



Mining Accident News No.0936

12 to 21 December 2009

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Turkey: Gas Explosion Kills 19 Miners in Bursa

Extract from the journal of Turkish Weekly

Nineteen miners were killed in Bursa after a methane gas explosion caused an underground coalmine chamber to collapse. The mine is

located in the town of Alpagut, in Bursa province. Turkish Labor and Social Security Minister Ömer Dinçer said the blast, which happened Thursday night, buried the workers nearly 220 meters below the surface. "We lost all 19 workers. The chamber was entirely collapsed," Dinçer said on Friday.

Three survivors have been rescued so far, but efforts to reach the trapped miners have been complicated by the high concentration of flammable gas inside the mine as well as the unstable ground around the mine. Air was first pumped into the mine in an attempt to dispel the gas. Rescuers had to remove debris themselves because the area surrounding the mineshaft was too soft for heavy machinery. They estimate that carefully re-erecting supports inside the mine, which is necessary before the bodies can be recovered, could take a whole day.

Dinçer said the mine was last inspected in May and had operated without such an accident since 1983. Past mine accidents in Turkey have been caused by safety violations and outdated equipment. The worst mining accident in Turkey's history occurred in 1992, near the Black Sea port of Zonguldak, when a gas explosion killed 270 workers.

Turkish 2009 mine disaster can be viewed at:

http://www.usmra.com/photos/2009_Turkey_Disaster/

NSW: Full Industrial Court bench rejects department appeal over Wilton mine accident

Extract from Macarthur Chronicle, Aus

THE court case against two mining executives over the death of a man and the serious injury of his workmate at a Wilton mine in 2000 has been finalised.

An appeal from the NSW Primary Industries Department (now Industry & Investment NSW)

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of Industry & Investment NSW.

Editor: Mark Freeman

over the acquittal of Allied Coal mine manager John Milner and managing director Stephen Baldwin was rejected by the full bench of the NSW Industrial Court on November 20.

On December 20, 2000, Gregory Aspinall and Justin Rowles were caught in a shaft when the mine's roof collapsed at the Bellambi West Colliery on Appin Rd, Wilton. The two men had been installing roof supports near some broken machinery when the collapse occurred, covering them in rocks and debris.



Mr Aspinall was killed during the incident and Mr Rowles was in a coma until January 2001.

The department launched legal proceedings against Allied Coal, the owner of the colliery, in 2006.

Mr Milner and Mr Baldwin had been accused of failing to ensure the health and safety of workers when the incident occurred.

In April last year the Industrial Relations Court dismissed the allegations against both executives on the grounds the department's mine and safety performance director, Inspector Rodney Morrison, had failed to prove a breach of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Inspector Morrison launched an appeal, which was heard over five days on September 28-30 and October 1 and 7 this year.

But the court found the primary judge had not erred in finding the relevant particulars of the charge had not been made and the prosecutor had failed to make his case.

This week in mining accident history

21 December 1910

Pretoria Pit, Lancashire, UK

Underground Coal Mine

Gas explosion

344 killed

Source: http://www.staveley-genealogy.com/pretoria_pit.htm

During the Christmas week of 1910, the task of most families in the Westhoughton and Atherton area was to prepare for the upcoming holidays. However, the local coal mining families were completely unaware that in a brief instant their lives were about to be tragically, and irrevocably changed.

The Pretoria Pit Disaster is the worst coal mining accident to have occurred in Lancashire, and the third worst mining disaster in British history. The Pretoria Pit was a complex of coal mines owned by the Hulton Colliery Company, and situated on the boarder of Westhoughton and Atherton. Pretoria Pit was the largest coal mine in the Westhoughton area, working five coal seams in the region. Each seam had its own mine: Trencherbone, Plodder, Yard, Three-Quarter, and Arley mine.

