



Mining Accident News No.1113

20 to 30 April 2011

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Wednesday 20 April 2011

At least 1 killed, 1 missing in Papua, Indonesia mining accident

Extract from channel 6 news

JAYAPURA, INDONESIA (BNO NEWS) -- At least one person was killed and another remains unaccounted for after a roof collapsed at a

mining area in eastern Indonesia, PT Freeport Indonesia said Tuesday.

PT Freeport Indonesia spokesman Ramdani Sirait said a possible mine blast could have caused a roof to collapse late Monday night at a so-called Deep Ore Zone in the Mimika District of Papua, where the men were working, the Jakarta Globe reported.

Indonesia's Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry said operations at the copper and gold mine owned by PT Freeport Indonesia have been suspended in order for the cleanup process and investigations to be carried out, as rescue teams try to locate the missing person.

During the search and rescue operations, one body was pulled out, and while one person has been confirmed missing, personnel are still verifying whether other individuals were working in the area when the accident occurred.

USA: Camera shows mine void

Extract from The Spokesman-Review, Idaho, USA

Bore work offers hope after setback to main rescue efforts

Rescue workers completed two bore holes into the rubble of Lucky Friday Mine on Tuesday in their effort to rescue a miner trapped since Friday.

A camera fed through a 180-foot hole showed there is a void in the area, although the size or extent of the void could not be determined Tuesday night, company officials said in a news release.

A second hole, 46 feet long, was tunneled into the area and has allowed crews to pump fresh air into the void.

Officials are hoping that Friday evening's rockfall left a space where Larry "Pete" Marek has been able to take refuge.

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of Industry & Investment NSW.
Issue 13 of 2011

It's unknown whether Marek, 53, survived the roof collapse in his work area at the Mullan, Idaho, silver mine.

Last year, bore holes were used to establish contact with 33 miners trapped in a copper mine in northern Chile. Food, water and messages were passed through the holes until the miners could be rescued.

At the Lucky Friday, the bore hole tunnels through 180 feet of rock from a neighboring stope, or work area. After the first hole was completed, Hecla Mining officials began drilling the second bore hole to the area where Marek is trapped more than a mile underground.

Tuesday's progress on the bore hole was an encouraging development in the round-the-clock efforts to locate Marek. Earlier in the day, federal mine safety officials halted efforts to clear fallen rock from the stope's west end. Unstable overhead rock posed too much danger for rescue workers, who might have been within 35 feet of reaching Marek. Instead, rescue teams have begun excavating a 220-foot drift north of the work area. Hecla said a second excavation effort will begin as soon as possible from another part of the Lucky Friday, requiring 182 feet of digging.

"We always have to have a Plan A and a Plan B," Hirsch said.

Both of the new excavation efforts use conventional mining methods, including jumbo drills and blasting. Crews are installing overhead support to protect rescue workers from falling rock.

"The company is working extraordinarily hard to reach Larry and will continue making every effort as long as it takes, using safe methods in the process in order to avoid risk to the rescue teams," Hecla officials said in a news release.

The Lucky Friday's safety record is touted by both mine administrators and hourly workers. More than 11 years have passed since a fatality at the mine. Yet mining is a high-risk industry, said Virginia Gillerman, associate research geologist for the Idaho Geological Survey.

"When you're that far underground, there is just a lot of inherent risk and danger in spite of the best engineering. You can't overcome those," Gillerman said. "Rocks have an intrinsic nature to fall down. ...We're asking a lot from Mother Nature to be down 6,000 feet taking out the kinds of minerals that we use for our daily lives."

Inspection reports on file with the Mine Safety and Health Administration show no recent violations related to the type of accident that occurred Friday. However, separately filed accident reports show that the Lucky Friday has reported 12 roof falls, or cave-ins, of various sizes and severity since January 2008. In three of those accidents, workers reported injuries.

The most recent occurred about six weeks ago. No one was hurt in the March 4 accident, though there were workers in the area when the rock fell. A summary of the accident given by a miner and posted on MSHA's database reads: "We were on an intersection trying to relieve some bags in the (supporting) wire and re-bolt when a 10' long x 8' wide x 6' high section of the back (roof) came down."

Just a day earlier MSHA had completed its quarterly safety inspection, which generated eight relatively minor violations including four issued to Hecla and four to contractor Cementation USA Inc.

Hecla was fined \$873. A penalty has not yet been assessed against Cementation.

Last November, there was a rock burst at the mine during day shift blasting time. No one was hurt when a 6-foot-by-14-foot-by-8-foot section of roof fell and blocked a roadway.

Rock bursts caused two more roof collapses in September, with no injuries reported.

An investigation into the causes of Friday's rock fall won't begin until Marek has been found.

"At this time, MSHA and the company's clear focus is rescuing the miner," Hirsch said.

Quote of the week



“The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings.”

