 3 mine is a small, "punch mining operation" that produces about 600 tons of coal per day. [Source document.](#)

1962 — An 8-year-old boy was responsible for saving two miners caught in a cave-in at the Bull Gulch lead and zinc mine near Jefferson City, Montana. Robert Steinbacher and Henry Madison, who were both in considerable pain, were safely removed from the mine by rescuers after their brief entrapment. [Source document.](#)

1970 — Amateur miner, Clifford J. Cox, was pulled out of the abandoned Hazard Gold Mine near Foresthill, California when he was found laying unconscious after **11 hours** in the mine. Would-be rescuer, Lester Benbow,

a school teacher, died from a lack of oxygen in the incident. [Source document](#).

1971 — As a result of a roof fall, two miners were injured and rescued from the clogged section of an underground tunnel which is 700 feet deep and a mile and a half back in the [Eastern Associated Coal Company's Federal No. 2 Mine](#). Also injured and recovered from the mine were Robert Lee Strakal, 24, of Cassville, and Steven Shuman, 29, of Fairmont. Shuman died the next day from his injuries.

Rescuer Deaths in June

1901 — [Port Royal No. 2 Mine Explosion and Fire](#), Port Royal, Pennsylvania — The initial blast occurred at about 6 p.m. on June 10. About 1 hour after the initial blast, Superintendent William McCune (or McComb), Dennis Wortley, Michael Roy, several other bosses, along with about 20 other men went down Shaft No. 1 in search of 4 missing miners. About 3 hours after the rescue party had been in the mine, more explosions were heard. Four hours later, four more men volunteered to enter the mine, but as of 3 a.m. on June 11, they too had not returned. Shortly after 3 a.m., W. Sweeney, Harry Beveridge and Frank Stratton worked their way out of the mine and were put under the care of physicians. All three of these men later died. Lawrence Settler and John Stakes were the only ones rescued from the mine. While 19 is the official death toll, it is unclear exactly how many were rescuers. [See all related news](#).

1906 — [Rocky Fork Mine Fire](#), Red Lodge, Montana — To suppress a fire, the fan was reversed, which reversed the air current supplying fresh air to the fighters in room 6. This resulted in forcing the noxious gases onto the men fighting the fire in room 6. Six men lost their lives from the crew fighting the fire in room 6, while two of the rescuers, Roy Carey and Joe Bracey, lost their lives in a vain attempt to rescue the men fighting the fire in room 6.

1908 — [Gold King Mine Fire](#), Gladstone, Colorado — After extinguishing the blaze, five rescuers searching for 3 missing miners fell victim to toxic mine air. In all, 6 were killed in the incident, including Victor Erickson, along with rescuers Peter McNini, Roy Coburn, Alf Johnson, A. W. Burns, and Gus Olson. John Sunston and Otto Johnson were returned to the surface barely alive.

1966 — [Dora No. 2 Mine Asphyxiations](#), Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania — After cutting into a void, resulting in an inundation of "blackdamp" in the Doverspike Bros. Dora No. 2 mine, two miners were instantly overcome.

The other 5 crew members managed to escape, however, three of them returned to help their fallen co-workers and were also overcome. Those immediately affected were Sam Gaul and Ronald Moore. Those attempting rescue included John Kramer, Robert White, and Hilton Neiswonger.

1970 — Hazard Gold Mine Asphyxiation, Foresthill, California — Lester E. Benbow, age 41, schoolteacher, Foresthill Elementary School, was asphyxiated in the Hazard Gold Mine in the early morning of June 20, 1970, when he attempted to rescue Clifford J. Cox, who was overcome in an oxygen deficient atmosphere. He had no mining experience. Cox was later transported to the hospital, and reportedly made a complete recovery.

1975 — Boron Mine and Mill Asphyxiation, Boron, California — About 3:30 p.m., June 25, 1975, W. E. (Willie) Dodderer, millwright, age 27, was asphyxiated when he and Eric R. Willis, millwright, entered a caisson in an attempt to rescue Brent Black, millwright, age 35, who had succumbed earlier in an oxygen deficient atmosphere.

1981 — Grays Knob No. 5 Inundation, Harlan County, Kentucky — The entire section crew, except for two roof bolters, who remained unaccounted for, boarded a scoop to ride to the surface via the man trip route. Soon after, however, the section foreman left the fleeing scoop to search for the two missing roof bolters. Later that afternoon, the bodies of the foreman and the two roof bolters - all victims of asphyxiation - were recovered.

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Successful Mine Rescues in July

1908 — Williamstown Colliery Explosion, Williamstown, Pennsylvania — Ten miners were removed from the mine after an **undisclosed period** badly burned and torn by the force of the explosion. It was feared that several of them would die. One of the injured men was taken to the morgue and it was not until an identification of the bodies was made that it was found that he was living. The exact number of miners rescued is not known. Seven miners perished in the disaster.

1914 — Banovich Silver Mine, near Tonopah, Nevada - Two men overcome by powder smoke at the bottom of a 95-foot shaft were brought out by two Bureau of Mines men from car 5. The rescuers descended the shaft, tied

ropes under the armpits of the unconscious miners, and had them hoisted to the surface, where oxygen and artificial respiration were used for two hours. One miner fully recovered, but no sign of life appeared in the other miner. [Source document.](#)

1916 — On July 25, 1916, Garrett Morgan made national news for using his gas mask to rescue 32 men trapped during an explosion in an underground tunnel 250 feet beneath Lake Erie. Morgan and a team of volunteers donned the new "gas masks" and went to the rescue. After the rescue, Morgan's company received requests from fire departments around the country who wished to purchase the new masks. The Morgan gas mask was later refined for use by U.S. Army during World War I. In 1914, Garrett Morgan was awarded a patent for a Safety Hood and Smoke Protector. Two years later, a refined model of his early gas mask won a gold medal at the International Exposition of Sanitation and Safety, and another gold medal from the International Association of Fire Chiefs. [More information.](#) [Source document.](#)

1928 — A dam burst without warning and flooded the shaft in the Locust Gap Colliery. Hearing the rush of the water, forty-nine men barely had time to reach a travelway, crawl into safety holes and make their way to the No. 1 level where they were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. Only one of the men, James Carey, of Girardville, required medical attention. He suffered from shock.

1933 — Twelve miners were rescued after having been trapped for **three hours** by a fall of coal in the Locust Gap mine operated by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company at Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania. [Source document.](#)

1937 — Four men, badly burned but still alive, along with about 20 others were rescued after an **undisclosed period** following an explosion at the Baker Coal Mine, 5 miles northeast of Sullivan, Indiana. The mine was owned by the Glendora Coal Company. [Source document.](#)

1938 — Five miners, buried alive for more than **48 hours** following a cave-in at the Veta silver mine at Duncan, Arizona were brought safely to the surface by rescue crews. The entombed men were Alfred Gillenwater, G. C. Robinson, D. H. Grissom, E. D. Wright, and Albert Carlson. [Source document.](#)

1938 — Praco No. 7 Rock Fall Disaster - A roof fall occurred in this mine, trapping nine men, three of whom were rescued alive, severely shocked, with minor injuries. One rescued alive, died, probably from shock, en route to the surface, and the remaining five bodies were dead when recovered.