The Hulton Colliery Co. employed approximately 2,500 people locally. On the morning of December 21, 1910, a total of 898 men and boys clocked in for the day shift at the Hulton Colliery, and most had descended the shafts below ground before 8am. One of those arriving for work early that morning was a 16 year old boy, Joseph Shearer Staveley of Westhoughton, on his very first day of employment in the Yard mine workshops. A total of 347 men, including Joseph, had descended down the No. 3 pit shaft to work in the Yard mine that morning, when suddenly, at 7:50am there was a tremendous underground explosion, about 300 yards deep below the earth's surface, at the level of the Yard mine.

Mr Alfred Tonge was the General Manager of Hulton Colliery at the time, and he lived almost

two miles away from the pit head. He was home at the time of the blast, and heard the explosion. He immediately left his home and arrived at the mine within about twenty minutes, leading a team of rescuers into the mine.

Only 4 men working the Yard mine that morning were fortunate enough to survive the initial blast. However, it is likely that if Mr. Tonge had not acted as swiftly as he did, that these young men may not have been as fortunate. The initial survivors of the blast were Fountain Byers, John Sharples, Joseph Staveley, and William Davenport. We know from the diary entries of Fountain's brother, Ben Byers, that Fountain would survive less than 24 hours. He left behind a wife, and child, just three days before Christmas, and was laid to rest at Wingates Parish Church on Christmas Day.

It is now known that Joseph was not the sole survivor from the Yard Mine explosion. However, it is to date, the only known article where Joseph Shearer Staveley's account of the day's events were published in his own words.

Joseph Staveley did not suffer any long lasting effects from his ordeal, and returned to work just after the New Year. In January 1911 Joseph testified during the inquest about his experience in the mine.

James Berry Jr., who died in the mine next to Joseph Staveley, was 21 years of age. Mr. Rushton, the under-manager, also perished, aged 32 years.

Richard Redmayne, the Chief Inspector of Mines, was responsible for leading the investigation into the accident. During the inquest, William Davenport was called to testify. Clearly he suffered long lasting effects as a result of his injuries during the blast, and two months after the explosion, he still could not recall the events of that day.

Redmayne ultimately concluded that a 20 yard section of roof along the North face of the Plodder district mine had collapsed the day prior to the explosion, and ultimately ruled that this collapse had resulted in fire-damp gasses

accumulating in the cavity left behind after the collapse, which was then ignited, likely by a faulty miner's lamp.

The blast had been reportedly heard and felt up to four miles away, and initially claimed the lives of 343 of the 347 men working in the Yard mine that fateful morning. Some close to the source of the blast died instantly, others suffocated due to the ensuing high levels of trapped carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide gasses or 'after damp' as the miners called it. There were a few minor injuries reported from the neighbouring Trencherbone and Arley mines, and some working those seams were also sickened by the gas, but there were no fatalities at these other mines as they were separately ventilated via the No. 4 shaft. All 343 men that perished that day were working in the Yard mine.

Christmas day 1910 was a day of mourning and remembrance. So many funerals were held that day at the surrounding churches, including the one for Fountain Byers, that his brother Ben noted in his diary that "*...funeral processions were criss crossing each other enroute to their denominations....*". Westhoughton was particularly hard hit by the tragedy as more than 200 men and boys from Westhoughton died in the blast, some were as young as 13 years old. The remainder were primarily from Daubhill and Chequerbent, others from Bolton, Atherton, and Tyldesley. Some families were almost completely destroyed. Mrs. Tyldesley of Chorley Road, Westhoughton lost not just her husband, but the explosion also claimed the lives of four of her sons. The blast was so severe, that the remains of thirteen of those killed were unable to be visibly identified, and were buried in a tomb in Westhoughton Cemetery.