Okakura Kakuzo
(Japanese scholar, 1863-1913)

Friday 22 April 2011

Philippines: 10 dead, 11 rescued in Mindanao landslide

Extract from Sun Star (Davao), Philippines

DAVAO CITY (Updated) -- Bodies of 10 miners were recovered while 11 others were rescued from a landslide that tore through a remote mining camp in the southern Philippines on Friday.

Dozens others are still missing as the debris of mud and trees buried shanties, tents and the entrances to illegal mine shafts in Kingking village in Pantukan, Compostela Valley.

The military said the landslide happened around 2:30 a.m. of April 22 in Kingking village, a known mining area with small-scale miners having mined the area for decades now.

Major General Arthur Tabaquero of the Eastern Mindanao Command said the landslide area covers about one hectare of the mining area.

Soldiers, police and miners were able to rescue 11 people in coordination with the local government unit. The remote location and other landslides blocking the lone road in were hampering efforts to bring in bulldozers and other rescue equipment.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig Gen. Romeo Mabanta said K-9

dogs from the brigade are on the way to the landslide area while a K-9 platoon, a medical team with ambulances, and a platoon of soldiers from the Division Headquarters was put on alert for possible deployment.

Army Lt. Col. Camilo Ligayo said one air force helicopter was standing by to ferry those who would be rescued to a hospital. Two other air force Huey choppers were deployed to secure the landslide-hit area from communist guerrillas, who are active in the province.

“The AFP expresses its sympathy to affected populace who are experiencing losses in the landslide. The AFP under local government units are working continuously to be able to rapidly respond with critically needed capabilities and supplies in times of crisis,” said Gen Eduardo SL Oban Jr., AFP Chief of Staff.



DAVAO. Search and rescue operation in Pantukan town continues as landslide buried dozens of miners. (Courtesy of AFP's 10th CMO Battalion)

“The role of the AFP during any humanitarian assistance/disaster response is to rapidly respond with critically needed supplies and support to help mitigate human suffering and prevent further loss of life,” said Oban.

Search and rescue

Meanwhile, members of the 71st Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army have intensified search and rescue operation for more or less 34 individuals trapped under the debris of mud and trees following a massive landslide.

Rescuers reportedly heard voices from a collapsed mine tunnel in the area. A female miner remains trapped but alive as of noontime Friday. Authorities said two more dead bodies of

miners were confirmed trapped in the said mine tunnel.

Lt. Col. Lyndon Paniza, spokesman of the Army's 10th Infantry Division, said one of the rescued victims is a certain Rebecca, a purok leader.

Senior Superintendent Aaron Aquino of Compostela Valley said 10 died from the landslide. He later admitted though that his figure could not be confirmed due to the unavailability of communication signal in the landslide area.

"It's been raining hard since last (Friday) night here, causing a high-risk landslide area to give in, burying houses below," said Liza Mazo, director of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Davao Region.

Five of the 11 injured victims were brought to a hospital in Pantukan. They were Lamberto Detoro, 47; a 15-year-old minor (name withheld); Jerry Hostil, 21; Erwin Galorio, 20; and Mike Sarit.

The sixth injured, Rico Clase, 29, was brought to the Davao Medical Center in Tagum City.

Mazo said a team from the OCD was dispatched to the area to help in the relief operations.

Provincial and Municipal Social Welfare and Development established evacuation centers.

The missing were mostly illegal gold miners and their families who have long been warned to stay away from the landslide-prone area. Authorities have closed some of the tunnels to discourage illegal mining, Pantukan Mayor Celso Sarenas said.

"We have warned them repeatedly of the danger there but they wouldn't listen," Sarenas told The Associated Press from Pantukan, which is in a gold-rich mountainous region about 580 miles (930 kilometers) southeast of Manila.

US mining firm offers help

On the other hand, the American mining firm that's conducting exploration in a mining site in

this town has offered its resources for the search and rescue operation.

Clyde Gillespie of St. Augustine Copper and Gold said their equipment and manpower are ready to help in the search and rescue. On Friday morning, their onsite bulldozer is being used in moving debris and in stabilizing the unstable slopes.

Gillespie said they readily lent their equipments upon receiving request from the local officials of Pantukan. It was learned that the landslide area is located some distance away from the area of St. Augustine.

"The landslide is in a very remote area called Upper Lumanggang, some distance away from areas in which Nadecor and St. Augustine are conducting environmental and engineering studies in the Kingking tenement. We have also offered the use of our helipad by military helicopters, which will airlift the injured to hospitals once they are transported from the mountain to the company's operations center," Gillespie said.

St. Augustine Gold and Copper is the group formed by joint venture of the local mining group Nationwide Development Corporation (Nadecor) and the US-based mining firm Russell Mining and Minerals Inc. for their gold and copper project in Pantukan.

"Nadecor and St. Augustine Gold & Copper are first and foremost concerned with the safety of everyone involved in this unfortunate incident. We are devoting the resources necessary to help respond and will continue to as long as is needed. As quickly as it is feasible and safe, we will offer our assistance to help determine the cause of the incident. Tragically, landslides of this sort are common throughout this area due to unstable slopes and frequent heavy rains," said Gillespie.