1963 — On July 12, 1963, in a miracle survival that confounded experts, three teenage boys were found alive after spending **2 days** in an abandoned, gas-ridden mine. The youngsters were found nearly a half-mile from the mouth of No. 2 shaft of Castle Shannon Coal Company which had not been used for more than 25 years. Their rescuers were U. S. Bureau of Mines Inspectors Everett Turner, James Hutchens and Jennings Breedon. The boys, Danny O'Kain, Billy Burke and Bobby Abbott were taken to St. Clair Hospital where they were treated for exposure and dehydration. [See vintage video.](#) [Source document.](#)

1966 — [Siltix Mine Explosion](#), Mount Hope, West Virginia — Eleven men in the 6 left section heard the explosion, but they were unaware of what actually happened, and they erected a barricade in the return entries about 250 feet from the entrance to the 6 left section when they encountered smoke and fumes in the return entries. The men remained behind the barricade until they were rescued about **2 hours** later. After leaving the barricade, seven of these men assisted in recovery operations in the 2 left mains section; two of these seven employees and three additional men were overcome by smoke and fumes and were removed from the mine.

2000 — [Willow Creek Mine Explosions & Fire](#), Helper, Utah — More than **10 hours** following the explosions in the Willow Creek Mine, four injured miners were laboriously brought to the surface by mine rescue teams. The rescued men included William Burton, Tyson Hales, Cory Nielsen and Shane Stansfield. Two other miners were found dead by rescue personnel.

2002 — Following an inundation of water from an adjacent abandoned mine, nine miners were rescued after being trapped more than **3 days** in the [Quecreek Mine](#) in Friedens, Pennsylvania. [Source document.](#)

2016 — [Abandoned Iron Mine](#), Iron Ridge, Wisconsin — Three teenage boys got lost in a labyrinthine abandoned iron mine in southeastern Wisconsin for hours, spending the night huddled together against the cold before rescuers found them alive and safe. The three were Tate Rose and Zachary Heron, both 16, and 15-year-old Samuel Lein.

Rescuer Deaths in July

1902 — [Rolling Mill Mine Explosion](#), Johnstown, Pennsylvania — Mine foreman, Harry Rodgers; assistant mine foreman, William Blanchard; and fire bosses, John Whitney and John Thomas were overcome by the afterdamp while attempting to rescue other miners.

1902 — Daly West and Ontario Silver Mines Explosives Ignition, Park City, Utah — 34 miners were killed following a magazine explosion in the Daly West and Ontario Silver Mines in Park City, Utah. The magazine, located in the Daly West mine, exploded after miner, John Burgy, entered carrying a lit candle. Three of the deceased were rescuers: John McLaughlin; James Smith; and Jack Ballon, all of whom died of asphyxiation while rendering aid and searching for survivors. McLaughlin died after making his second trip into the mine. Several of the dead were in the adjacent Ontario mine. With the exception of Mr. Burgy, all the miners died from asphyxiation.

1920 — Black Diamond No. 2, Mine Rescue Training Fatalities, Black Diamond, Washington — On July 10, 1920, Henry DeWinter, Hugh Hughes, and James Hudson lost their lives while wearing oxygen breathing apparatus in an abandoned slope of the Black Diamond No. 2 mine of the Pacific Coast Coal Company, Black Diamond, Washington.

1944 — Powhatan Mine Fire, Belmont, Ohio — Immediately upon receiving the news of the fire, George Emery, a 45-year-old foreman and father of four children, went into the pit to help the trapped men. Hours later he had not returned.

1950 — Lark Section - U. S. and Lark Mine Fire, Lark, Utah — The fire was first detected by a pumpman who encountered smoke while being hoisted in the Lark Shaft from the 2500 level to the 1200 level. He returned by cage to the 2500 level to notify the hoistman by telephone and died some time later after closing the water doors when a power outage occurred. The other four men died while attempting to rescue him.

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Successful Mine Rescues in August

1894 — Gilberton Colliery Explosion, Ashland, Pennsylvania — Eleven miners, plus another number whose names could not be learned, were brought to the surface following a methane explosion in the Gilberton Colliery at Ashland. A roof fall occurred where pillar robbing was being performed which pushed the gas more than 1,000 yards to the gangway where it was ignited by naked lamps. One miner was killed outright and another died while being carried to his home.

1886 — Fair Lawn Colliery Explosion, Scranton, Pennsylvania — Following the explosion, a crew of men making repairs were sent to the east gangway where groans had been heard. There they found 3 men still alive. After an **undisclosed period**, the first man to be brought to the surface was John Nofin. He was badly burned about the face and arms. John Kerrigan was alive when found and talked the strongest of all but he died before being brought to the surface. The last was John Connor. He had two large scalp wounds and a bad cut on the knee and another on the arm. His face and hands were badly bruised.

1908 — A fall of top rock occurred following an explosion in the Knickerbocker Colliery near Shenandoah, Pennsylvania. Two miners died, but John Kuza, William Suso and Charles Cowley were rescued. The three men were seriously injured.

1911 — Rescuers worked for **three days** to free Joseph Clary, 32, from the White Oak Mine near Villa Heights, Missouri, where a cave-in had occurred on July 30. Once a drill hole was large enough, a fried chicken dinner, water and whiskey were lowered to Clary along with a telephone from which he conversed with his family and rescuers.

1915 — Orenda Mine Explosion, Boswell, Pennsylvania — After an **undisclosed period**, a foreman and others rescued 10 miners who were overcome by afterdamp following a local explosion in the Orenda Mine near Boswell, PA. Two of the rescued men were among the 19 that perished in the disaster.

1917 — Thanks to the heroism of Frank Mattson, two miners who were overcome by smoke in the Lincoln mine fire at Virginia, Minnesota were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. Mattson was lowered into the mine without a mask where he found Oscar Pakkala and Joe Reinshe. Mattson found the victims near the flames and carried both of them to the surface. All three were revived by a pulmotor.

1917 — Forty six had been brought to the surface alive from the West Kentucky Coal Company's No. 7 mine explosion after an **undisclosed period**. Of the rescued, 24 were uninjured. The remainder were suffering from burns, none of which were said to be serious.

1921 — Seven miners were rescued after an **undisclosed period** following an explosion in the Harco Coal Company mine near Harrisburg, Illinois. The men were suffering from the affects of blackdamp and taken to local hospitals.

1923 — Kemmerer Coal Company, Frontier No. 1 Mine Explosion — At 5 o'clock rescuers found a man lying in the main slope who was nearing death

from inhalation of smoke and gas fumes. He was revived by a pulmotor and brought to the surface, where he was taken to a hospital. He was expected to recover. A short time later, two men who had hidden in a remote corner of a room off the main slope were taken to the surface, apparently not suffering greatly from their entombment. Another man, found further in along the main slope, showed signs of life when rescuers reached him, but when doctors attempted to revive him, it was found that he had died.