The remaining three survivors of the accident were pictured on postcards produced locally for sale to raise money for the Mayor's Relief Fund in an effort to aid the widows, orphans and children of the deceased. Joseph Staveley is shown in the centre of this postcard:

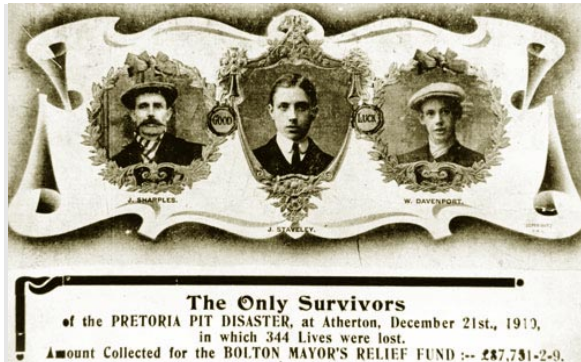


Image courtesy of Bolton Revisited

The Mayor's Relief Fund ultimately succeeded in raising £145,000 (the equivalent value of £9,046,485.61 in 2002) to help support the widows and children of those that died.

Of the three remaining survivors, another would soon be lost. John Sharples, although he had survived the initial explosion, and by all accounts had been initially recuperating well, ultimately succumbed to pneumonia, secondary to after-damp exposure, and died a week later. Of the 347 men that went to work in the Yard mine on the morning of December 21, 1910, now only Joseph Staveley, and William Davenport remained.

Many commemorative serviettes were produced locally as a tribute to those that had died, and listed the names of all 344 deceased men and boys.

One can only assume that the initial relief that Staveley and Davenport must have felt after surviving the Yard Mine explosion, quickly turned to grief, and later guilt. Why had they survived, when so many of their friends, neighbours, and colleagues had perished? Although it seems in some regards that Staveley and Davenport were hailed as miraculous survivors, one has to assume that their survival was equally resented by others who had lost so much.

Joseph did physically recover from his injuries, quite quickly, but his life was forever altered by the events of that day. He later served in the Royal Engineers during World War 1. After the war he returned home to Westhoughton to settle down, and married Ethel Barrett in 1926. They

had a son James in 1927, a daughter Mary in 1929, and a son Alan in 1936.

Joseph Shearer Staveley died in 1954.

Sunday 13 December 2009

USA: Penalties vs. mines are often reduced

Extract and comment from Arizona Republic, USA

Arizona mine operators often pay a fraction of the original fines they receive for violating federal safety regulations, a review of penalty data shows.

Total annual penalty amounts issued against Arizona miners have been reduced by as much as 40 percent in a single year during the past decade, according to data released by the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration after a public-records request.

Operators and industry representatives say changes to the way the agency calculates fines caused dramatic increases in penalty amounts, prompting more appeals by mine owners. They also say safety conditions in the industry have improved significantly in the

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Critics argue that reducing penalties renders the fines ineffective and sends the wrong message to violators.

The reduction typically results from mine operators contesting fines by filing an appeal with MSHA, a division of the U.S. Labor Department that enforces mine-safety regulations, inspects mine operations and investigates injuries and fatalities.

MSHA, like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, issues citations and civil penalties for everything from incorrect paperwork to faulty equipment.

Operators have 30 days from the time a civil penalty is assessed to contest it with the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, according to MSHA spokeswoman Amy Louviere.

The commission, an independent agency that oversees administrative cases stemming from mine-safety violations, takes several factors into consideration when weighing an appeal, including an operator's safety history, level of negligence and attempts to rectify the problem, according to Louviere.

New civil-penalty regulations with stiffer fines for many violations went into effect in 2007. The change has sparked more protests from mine operators, Louviere wrote in an e-mail.

While some industry critics question whether regulatory officials are letting violators off easy by reducing fines, mine operators say safety decisions are made independently of fines.

"We disagree with the notion . . . that safety decisions are made on the basis of economics," said Bruce Watzman, senior vice president with the Washington, D.C.-based National Mining Association. "Safety decisions are made because it's the right thing to do."

Mine operators point out that in most cases, MSHA citations require them to rectify a safety hazard well before the agency issues a monetary fine.

2000-09 fines cut 13.6%

MSHA provided *The Arizona Republic* the total number of violations committed by metal and

non-metal miners in Arizona, which includes all mines except for coal operations, for every calendar year since 2000.

Information for 2009 included data through Oct. 27.

It includes the original amount of civil penalties MSHA assessed against miners and the final penalty amount assessed after protests and negotiations for each year.