1926 — Five miners were trapped for six days and seven nights by a cave-in at the Hudson Zinc and Spar Mine near Salem, Kentucky. Rescuers worked through much difficulty to free the men who were mostly affected by the cold and their thirst. The 5 rescued miners included Randolph Cobb, Roy James, George Catillo, U. B. Wilson, and Harry Watson. Underground prayer meetings had caused conversion of last man, read the New York Times headline on August 12, 1926. All were ready to die. "If we are dead when you find us, we are saved," was written on their cloth caps. [Source document](#).

1926 — [Clymer No. 1 Mine Explosion](#), Clymer, Pennsylvania — Four miners were rescued by the first group of rescuers that entered the shaft after an **undisclosed period**. They were working at the foot of the shaft and were dragged to safety before the gases ended their lives. All were said to be suffering broken bones and internal injuries. Several minutes later four other men were found and brought out. They were still warm and first aid was given. After two hours' work and all means known to medical science had been exhausted, they were pronounced dead.

1927 — [West Kentucky No. 7 Mine Explosion](#), Clay, Kentucky — Sixteen of the miners who were preparing to come to the surface at the time of the explosion were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. They were 10 white men and six negroes. None of them was seriously injured. The explosion wrecked the cages used to lift the miners and coal from the pit and those saved had to be carried through a mine hole used to circulate air.

1934 — [Derby No. 3 Mine Explosion](#), Big Stone Gap, Virginia — After an **undisclosed period** following the 7 a.m. explosion, two men, Lawrence Fleener and Walter Bayless, were brought out alive and were taken to the Stonega hospital for treatment. Artificial respiration was resorted to in vain efforts to save some of the others.

1934 — William Jones, 35, from Minersville, Pennsylvania was rescued from a rock slide in a Bootleg anthracite mine at Coal Castle, Pennsylvania, where he was trapped for more than 24 hours. [Source document](#).

1936 — Following a **72 hour** entrapment in the burning [Esry Mine](#) near Moberly, Missouri, two of four men were rescued. The deceased were Ed

Stoner, one of the owners, and George Dameron. The rescued men were Demmer Sexton and Jack McMann.

1963 — David Fellin and Henry Throne were trapped for **14 days** in the [Sheppton Mine](#) in the Pennsylvania anthracite coal region following a cave-in. In the early hours of Tuesday, Aug. 27, 1963, first Throne, then Fellin were pulled from a depth of 330 feet to the surface wearing parachute harnesses and football helmets. A third miner in the mine at the time, Lou Bova, was never recovered. [See more.](#) [Vintage Video.](#)

1963 — [Cane Creek Mine Explosion](#) - Seven men erected a barricade in 3U drift. Two of these men left the barricade and traveled to the shaft station where they were met by a rescue crew and brought to the surface **19 hours** after the explosion. The other five men remained behind the barricade and were rescued **50 hours** after the explosion.

1968 — Buried up to his waist in debris, Ervin Roark was rescued following a roof fall accident in the Amherst Coal Company's No. 1 mine at Lundale, West Virginia. Three other miners, Charlie Lowe, Enoc Tudor, and Emmett Copley, were recovered dead after 8 hours. [Source document.](#)

1991 — 70 miners were rescued after more than **seven hours** following a roof fall at the Consolidation Coal McElroy Mine near Moundsville, West Virginia. The fall occurred when a mine car struck a roof support causing the collapse. Rescuers lowered food and extra mine lamps to the trapped miners during their ordeal. [Source document.](#)

Rescuer Deaths in August

1913 — [East Brookside Mine Explosions](#), Tower City, Pennsylvania — Five miners met their death when they entered the East Brookside Anthracite Mine following an explosion there. While attempting to rescue victims of the first blast, a second methane explosion occurred, sealing their fate. The first explosion, believed to be caused by dynamite, killed 15 miners. One of the rescuers managed to escape, but died a few hours later.

1919 — [Confined Space Fatality](#), Trinidad, Colorado — On August 25, 1919, James S. Cunningham, foreman miner of Bureau of Mines rescue car No. 2, died while wearing a Salvus ½-hour apparatus in a gasoline storage tank of the Sinclair Oil & Refining Company, Trinidad, Colorado.

1936 — [Kathleen Mine Fire](#), Dowell, Illinois — During the time the State Mine rescue team was erecting seals outby the fire, several motor trips of material were sent into the 7th north haulage road which is on the return for

this section. With these trips, there were between 15 and 20 men, who had been sent to assist with the sealing. All of these men were more or less affected with carbon monoxide; nine of them lost their lives.

1936 — [Mountain City Mine Asphyxiation](#), Mountain City, Nevada — Two men persuaded a third to lower them to an area of dangerous atmospheric conditions. The third man realized the seriousness of the situation but gave little or no thought to the atmospheric conditions. He proceeded down the manway until he was overcome and fell to the bottom. A fourth man, in a solitary attempt to rescue the third, was overcome and also fell to within 5 feet of the bottom. When the shift boss and four others arrived, they attempted to recover the bodies. Two men were lowered in the bucket, and both were overcome.

1943 — [General Chemical Defense Corporation](#), Point Pleasant, West Virginia — Three employees of the disposal plant were killed by the inhalation of toxic fumes believed to be hydrogen sulfide or an oxygen deficiency. Charles R. Miller, Water Treating Operator, was the initial victim. Delmar W. Oldaker and Gerard Colwell were overcome during rescue attempts.

1943 — [Sayreton No. 2 Mine](#), Sayreton, Jefferson County, Alabama — About 12:40 a.m., August 29th, or 2½ hours after the first explosion, a second explosion occurred in the same area, at which time there were 18 members of a rescue party in the affected section. Two men of the rescue party were killed and 16 were injured. Eight of the sixteen injured died after being removed to the hospital. Total number of deaths from the second explosion was 10.

1985 — [R & R Mine No. 3 Carbon Monoxide Suffocation](#), Woodbine, Kentucky — Loading and hauling coal after a shot throughout the afternoon, a miner was overcome by CO when his scoop became stuck in the face area. Two others attempting to save the fallen miner were also overcome.

2007 — [Crandall Canyon Mine Collapse](#), Huntington, Utah — On August 16, 2007, three rescue workers were killed and six others were injured when a seismic jolt caused a mine accident during an effort to reach six men who have been trapped at the Crandall Canyon Mine since August 6. The six men initially killed were Kerry Allred, Luis Hernandez, Carlos Payan, Don Erikson, Manuel Sanchez, and Brandon Phillips. The three killed during the attempted rescue were Federal Mine Inspector, Gary Jensen, Brandon Kimber and Dale Black.

For more information, see the [Mine Disaster Calendar](#) at usminedisasters.com. Download the [master file](#) containing all 12 months.

Note: In all, 197 successful mine rescues, and 95 incidents of rescuer deaths have been identified. If others are known, please contact Rob at usmra.rob@gmail.com and I'll research them further.

Successful Mine Rescues in September

1897 — Williamson County Mine Explosion, Johnston City, Illinois — Fifteen wounded miners, two of whom later died, were rescued from the smoke and flames after an **undisclosed period**.

1902 — Stafford Mine Explosion, Stafford, West Virginia — Six badly wounded miners were rescued after an **undisclosed period** and placed under the care of Mine Superintendent Stewart. Several others were also hurt in the incident. The most serious cases were sent to the hospital.