From 2000 through Oct. 27, 2009, Arizona metal and non-metal miners committed 25,281 violations.

MSHA originally issued \$8.27 million in civil penalties against miners in violation.

The amount was reduced by \$1.13 million, or 13.6 percent, to \$7.14 million.

Penalties were reduced more in some years than in others.

The largest reduction in the past decade occurred in 2000 when the original penalty amounts were reduced 40 percent to \$479,142.

Penalties issued this year through Oct. 27 only have been reduced 0.2 percent to \$1.06 million.

In more recent years, the reduction in fines has been smaller from a percentage perspective, the data indicate.

The reduction issued against Arizona metal and non-metal mine operators mirrors national figures, Louviere wrote.

Between 2000 and Oct. 31, 2009, civil penalties against metal and non-metal mine operators nationwide were reduced 10 percent, she wrote.

State Rep. Daniel Patterson, D-Tucson, said he thinks the fine amounts issued by MSHA are small and do little to deter "risky" behavior by operators.

"The fines become a cost of doing business," said Patterson, Southwest director for Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a non-profit alliance of federal and state employees that promotes wildlife and land conservation.

When asked about those who contend fine reductions send the wrong message to violators, Louviere said civil penalties should be "at a level that provides an incentive for mine operators to comply with the law."

"However, mine operators have the right to due process, and when the mine operators can present facts that mitigate the circumstances of a violation, MSHA and the commission are obligated . . . to reduce the penalties when appropriate," she said.

Among the factors prompting mine operators to contest fines are new penalty regulations MSHA introduced in April 2007. The change resulted in higher penalty amounts for violations that previously carried lower fines.

Fines assessed against all mines nationwide rose more than 450 percent to \$194.3 million from 2006 to 2008.

"The irony is that . . . some mines are seeing their penalties go up at the same time their safety performance is improving merely by fortune of a change in the regulatory formula for calculating (fines)," said Watzman of the National Mining Association.

Mark Savit, an attorney who represents Tucson-based copper miner Asarco LLC in safety matters, disagrees with the notion that stiffer penalties equate to safer conditions.

"The cost of accidents so far outweighs the cost of penalties" that preventing accidents is a chief concern for operators, Savit said.

Eric Kinneberg, spokesman for Freeport-McMoRan Copper Gold Inc., wrote in an e-mail that responses to MSHA fines issued against the Phoenix-based miner are considered "on a case-by-case basis."

"Whenever possible, we attempt to resolve these issues through discussions with MSHA," he said.

State Mine Inspector Joe Hart said the money spent on higher penalties would be better spent

if companies were able to reinvest it into their own training programs.

All bodies recovered in Turkey mine blast

www.worldbulletin.net

All the bodies were unearthed from the collapsed mine in Bursa, Turkish state TV said.

A team of 450 experts worked hard to recover the bodies of the workers that had been trapped in a mine in Mustafakemalpaşa town of Bursa province in Turkey.

Two of the workers' bodies had been reached at the 220 km depth in the first stage and were buried on Friday. Seven others were laid to rest on Saturday.

State Minister Faruk Celik and Energy and Natural Resources Ministers Taner Yildiz also attended the funerals.

The remaining 10 bodies are to be buried on Sunday.

Investigation on the incident continues.

Quote of the Xmas week



"When Christmas bells are swinging above the fields of snow, we hear sweet voices ringing from lands of long ago, and etched on vacant places are half-forgotten faces of friends we used to cherish, and loves we used to know."

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, (Poet, USA 1850-1919)

USA: Government publishing worker fatality information online

Extract from Dayton Daily News, USA

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has begun publishing employer-specific information online about worker fatalities or catastrophes that result in hospitalization of three or more workers, as part of a U.S. Department of Labor effort to increase public access to data.

The OSHA accident information online identifies the employer by name, gives the city and date of the accident and a brief description of how it occurred, without providing the worker's name. Previously, only the Labor Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration posted worker fatality data on its Web site.

The increased public visibility could provide impetus for employers to improve workplace safety programs, Miami Valley observers said, although some questioned the need to identify the employers online.

"You can form a negative impression of a company unnecessarily," said Todd Kelchner, president and chief executive officer of Kelchner Excavating, a Springboro-based contractor. An employee of the company, a bulldozer operator, was killed in a Sept. 19 accident in Miami Twp., south of Dayton.

By making the accident information available in more generic fashion, however, the government could help employers spot patterns and improve workplace safety programs to avoid future fatalities, Kelchner said.

"The decision to post the worker fatality figures on the OSHA Web site was made as part of this administration's commitment to open government and to provide employers and workers with information they can use to help assure worker health and safety in their own establishments," said David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for OSHA.

For many small companies, workplace fatalities are rare, said Michael Gorman, a University of Dayton associate professor of operational management.

Employees of a company where a worker has died of workplace injuries will push management to make safety improvements, and management would be motivated to do so anyway to protect the company's interests, Gorman said.

Wes Wells, executive director of the Dayton-Miami County AFL-CIO organization, and Jim Clark, president of the International Union of Electronic Workers-Communications Workers of America, welcomed the increased public visibility for worker fatality statistics, saying it could help focus attention on the problem.

Monday 14 December 2009

PNG: One Freeport Worker Killed in A Landslide

Extract from tempointeractive, Jakarta

TEMPO Interactive, Jakarta: One mining worker in the Freeport McMoran goldminer complex in Papua was killed in a rain triggered landslide on Sunday night which also injured four of five other workers.

Police said the incident took place at the Ridge Camp area at mile 72 (near the Aptonal hill) at about 8:30 pm local time after heavy rains in the area. Five other workers recovered from the ground according to head of the Public Communication unit of Papua Police Agus Rianto were in critical condition. And were being treated at Tembagapura Hospital.

Spokesman for Freeport McMoran, Mindo Pangaribuan confirmed the accident but said only four other workers we injured in the accident.



USA: Coal truck accident leaves a man dead

Extract from WYMT, Ky. USA

Officials say 52-year-old Stevie Johnson of Virgie was driving his 10-wheel truck loaded with coal on a haul road, when he lost control.

Johnson was thrown from the truck.

He was taken to Pikeville Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

The mine is owned by Premier Elkhorn Coal Company.

Officials with the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing are investigating the cause of the accident.

Wednesday 16 December 2009

Turkey: Three detained, mine shut down after deadly explosion

Extract from Today's Zaman, Istanbul, Turkey

Three people were detained yesterday for negligence following a coal mine explosion that killed 19 workers on Dec. 10 in the northwestern province of Bursa, Turkey.

A manager from the mine's managing company and two employees were reportedly detained upon the orders of the public prosecutor's office investigating the incident. The detentions came after Energy Minister Taner Yıldız announced that the mine would be closed. "We have decided to stop mining and production here completely for six months," the minister told the Anatolia news agency on Sunday.

A team of 14 investigators was sent into the mine after all the bodies had been removed on Sunday morning.

"A decision was made as a result of the investigations carried out in the mine. Independent of the investigations conducted by the public prosecutor and that of the Social Security Authority [SSK] officials, we launched a study involving staff from various institutions.

These institutions include the Turkish Mining Exploration Institute [MTA], the Turkish Hard Coal Enterprises [TTK] and the General Directorate of Mining Affairs, and staff from the mining areas

of Soma, Tunçbilek and

Dursunbey, which are all affiliated with the Ministry of Energy and Natural

Resources, and made the decision

to close the mine.

Yıldız also stated that they will notify the Bursa authorities about the decision, adding that private companies will work in order to update the safety measures in the mine. "If the private sector does not remedy what is lacking, it means there will be no mining activity," he said.

TL 5,000 emergency aid for victims' families

Yıldız stated on Sunday that Labor and Social Security Minister Ömer Dinçer said TL 5,000 will be given to the families of the victims from the Prime Ministry's emergency fund. Yıldız was in Mustafakemalpaşa in Bursa, where he attended a funeral for worker Yusuf Karaca along with Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Bursa deputy Ali Koyuncu.