1914 — Cave-in at Centennial Gold Mine, Eureka, Utah - Twelve men were imprisoned. One man was rescued by company men, who, in **seven hours**, drove a drift 15 feet in country rock without shooting. [Source document](#).

1915 — Rahn Colliery Explosion, Coaldale, PA – On September 27, an explosion caused a rush of water and coal which cut off and entombed 11 men. Two of the men were rescued **12 hours** after the disaster, but the others were not reached until October 3, after an imprisonment of **6 days and 5 hours**. Three hundred men working 3 shifts per day drove the tunnel to reach the trapped miners. [Source document](#).

1916 — Jacob Dixon and William Gammell became enclosed by a rush of coal in the Good Spring Colliery of the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company near Tremont, Pennsylvania. After **five hours**, Dixon succeeded in getting into a blind heading where he was rescued. They were engaged in the hazardous work of "robbing pillars." No further news could be found regarding the rescue of William Gammell. His survival was unlikely. [Source document](#).

1922 — Seven miners were imprisoned for an **undisclosed period** following the Lake Creek Mine Explosion in Johnston City, Illinois, but were taken from the shaft by rescue teams hastily called. The seven men had taken refuge in another entry and by doing this prevented the gas from killing them.

1926 — Tahoma No. 29 Mine Explosion, Tahoma, Oklahoma — After about **3 hours**, George Adams saved himself and three workmen, including Sam Cox. Cox was burned and was bleeding about the body. Adams dragged him through the debris to the surface and then returned for the two other

men. At another location, Lee Carter was almost overcome by gas fumes when a rescue party carried him to safety.

1931 — Aukstock Carter, 30, was rescued after an **undisclosed period** following a cave-in in an unnamed coal mine near Charleston, West Virginia. His rescue came after company physician, Dr. W. B. Davis, amputated his right arm. [Source document.](#)

1943 — Rescuers freed six miners after an **undisclosed period** following an explosion at the Three Point Coal Company mine in southeast Kentucky. Twelve miners perished in the accident; 3 directly by the explosion and 9 others found huddled together, overcome by gases. The six rescued miners had traveled one mile further into the mine where they constructed a barricade. [Source document.](#)

1957 — Marianna No. 58 Mine Explosion, Marianna, Pennsylvania — Six miners were rescued from the exploded and burning mine after more than **8 hours**. Shortly after noon, telephone lines were dropped to the men at the foot of the portal shaft. The miners said they all were burned, one so badly he could take liquids only through a straw. Blankets, first aid equipment and oxygen tanks were then lowered by rope. The first of the trapped miners was brought to the surface in a makeshift oil drum elevator at 2:10 p.m. At half-hour intervals, five other survivors were lifted to safety in the drums.

1968 — Somerset Mine Roof Fall, Somerset, Colorado — John W. Southerland was rescued following a roof fall in the United States Steel Corporation's Somerset Mine. Southerland said he was trapped among the rocks for about **45 minutes** before two fellow workers, Chuck Woodburn and Jim Pavisik, dug him out. Four others were killed in the accident.

1970 — Richard Owens was rescued **10 hours** after being trapped in mud and rock up to his neck in the Ranchers Exploration and Development Corporation's Tungsten Mine. The mine is located in Vance County in north-central North Carolina, near the Virginia border. [Source document.](#)

1989 — Joshua Dennis, a 10-year-old gone missing from a Boy Scout exploring trip, was rescued after nearly **one week** from the abandoned Hidden Treasure Mine near Stockton, Utah. The boy was found by a Utah Power and Light Company mine rescue team, ranked among the best teams in the country. [Source document.](#)

Rescuer Deaths in September

1869 — Steuben Shaft Mine Fire, Plymouth, Pennsylvania — 108 miners were asphyxiated, 2 rescuers killed. Thomas W. Williams of Plymouth and David Jones of Grand Tunnel, entered what subsequently proved to them the pit of death.

1879 — Grizzly Mine Asphyxiations, Alta, Utah — Six men were asphyxiated in the Grizzly mine from carbon monoxide. Three of them were killed in an effort to rescue others. The cause of the accident is ascribed to smoke from the engine furnace on the tunnel level, the exit of which had become choked, and thereby smoke was driven back through the mine.

1913 — Mine Rescue Training Fatality, Rock Springs, Wyoming — On September 30, 1913, Edward Evans, an employee of the Bureau of Mines, lost his life during mine rescue maneuvers at a mine of the Union Pacific Coal Company, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

1915 — Alta-Quincy Tunnel Exploration, Salt Lake City, Utah — On September 17, 1915, Thomas Hendrickson, a foreman of the International Exploration Company, lost his life while wearing a Dräger 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus during an exploration in the Alta-Quincy tunnel, near Salt Lake City, Utah, leased by the Albion Mining Company.

1936 — Metz Coal Mine CO Asphyxiation, Fulton, Missouri — Columbia firemen were called to remove the four bodies and helped save a fifth worker who was in serious condition. Mine owner Louis Metz and his father-in-law were overcome by gas as they went into the mine to pump water. The miner's three younger brothers came to help and they too fell victim to the deadly gas. [Source document](#).

1966 — William Adams, 33, of Barnesville, Ohio, was outside when a fire broke out deep inside the Morgan Mine near St. Clairsville, Ohio. He ran into the mine and sounded the alarm. Counting only 12 men running out, he then went inside again in search of Keith Spicer, 22, of Dillonvale, Ohio, a miner for only two months, and Tony Territti, 43, of Wheeling. None of the three men surfaced from the mine.

1979 — In the process of testing a newly installed rescue capsule in the 335 foot shaft of Consolidation Coal Company's Mathies Mine in Peters Township, Washington County, PA, company safety inspector, John Marn, plunged 180 feet to his death after the capsule's coupling device broke. The Washington County Coroner, Farrell Jackson, ruled that Edward Nogal, federal mine inspector, was partially responsible for Marn's death. [Source document](#).

1981 — Warrier Gold Mine Explosion, Burgdorf, Idaho — After the explosion, Rocke Wilson and Ardy Johnson descended to search for two workman. Shortly thereafter, both men were suddenly overcome by carbon monoxide.

Two hours later, the general partner and mine manager resumed the search. During this effort, Johnson was found 75 feet from the portal and Wilson was found 100 feet from the portal. Subsequent CPR attempts revived Wilson, but Johnson never regained consciousness.

2001 — [JWR No. 5 Mine Explosions](#), Brookwood, Alabama — After communicating with the section foreman about the events of the initial blast in 4 Section, 3 other miners entered the 4 Section to rescue the remaining injured miner. Additional miners from other sections were notified and traveled toward 4 Section to lend assistance. Five of these miners entered the Section and another 4 reached the mouth of the 4 Section. The second explosion resulted in 12 fatalities and widespread destruction.

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Successful Mine Rescues in October

1897 — October 30, 1897 - Joseph Yomaski, one of the men entombed in the Von Storch Mine of the Delaware and Hudson Company, was rescued at 10 o'clock Saturday night. The bodies of the other men were afterwards found and brought to the surface. In an interview, the Pole explained that when his companions began to suffer their death agonies, he at once urged them to follow him, but they refused. He escaped to an old airway where he knew of a hand fan, over which he placed a box, and in that inserted his head. He then kept the fan going for **ten hours** and kept himself alive until rescued. [See more](#).