The minister further stressed that the emergency aid to be granted to the victims' families was not a retirement pension or compensation. "The emergency aid fund is to meet basic needs. Today [on Sunday], we visited a family. They said they could not pay their rent. This money is given to alleviate such circumstances. It is immediate emergency support given to meet the families' financial needs and bring a small amount of relief."

Meanwhile, the bodies of seven of the 19 workers, which could not be retrieved from the



The bodies of seven workers that could not be retrieved from the mine earlier were removed at about midnight on Sunday while investigations continued in the mine.

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In a press conference held at the Bursa branch of the Republican People's Party (CHP), CHP Deputy Chairman Onur Öymen said they will issue a parliamentary resolution in order to conduct research into the incident "because we understand that the measures the government takes regarding safety at work are not enough."

Öymen explained that they had contacted experts in the mining field to gather information. He cited Germany as an example, saying that because of the safety precautions taken in German mines, no major mining accident has occurred in the country since 1992. He noted that while some public mines have pre-warning systems, some private mines, including the one in Bursa, do not.

He added that 2,687 workers have died in Turkish mines since 1955 while 713 people have died in mines in the US since 1950, even though the US has more mines than Turkey.

USA: Ohio CM accident leaves one injured

Extract from International Longwall News

AN unidentified male worker has received injures after what appears to be a pinning accident at a northeastern Ohio underground mine Monday.

US Mine Safety and Health Administration spokesperson Amy Louviere told *ILN* that much of the detail surrounding the incident was still preliminary, but could confirm that the man was working at the Buckingham Coal Company No. 6 mine in Glouster.

"The victim was presumed to have been struck by the boom of a continuous mining machine and may have been crushed between the boom and mine rib," she said, nothing that he was alert and conscious when rescuers reached him and had good vital signs.

After reaching the surface, the worker was taken by ambulance to an emergency helicopter.

Various local media have reported the worker is at a medical centre in Columbus, though his condition is not known.

The injured worker has not been identified.

Louviere said MSHA had issued a 103(j) order, a federal order often given to mines where injuries have occurred and protection of the victim, staff and any evidence is needed, to No. 6 at 2.30pm local time Monday afternoon.

Federal officials have commenced an investigation.

Ron Bird, a vice president of the company refused to comment on the incident The Perry County bituminous operation is controlled by James Graham, according to MSHA. Graham could not be located by *ILN* for comment or details by press time.

According to federal statistics, the mine has had three non-fatal days lost operator injuries so far in 2009, and recorded three in 2008. Last year, No. 6 produced just over 1 million tons on almost 175,000 operator hours worked.

NT: Former resident dies in mining accident

Extract from Canowindra News, Aus

David Magree was struck by an underground loader at the Granites Gold Mine on the Tanami Desert, 580kms northwest of Alice Springs NT.

The accident happened at 7pm on Sunday, November 22.

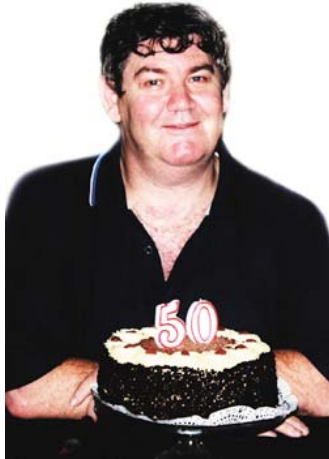
Dave died on-site approximately 6 hours later from injuries sustained in the accident.

The accident had occurred 1.1kms underground.

Dave's brother Bob, (who also works at the same mine) was at home in Darwin at the time.

Dave moved to Canowindra at age 8 in 1967 when his parents bought the Junction Hotel.

Dave was educated at St Edwards School and went on to own the local milk-run.



David Magree

Dave is survived by his wife Julee (also from Canowindra) and his three children Michael, Allison and Rachel.

Thursday 17 December 2009

USA: Man recuperating after mine accident

Extract from Zanesville Times, Ohio

COLUMBUS -- Dustin Gamble remained at Grant Medical Center in Columbus recuperating from broken ribs after an accident at the Buckingham Coal Company 6 Mine in Glouster on Monday.