1913 — Seven Mexican miners, trapped for **6 days** in the Vogel and Lawrence Lignite mine at Rockdale, Texas were found unconscious, and barely alive. The men were imprisoned by a cave-in following a cloud burst which flooded the mine. Laying near the men was their mule, still alive. [Source document](#).

1913 — Trapped in an abandoned chamber of the Continental Mine operated by the Lehigh Valley Coal Company in Centralia, Pennsylvania, Thomas Toshesky was finally freed by rescuers after **8 days**. He was in good condition and spirits, refusing a stretcher and making it out of the mine under his own power. [Source document](#).

1914 — Royalton North No. 1 Mine Explosion - An accumulation of gas was ignited by open light. Doors to an old room were left open and gas accumulated. One man was rescued from the affected area **10 hours** after the explosion had occurred.

1914 — Explosion in Mulga Mine, Mulga, Alabama - Sixteen men were killed and 12 were rescued by parties led by company officials. [Source document](#).

1914 — Explosion at Patterson No. 2 Mine, Elizabeth, Pennsylvania - Following the explosion, the superintendent and the pump man were overcome by afterdamp. A rescue party in the charge of the mine foreman carried the unconscious men to fresh air. The superintendent soon recovered, but the pump man could not be revived. Breathing apparatus was not used. [Source document](#).

1915 — Continental Colliery Cave-in, Centralia, PA – On October 4, John Tomaszewski was rescued after **187 hours**, imprisoned by a cave-in at the colliery which occurred on September 26. A 2-inch diamond drill hole was drilled 50 feet to provide food, water and dry clothing. It took 85 hours to drill this hole. Following this, the rescuers drove, by pick mining, a 4-foot by 4-foot passageway to reach and rescue the trapped miner. It required 4 days to accomplish this. [Source document](#).

1931 — Two miners who never gave up hope after 4 comrades were killed in an explosion in the Mocanaqua Mine of the West End Coal Company were rescued after **133 hours** of entrapment. The survivors were John Thomashunis, age 40, and John Metz, age 22.

1935 — Mine workers who worked all night, rescued one of two men entombed in a "bootleg" coal mine, 2 miles south of Mt. Carmel, Pennsylvania. [Source document](#).

1938 — Falling slate blocked the exit from a room where Dolar Johnson, 54, was preparing to blast in the Lilly Meade Mine in Owensboro, Kentucky. When his lamp became extinguished, he realized he was lost and he decided to sit and wait for rescue. He was safely brought to the surface **4 days** later. [Source document](#).

1941 — Daniel Boone Mine Explosion, St. Charles, West Virginia — 34 rescued miners were brought to the surface by way of an air shaft within **two hours** after the explosion. Four other survivors were able to leave through the main entrance before it was filled by gas.

1954 — Nearly freed from fallen timber and rock in an Anthracite mine in Branchdale, Pennsylvania, Carl Herman became trapped again when a second cave-in occurred. 35 friends worked for an **undisclosed period** to

free Herman who managed to get out with only a broken leg. [Source document](#).

1958 — [Bishop No. 34 Mine Explosion](#) - An explosion occurred in this mine and resulted in the death of 22 miners. Thirty-seven others erected barricades and remained behind them until they were rescued.

1958 — [Burton Mine Explosion](#), Craigsville, West Virginia — Four men who miraculously escaped death after being trapped underground were hospitalized. The first of four men rescued reached the surface on his own feet, leaning on the shoulders of his rescuers, some **four hours** after the blast. He was Artie Humphreys of Craigsville. Three others, two of them horribly burned, were brought out on stretchers.

1965 — [Mars No. 2 Mine Fire](#), Wilsonburg, West Virginia — Workers inched their way deep inside the fire-ravaged Mars No. 2 mine tunnels for nearly **20 hours** before coming upon Charles Lantz, 26, of Buckhannon. He was brought out alive but died of his injuries en route to a hospital.

1965 — Wildcat Cave Entrapment, Hinckley, Ohio – A fifteen-year-old boy was rescued after being trapped for 24 hours. He was wedged in a crevice 10 inches wide and three feet high and was found tilted downward at a 45° angle. Consultation and assistance was provided by employees of the Ohio Division of Mines. [Source document](#).

1980 — Two men, David Aubuchon and Guy Hayton, and the car they were driving were rescued after spending **4 days** at the bottom of a vertical shaft of the University of Arizona experimental mine near Tucson. They had crashed their car through a barbed-wire fence protecting the shaft entrance. Following their rescue, the men were questioned by Pima County Sheriff's detectives about the burglary of \$700 worth of tools from the mine. Apparently no charges were filed. [Source document](#).

1987 — Rescuers worked for **58 hours** to free "Baby Jessica" McClure from an eight-inch (20 cm) well casing 22 feet (6.7 m) below the ground. The story gained worldwide attention (leading to some criticism as a media circus), and later became the subject of a 1989 television movie Everybody's Baby: The Rescue of Jessica McClure on ABC. As presented in the movie, a vital part of the rescue was the use of the then relatively new technology of waterjet cutting. [See more](#).

1987 — Five miners trapped for more than **a day** were hauled 800 feet to safety in a bucket about the size of a garbage can. They became trapped when a cable suspending a 3-ton piece of machinery snapped, sending the equipment and debris plunging into the Diamond gold and silver mine at

Leadville, Colorado. The mine was owned by the Leadville Corporation.
[Source document.](#)

Rescuer Deaths in October

1896 — [No. 3 Shaft Explosion](#), South Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania — 4 killed in gas explosion, 2 fire bosses suffocated by afterdamp in attempting rescue.

1913 — [Dawson No. 2 Mine Explosion](#), Dawson, New Mexico — Of the 284 men working in the mine, 14 men escaped from an unaffected area of the mine, and nine others, unconscious at the bottom of the shaft were later rescued by a crew wearing apparatus. Two helmet men, James Laird and William Poyser, were lost that night when they overtaxed the oxygen supply by overexertion and going in farther than instructed. The oxygen was supplied at a fixed rate and when they tried to remove the oxygen bottles to breathe from them, they were overcome by afterdamp. [Source document.](#)

1916 — [Jamison No. 7 Mine Explosion and Fire](#), Barrackville, West Virginia — Lewis M. Jones, a mining engineer from the U. S. Bureau of Mines in Pittsburgh became asphyxiated in the Jamison No. 7 Mine fire at Barrackville, West Virginia. When Jones and seven others failed to return to the surface, additional rescuers were dispatched to bring them out. All of the initial party recovered except Jones. 9 other miners lost their lives in the disaster.
[Source document.](#)

Related incident: On November 13, 1917, Samuel T. McMahon and Bryce Warren lost their lives while wearing Fleuss oxygen breathing apparatus in a sealed fire area in the No. 7 mine of the Jamison Coal & Coke Company, Barrackville, West Virginia.

1916 — [Marvel No. 2 Mine Explosion](#), Marvel, Alabama — Eighteen men entered the mine and all were killed in the explosion, except one pumper who was burned but escaped. A rescue worker without rescue apparatus was overcome and was killed by a fall from a ladder.