According to Amy Louviere, a spokeswoman for the Mine Safety and Health Administration, Gamble was injured just before 2pm. while tramping a continuous mining machine across the working section of the mine.

A cut had been completed in No. 8 entry, Louviere said, and the continuous miner was being moved to No. 10 entry. At the No. 9 intersection, Gamble walked around the machine and was tramping the miner in the red zone, which is the hazardous area around the continuous mining machine, Louviere said.

The mine floor was soft and broke under one side of the tracks, throwing the machine into Gamble.

Gamble was stuck by the metal cable, or rope, post and was pinned between the cable/metal post and the mine rib.

Gamble was unable to release himself and other miners moved the machine.

Gamble was treated and transported to the surface, then flown by Medflight to Grant Medical Center.

Louviere said the approved roof control plan includes a provision preventing miners from being in the red zone.

Neither Ron Bird, a vice president at the company, or Clay Graham, one of the owners of the company, returned telephone calls seeking comments.

Louviere said an investigation into the accident may take weeks or months to complete.

Turkey: Report reveals 7 shortcomings in mine disaster in Bursa

Extract from Today's Zaman, Istanbul, Turkey

A report prepared by a team of 14 investigators on a coal mine explosion that claimed the lives of 19 workers in Bursa last week revealed that there were seven shortcomings in the coal mine that led to the tragic accident.

The explosion, believed to have been caused by methane gas, took place in a mine in the Mustafakemalpaşa district of Bursa, trapping the workers underground last Thursday evening.

According to the report, commissioned by the Energy and Natural Resources Ministry, the coal mine did not have an explosion-proof lighting system; it did not have a gallery that linked all the ventilators even though this is mentioned in the company's initial planning application; there was insufficient ventilation; except for the electrical engines, the equipment used in the transportation of the coal was not explosion proof; there were broken support posts; there was a collapsed ceiling; and gas levels were measured irregularly.

Authorities announced that the coal mine has been closed down due to the shortcomings mentioned in the report. This month's accident was just the latest in a series of mining

tragedies, which are frequent occurrences in deep coal mining.

USA: Coal Miner Dies in Mine Collapse

Extract from WSAZ, USA

LETCHER COUNTY, Ky - Rescue crews have confirmed that a coal miner trapped when a mine collapsed last night did not survive.

Our sister station, WYMT, reports that the accident happened before midnight Wednesday at the Sapphire Coal Company mine near Whitesburg, in Letcher County.

The miner was trapped under a large rock.

Crews worked throughout the overnight hours trying to reach him, but by the time they got there, it was too late.

The name of the coal miner hasn't been released.



UPDATE: The man killed, 34 year old Phillip Newton, worked for Sandlick Two mine, operated by Sapphire Coal Company.

Officials say a roof fall accident caused Newton to be trapped under a large rock.

"It's just a freak accident, just one of those things, you know, something sad happening here around Christmas to the family." Said Letcher County coroner Wallace Bolling.

Bolling says once emergency crews arrived, they just had to be patient to try and free Newton.

Once crews got Newton out, they found he had not made it through the trauma.

"He was brought out of the mines by the state, the coal company and federal, at 11:45, when he was pronounced dead." Says Bolling.

The mine was shut down immediately following the accident, and officials will continue investigating what happened.

No other miners were injured.

Newton was taken to the Everidge Funeral Home in Whitesburg.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

Rescuers hear cries for help from blocked central China mine shaft

Extract from Xinhua, China

CHANGSHA, -- Rescuers said Thursday they had heard cries for help from a blocked mine shaft in which five miners had been trapped since noon on Wednesday in central China.

Rescue efforts at the Manaoshan Mine in Chenzhou City, Hunan Province, would continue so long as the trapped miners had a chance of survival, said a work safety official.

More than 100 people were trying to reopen the tunnel, which was blocked by a mud-rock flow, trapping five miners 10 meters underground.