1930 — [Dalton Coal Company Mine Fire](#), Dalton, Ohio — On October 8, 1930, Rush D. Hiller, an undertaker of Canton, Ohio, lost his life while wearing a ½-hour McCaa oxygen breathing apparatus on the property of the Dalton Coal Company, Dalton, Ohio.

1940 — [Wanamie Colliery Mine Fire](#), Wanamie, Pennsylvania — On October 6, 1940, Reese Phillips and Gray Lacey lost their lives while wearing Gibbs oxygen breathing apparatus after entering a sealed fire area at the Wanamie Colliery of the Glen Alden Coal Co., Wanamie, Pennsylvania.

1956 — Wharton Auger Mine Asphyxiations, Ohio — Two men died from asphyxiation and a third man was overcome in a rescue attempt at 7:15 a.m., Friday, October 12, 1956.

1970 — Open-Pit Uranium Mine Electrocuting, Texas — A miner was electrocuted when he drove a portable drill rig with the mast up into a high voltage powerline. In an attempt to rescue the truck driver, another miner was also electrocuted.

2002 — Storm Decline Exploration, Elko, Nevada — Team trainer, Theodore Milligan and team member, Dale Spring were fatally injured when they collapsed from excessive heat while evaluating the conditions in an inactive gold mine. The pair's failure to have coolant cartridges installed in their breathing apparatus was identified as a principle contributing factor.

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Successful Mine Rescues in November

1888 — At 5:30 p.m. on November 9, an explosion occurred in the Frontenac Shaft No. 2 of the Cherokee and Pittsburg Coal Company. At 4 a.m. (**10½ hours**), five had been rescued, and at 1 p.m. (**19½ hours**), four more were brought out alive.

1901 — Four days after the start of the Pocahontas Baby mine fire in Pocahontas, Virginia, Fritz Moulter was found barely alive, entombed in a room on the east side. Six physicians worked with him before he was restored to consciousness.

1902 — Luke Fidler Mine Explosion, Shamokin, Pennsylvania — Several miners working near the scene of the accident made a rush for the foot of the shaft and were overcome by the after damp following the explosion. They were rescued after an **undisclosed period** by the relief party and sent at once to the gangway.

1903 — Ferguson Mine Explosion, Dunbar, Pennsylvania — After **an hour** of frantic search, nine miners were picked up by the rescuing party in different positions of exhaustion. As they reached the open air they fell prostrate in the arms of their wives and children, who had spent that long, weary hour at the pit's mouth fearing that they would never see their loved ones again.

Their faces were blackened, their hair scorched and clothing burned almost to shreds from the flames that followed the explosion.

1906 — San Toy No. 1 Mine Shaft Disaster, Corning, Ohio — Three men, who clung to the cage in which they were riding, were saved after an **undisclosed period**. The men were ascending in the mule cage when the door, which had been left open, caught against the sides of the shaft. Five were killed when they were thrown from the cage and fell 150 feet to the bottom of the shaft.

1907 — A cave-in deep inside the Draper Mine at Gilberton, Pennsylvania, followed by a inrush of culm and water from the surface trapped Michael McCabe for **87 hours** before rescuers managed to free him. He was released from his prison barely alive. [Source document](#).

1909 — There were tales of unbelievable suffering and endurance following the Cherry Mine Fire. One group of miners, 500 feet underground, had built a wall of mud, rocks, and timbers to block off the poisonous gases. They were in total darkness with only a pool of water leaking from a coal seam to drink. After **8 days** of confinement, they could bear it no longer. They tore down the barricade and began crawling through the tunnels. Finally, they heard the sounds of a search party. Twenty-one men still alive from this group were rescued. 259 miners were killed in the disaster.

1910 — Fifty men who were working in the section of the Shoal Creek No. 1 Mine where the explosion occurred were rescued after an **undisclosed period** according to the mine management. Six miners died in the incident.

1910 — Jumbo Mine Explosion, Durant, Oklahoma — After an **undisclosed period**, just one miner was rescued from the shaft explosion of the Jumbo Mine, operated by the Choctaw Asphalt Company of St. Louis. Five miners descending in cars were blown to atoms and eight others were entombed and asphyxiated by the deadly fumes.

1911 — Bottom Creek Mine Explosion, Vivian, West Virginia — By heroic work the rescuers reached the scene of the disaster after an **undisclosed period** and found engineer Alexander Williams and 3 other men who were brought out alive. All were injured. Hoping to reach others of the entombed men the rescuers pushed the work with all haste. One after another they found the victims and by midnight all but two had been brought out of the mine. The dead included 4 other engineers.

1914 — Bonar Mine, East Bernstadt, Kentucky - Three men were overcome by powder smoke. They were rescued by the State mine inspector and the mine superintendent. One miner was revived by artificial respiration; the other two died. [Source document](#).

1914 — Cave-in at Sibley Iron Mine, Ely, Minnesota - Six men were entombed. One man was rescued after **112 hours** by parties led by company officials. [Source document](#).

1914 — Fall of Top Rock at West Brookside Mine, Pottsville, Pennsylvania - Two men were imprisoned for **four days**, when they were rescued by a party led by company officials. [Source document](#).

1916 — [Bessie Mine Explosion](#), Palos, Alabama - About **15 hours** after the explosion, a trained apparatus crew of 5 men found 3 men at a break in the air line. The party was then about 1,000 feet from fresh air, and the men were able to proceed to safety with the aid of the apparatus crew. Thirty men were killed by the explosion, 5 escaped unassisted, and 3 were rescued as noted. [Source document](#).

1922 — [Dolomite No. 3 Mine Explosion](#), Dolomite, Alabama — An unidentified foreman assembled thirty workers after the blast took place and ordered all to remain with him and work on fixing up brattices with stones and canvas to shut off the dreaded afterdamp gas that he felt sure was to follow the explosion. When the fans started up again, the air cleared sufficiently to indicate that it was safe to tear down the temporary wall and the foreman led his men out. One miner, who objected to remaining with the rest of the men was found only a few feet away from the temporary brattice. He had become a victim of the gas.

1922 — [Reilly No. 1 Mine Explosion](#), Spangler, Pennsylvania — 33 miners were taken out alive after an **undisclosed period**, but three succumbed to their injuries. Of the remaining 30 rescued, all were at the Spangler Hospital and the attending physicians, who were doing everything in their power for them, said all would recover.

1926 — [Mound Mine Explosion](#) - An explosion killed 5 of the 18 men in the mine. Two died of burns and 3 from carbon monoxide poisoning. Two injured men were rescued **several hours** later and 11 escaped uninjured. Gas accumulated by the wrecking of a door, was ignited by the arcing of a trolley wheel of a locomotive. Coal dust was ignited, but the explosion was stopped by rock dust and water on the entries.

1926 — Six miners were trapped by water in the Tomhicken Mine of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company in Pennsylvania on November 16, 1926. One man died, but five men were rescued **8 days** later. The five rescued were Henry Kirchdoerfer, August Yensick, Michael Lorincz, John Gondera and Mike Lawrence. [Source document](#).

1930 — Lutie No. 5 Mine Explosion, Lutie, Oklahoma — The explosion sealed only one entry, known as number 10 1-2. About 17 men were said to be in this entry. Workmen reached entry 10 1-2 about **two hours** after the explosion and brought one man to the surface alive. Bodies of the other men were brought up slowly and taken to a morgue.

1930 — Millfield No. 6 Mine Explosion, Millfield, Ohio — 19 miners were rescued **10 hours** after the explosion. The miners, most of them unconscious, were found behind a ventilation partition. John Dean, Inside Foreman, is credited with saving the lives of the rescued miners, including him. Dean and the other miners erected and gathered behind a ventilation partition which protected them from the deadly gases. Dean risked several trips into the smoke-filled entries to carry some of his comrades to safety before he collapsed and had to be carried to safety.

1933 — Five men were rescued from a mine after an **undisclosed period** in South Scranton, Pennsylvania following a cave-in. Two of the men, Paul Mariello and Carmel Comparta, were seriously hurt, suffering from internal injuries. The other three men left the scene before they could be identified. [Source document.](#)

1962 — After falling 200 feet down the abandoned Idaho Bride gold mine near Idaho Springs, Colorado and spending **14 hours** in the murky depths, Airman Chester West was rescued. It took rescuers, lead by District Mine Inspector, Norman Blake, three hours to lead West out of the winding tunnels. [Source document.](#)

1968 — Eight miners were rescued **five hours** after explosions ripped through the No. 9 mine in Mannington, West Virginia owned by the Consolidation Coal Company. 13 other miners managed to exit the mine shortly after the 1st of at least 3 explosions tore through the mine. This disaster, which killed 78 miners, triggered Congress to pass the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. [See video.](#)

Among the 21 miners rescued from the Mountaineer Coal Co. (Consol) No. 9 mine was Matt Menas, Jr., whose father died in a similar disaster in the same mine 14 years earlier. The explosion on Nov. 13, 1954, killed 16 men. The mine at that time was owned by the Jamison Coal Co., and was called Jamison No. 9. [See Video.](#) [Source document.](#)

Here is a list of the other miners rescued, all of whom are from the area around Mannington, Fairmont and Farmington: Byron Jones; Nathaniel Stephens, 48; Charles Biafore; Nick Rose, 23; Roy Wilson; James Herron; Paul Sabo; Walter Slavikosky; Henry Conway; Nezer Vandergrift, 48; Ralph Starkey, 41; Lewis Lake, 55; George Wilson, 54; Alva Davis, 29; Raymond Parker; Robert Bland; Robert Mullen; Gary Martin; Charles Crumm; and Brad Hillberry.

1985 — Following an avalanche at the remote Bessie "G" gold mine in Colorado's San Juan Mountains, rescuers, including officers from the LaPlata County Sheriff's Department worked for **24 hours** to rescue Lester Jay Morlang. His partner, Jack Ritter, died of suffocation when the men were buried around 6 p.m. [Source document](#).

Rescuer Deaths in November

1901 — Baby Mine Fire, Pocahontas, Virginia — While the fires were being fought, a small explosion occurred, which injured no one, but blew out some of the brattices and allowed the smoke and gases to pass through into the adjoining West Mine. Nine men in the West Mine were overcome by smoke and suffocated. On November 22, 1901, a rescue party of eight men was also overcome by gases in the West Mine and suffocated.

1903 — Koarsarge Gold Mine Fire, Virginia City, Montana — At the first alarm the 170 employees hastened to extinguish the flames. The Mine Superintendent entered the tunnel through the fire and smoke to warn the entombed miners and to aid them to escape. He returned and tried to enter the mine by the air shaft but fell from the ladder and was killed.

1909 — St. Paul No. 2 Mine Fire, Cherry, Illinois — ". . . there were 259 men and boys who were never saved despite great deeds of heroism by volunteer rescue teams. Sadly, that heroism was rewarded with death for no less than twelve of the rescuers. They were a hastily assembled team of people from the town who went down in the cage six times, each time dragging more miners to safety. From the seventh trip into the hell below, however, none returned alive."

1910 — Victor American No. 3 Mine Fire, Delagua, Colorado — A member of the rescue crew who gave his breathing apparatus to one of the four men found behind a barricade stayed behind to wait for the party's return. He was later found overcome in another part of the mine and died the next morning.

1911 — Adrian Mine Explosion, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania — It is believed that the six dead miners, realizing that there had been an explosion, dropped their dinner buckets and ran further into the mine to rescue their fellow workmen. The dinner buckets were found about a mile and a half from the innermost workings of the mine, which is five miles from the entrance.

1948 — Nethken Mine Asphyxiations, Kitzmiller, Maryland — One of those suffocated in the Nethken Mine was a miner, Robert Jackson from Kitzmiller, Maryland, age 25, who had gone down the shaft to warn the other 4 miners of the danger and lead them out. He had been married less than 6 months.

2013 — Revenue-Virginus Mine Asphyxiation, Ouray, Colorado — A miner, Nicholas Cappanno, did not return from an area of the mine where an explosive had been previously detonated. The shift foreman, Rick Williams, went in to search for him. Eventually they were both found by other miners working in the area, and those miners immediately evacuated the mine. Mine rescue teams entered the mine and found the two others. During the recovery operation, they detected fatal levels of carbon monoxide. The teams brought the victims to the surface. Twenty miners were taken to the hospital, and three were kept overnight. All 20 were subsequently released.

For more information, see the [Mine Disaster Calendar](http://usminedisasters.com) at usminedisasters.com. Download the [master file](#) containing all 12 months.

Note: In all, 197 successful mine rescues, and 95 incidents of rescuer deaths have been identified. If others are known, please contact Rob at usmra.rob@gmail.com and I'll research them further.

Successful Mine Rescues in December

1901 — McAlester No. 1 Hoisting Disaster, Hartshorne, Oklahoma — Two miners were rescued from the McAlester No. 1 mine after an **undisclosed period**. The cage was ascending with eight men and about 100 feet from the bottom of the shaft, it jumped its guidings and 6 of the 8 dropped to the shaft bottom to their death. The other two, who held on to the cage had to be drawn up to the surface with ropes. These men were said to be injured slightly.

1869 — December 18, 1869 - The East Sugar Loaf Colliery cave-in in Stockton, Pennsylvania claimed 10 lives on Dec. 18, 1869; only three bodies were ever recovered. The cave-in occurred at 5 a.m. when two houses were swallowed into the ground. A third home went into the subsidence and all but one person got out. It was a young girl who was later rescued from a rooftop. One outcome of the Stockton Mine cave-in was that houses were not built so close to mines after the incident. [See more](#).

1899 — Carbon Hill No. 7 Mine Explosion, Carbonado, Washington — Two men were rescued more than **18 hours** after the explosion. They are Peter Merp, a Frenchman, and Michael Kulsh, a Pole. Merp had been blindly groping around in the darkness most of the night on his hands and knees, seeking for some avenue of escape.

1906 — Rescuers worked around the clock to release Lindsay B. Hicks from his tomb in the Edison Tunnel near Bakersfield, California. Trapped there with five other miners on December 7, Hicks' freedom finally came after his **15 day entrapment**. He was the only survivor. On December 12, speaking through a pipe, Hicks told rescuers that he had survived on 40 cents of chewing tobacco. Victory finally came for his rescuers on December 22nd at 11:25 p.m. [Source document](#).