"Utmost efforts will be made so long as there is a sliver of hope," said Zhang Riqing, vice director of the Chenzhou Administration of Work Safety.

The blocked area was 2,000 meters from entry of the shaft. Due to limited space, rescuers were taking turns to dig in teams of four. Their work was also hampered by silt in the tunnel.

The Manaoshan Mine produces a mix of iron, manganese and other ores.

Friday 18 December 2009

USA: Dry Fork mine worker is hurt

Extract from the Gillette News Record, USA

An employee at the Dry Fork mine was hurt Sunday when he was attempting to dislodge an ice plug from inside a section of polyurethane water pipe.

The worker's name and the extent of injuries was not released by the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

"He hooked up an air compressor to assist the process of unplugging the pipe and he was using a torch to heat the pipe and melt the ice," said Amy Louvieri, MSHA spokeswoman. "The ice became dislodged and was forced through the end of the pipe section with significant force, which caused the pipe to strike the employee."

Dry Fork mine is owned by Western Fuels. A spokesman for the company could not be reached by press time. MSHA is investigating the accident.

Survivor says trapped colleagues still alive in central China mine shaft

Extract from Xinhua, China

CHANGSHA -- A miner who survived 32 hours in a blocked mine shaft in central China said Friday that he believed four colleagues still trapped were alive.

Rescuers saved 34-year-old Li Lianghui from the Manaoshan Mine in Chenzhou City, Hunan Province, at about 8:30 p.m. Thursday.

About 80 rescuers are struggling to reopen the tunnel at the Manaoshan Mine in Chenzhou City, which was blocked by a mud-rock flow at noon on Wednesday, trapping five miners 10 meters underground.

Li said he believed his four colleagues were trying to signal rescuers.

"Before I was pulled out of the shaft, I heard someone knocking stones rhythmically underground. I think they were sending a signal for help," he said.

Li, who was being treated at the Chenzhou Municipal No. 1 People's Hospital, said he thought he was going to die in the shaft.

"I was very scared during the hours underground. which was a completely dark period. I thought I would never have a chance of

seeing my relatives and friends again," he told Xinhua Friday.

"I was gradually overwhelmed by unbearable hunger and thirst," he said. "Finally, I suddenly heard sounds of digging. I knew that rescuers had come to me, and I began to shout loudly."

Zhao Anhua, of the hospital affiliated to the Manaoshan Mine, said after the rescue, "Li was sober-minded, and his blood pressure and heartbeat were normal."

Zhang Riqing, deputy director of the Chenzhou Municipal Work Safety Administration, said, "Rescuers have been working around the clock. According to signs we have gathered from underground, the four trapped miners still have a chance of survival."

The blocked area was 2,000 meters from entrance to the shaft. Due to limited space, rescuers were taking turns to dig in teams of four. Their work was also hampered by silt in the tunnel.

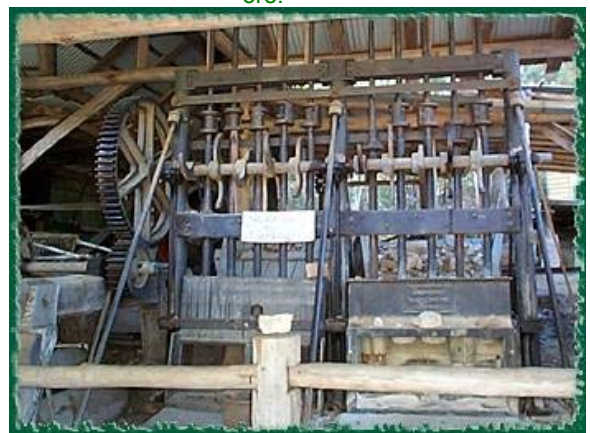
The Manaoshan Mine produces a mix of iron, manganese and other ores.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

S

stamp/stamper An iron rod, fitted with an iron or steel stamper shoe, and a tappet that is raised by a cam. The stamp and shoe fall onto stamper dies in the mortar box of a battery, so crushing the ore.



MERRY CHRISTMAS Back in 2010 -Ed.