1908 — [Lick Branch Mine Explosion](#), Switchback, West Virginia — At 11 o'clock p.m., **8 hours** after the explosion, eighteen of the entombed men had been taken out of the colliery alive. They had been stifled by smoke and were not seriously injured enough to make their removal to a hospital necessary.

1910 — [Greeno Mine Explosion](#), Tacoma, Virginia — Four miners were either rescued or otherwise made their way to the surface after more than **twelve hours** following the explosion in the Greeno mine which killed eight. The four included John Swede, James Rosenburg, John Ritsky, and G. E. Lehman. Rosenburg was badly burned on his head, face and hands. The others were reported to be in good condition. Note: corrected name spellings are taken from the final accident investigation report.

1911 — Four miners were found alive after an **undisclosed period** following an explosion in the Cross Mountain mine at Briceville, Tennessee. Discovery of Andrew Johnson was made when a dead miner was found in a sitting position in one of the interior chambers. Johnson and the other three were suffering from black damp. [Source document](#).

1915 — A rock slide choked the main gangway in the Newcastle Mine of the Pacific Coast Coal Company near Seattle, Washington, trapping Thomas Zathias for **nine hours**. Rescuers expected to find his crushed body when they broke through the 60 feet of debris, but instead, they found him calmly sitting on his dinner bucket, awaiting deliverance. [Source document](#).

1929 — [Old Town Mine Explosion](#), McAlester, Oklahoma — Two miners found their exit blocked after the explosion. At this point, one of these men, Frank Gonzales, saw a third miner, Arnold Kissinger, collapse. Mr. Gonzales and the second miner, Joe Ponsella, next dragged Mr. Kissinger into a room where there wasn't much smoke and worked with him for about three hours. "After awhile, said Gonzales, when no one came to help us, we believed we would die. I said my prayers but I was not scared." Rescue workers reached the three men **five hours** after the explosion.

1932 — [Morgan Jones Mine Explosion](#), Madrid, New Mexico — Following the first impact of the explosion, some ten men near the outer edge of the area

made a dash for the main passageway. Three of these, including Jimmie Taylor, 19, son of H. L. Taylor, assistant superintendent of the company's Madrid mines, were overcome. They were picked up and carried out safely by their comrades. Andrew Sampria, rushing out, picked up a prostrate form and carried it with him. When he had reached the area of clean air, he learned that it was his own son, Pete, he had rescued.

1940 — December 31, 1940 — **18 hours** after a 70-foot roof fall entrapment in the Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal Company's Kent No. 2 Mine in McIntyre, PA, the following miners were rescued: Edgar Swan, Louis Canton, J. Fulmer, Leland Stutchell and Paul Cochran. Six months later, a mine explosion in the Kent No. 2 mine would take the lives of 7 miners.

[*Source document.*](#)

1950 — His life saved by the same huge beam that kept him prisoner for **54 hours**, John Wolti was freed from his tomb by rescuers in the Big 4 coal mine at Selleck, Washington. Wolti was brought out of the mine with a crushed arm and suffering from shock and was expected to be hospitalized for a week to ten days. [*Source document.*](#)

1951 — One miner, Cecil Sanders, was rescued after **60 hours** from the Orient No. 2 coal mine in West Frankfort, Illinois following an explosion which killed 119. At that time, this disaster was the nation's worst in the preceding 23 years. [*Source document.*](#)

1957 — Fourteen miners were rescued after more than **five hours** following an explosion at a Pocahontas Fuel Company No. 31 mine near Amonate, Virginia. Eleven miners died in the blast. The mine is officially listed as being located in McDowell County, West Virginia. [*Source document.*](#)

1970 — Loren Hinkle was rescued after his **24-hour** entombment following a roof fall in the Leckie Coal Company mine near Anjean, West Virginia. Rescuers delivered water and orange juice through a two-inch emergency air vent while they dug him out. Killed in the accident were R. B. Crookshanks and Charles Pitzenbarger. Ironically, Hinkle previously escaped death in a mine fire and another roof collapse. [*Source document.*](#)

1972 — Itmann Coal Company, Itmann No. 3 Mine Explosion — Three miners were brought out by rescue crews about **six hours** after the explosion. They were identified as Larry Bailey, 23, of Brenton; Dallas Mullins, 32, of Pineville; and Jerry Billings. All three were said to be in critical condition.

1987 — Charles Simpson, Jr. was rescued **19 hours** after a roof fall accident at the Slate Top Coal Company mine near Woodbine, Kentucky. [*Source document.*](#)

Rescuer Deaths in December

1906 — Pocahontas Mine Explosion, Pocahontas, Virginia — Edward Jones, the inside foreman, led the first rescue party, and when that party failed to return in a reasonable time a second rescue party under Supt. Leckie followed. Two of the Leckie party, John Odham and Ed Brown, were overcome by gas and died. Leckie barely escaped with his life. Then the third party was formed and continued the work. Meantime the first party had reached another entrance to the mine in safety, and sent word over the mountain announcing that fact.

1907 — Monongah Nos. 6 and 8 Mine Explosion, Monongah, West Virginia — John Narey died in the mine rescue effort during the mine disaster at Monongah Mine, West Virginia Dec. 6, 1907. (from an article in the "Latrobe Bulletin," Latrobe, PA, Dec. 18, 1907.) In all, three men are said to have lost their lives in the rescue work at Monongah, apparently overcome with smoke or poisonous gases lingering in the mines because they had no proper equipment for entering exploding mines, or proper equipment to revive rescuers or miners who had succumbed to their smoke and poisonous gases.

1921 — Satanic Mine Fire, Morrison, Colorado — Six men were killed by firedamp in the Satanic coal mine of the Colorado Collieries Company, when they attempted to place a bulkhead on the 100-foot level of an abandoned shaft, used as an air course, to stop a fire. The only man brought to the surface, apparently still alive, was Eugene F. Bovie, Sr., of Morrison, father of a young miner, who was overcome when he attempted to rescue his son.

1921 — No. 1 Mine Explosion, Ellsworth, Pennsylvania — On December 31, 1921, Albert Gilmore, a section foreman, lost his life in the No. 1 mine of the Ellsworth Collieries Company, Ellsworth, Pennsylvania, while wearing a Gibbs 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus following a local mine explosion.

1925 — Charles Hjurquist died while he and three others were searching for two miners trapped in the Fairview Gold Mine fire and cave-in on December 4 near Nederland, Colorado. One of the trapped men died in the fire and the other was removed in serious condition and hospitalized. Three other smoke-affected rescuers were also hospitalized in serious condition. [Source document.](#)

1985 — No. 2 Slope Afterdamp Asphyxiation, Carlstown, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania — Rick Wolfgang helped his injured brother from the No. 2 Slope of the MS&W Coal Company, but perished when he returned to the 4-

foot wide tunnel to try to save his father, Gene Wolfgang. Toxic gas flooded the area after the men set off a dynamite charge in the mine. Frank Benner also perished in the accident.

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