A similar landslide struck the village of Kingking — the site of Friday's accident — and a nearby community in 2009, leaving 21 dead, including children, officials said.

Illegal miners and their families have defied government warnings and built bunkhouses and shanties near where they eke out a living by digging in narrow, dangerous shafts, where accidents are common. Friday's landslide buried a still unknown number of those bunkhouses and entryways to nearby tunnels, the Pantukan mayor said.

Saturday 23 April 2011

USA: MSHA Man's death was mining accident

Extract from The Salt Lake Tribune, USA

The Feb. 24 death of an employee at a sand and gravel operation on Stansbury Island has been designated formally as a mining accident by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration.

Allan K. Sherman, 56, was found unconscious on a conveyor belt at a crushing and sampling facility that Bolinder Resources LLC operates at a gravel pit 7 miles north of Interstate 80. He died later.

Since no one saw the fatal mishap occur while Sherman was attempting clean a magnet on the conveyor belt, MSHA refrained from officially designating it a mining accident until an autopsy ruled out the possibility of a medical issue having been responsible.

The determination does not impact MSHA's investigation into the cause of the accident, a probe that has been under way since the day of the accident. It means only that Sherman's death is listed as the second of three fatalities so far this year in mining operations other than coal.

MSHA officials have not indicated when the investigation report will be final.

Sherman was employed by Bolinder Resources for nearly two years. At the time, the company had eight employees.

MSHA records show Bolinder had no lost-time injuries before the Feb. 24 fatality. But in the aftermath of the accident, the operation was

subjected to a special "impact" inspection in March. "These inspections," said MSHA boss Joe Main, "involve mines that merit increased agency attention and enforcement due to their poor compliance history or particular compliance concerns."

The Bolinder operation received 23 citations and orders in that inspection, 14 of which were deemed "significant and substantial." That 61 percent rate of "S&S" violations was the highest of eight metal/non-metal mines inspected in March. The average was 38 percent.

Sunday 24 April 2011

USA: Miner's body recovered from Idaho mine

Extract from UPI.com

MULLAN, Idaho, -- The body of a miner killed when a shaft collapsed in the Lucky Friday Mine in Idaho was recovered Sunday, the company that owns the mine said.

Hecla Mining Co. said in a release on its Web site that the body of Larry Marek, 53, had been retrieved from the underground silver, lead and zinc mine in Mullan Sunday afternoon and the family was notified.

"Words cannot express the deep sorrow we feel at the tragic loss of our friend, colleague and 30-year veteran of the mining industry. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, loved ones and friends," Hecla, the company that owns the mine, said in a release.

"We will begin our in-depth investigation to discover how and why this happened."

Marek was killed while working in an area more than a mile underground alongside his brother. His brother was able to escape. There were about 50 employees in the mine when the accident occurred, the company said.

UPDATE (25 Apr): The U.S. secretary of labor has promised a federal investigation into an Idaho mining accident that claimed the life of a Hecla Mining employee. The body of Larry Marek was recovered Sunday following a

weeklong rescue effort at the Lucky Friday Mine in Idaho's Silver Valley.

"No miner should ever have to die for a paycheck," said Labor Secretary Hilda Solis.

Monday 25 April 2011

USA: Worker Dies in Mining Accident

Extract from WTAE.com, USA

Beaver County Rescue Team Called To Springfield Township

SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP, Oh -- A worker was killed early Monday morning in an accident at a limestone mine in Ohio.

Jason Gudat, 31, of Washingtonville died when some loose rock fell and hit him in the head at the East Fairfield's Subtropolis mine on East Garfield Road in Springfield Township.

Authorities said co-workers tried to help the victim but were unable to save his life.

The owner of the mine said Gudat was wearing a hard hat at the time of the accident.

The mine employs about 150 people, and about 25 were working at the time of the accident, authorities said.

Underground mining is shut down until the investigation is complete.

A tactical rescue team from Beaver County was alerted about the rescue effort.

USA: Families of Ky. miners killed sue coal company

Extract from Businessweek, USA

LOUISVILLE, Ky. -- The families of two coal miners killed in a roof collapse in 2010 in western Kentucky sued the mine operator on Monday, saying production was emphasized over safety at the Dotiki mine, which had been cited hundreds of times for safety violations.

The lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court in Kentucky by Sandy Travis of Dixon and Melissa Carter of Hanson, whose husbands died in the April 28, 2010, collapse. They also filed claims

with the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration seeking \$9 million each for personal injury and wrongful death.

Travis is seeking up to \$5 million in punitive damages in the lawsuit, while Carter, who is also suing on behalf of the couple's minor son, is asking for up to \$10 million in punitive damages. Both are also asking for an undisclosed amount in compensatory awards.

Travis and Carter said in the lawsuit that safety was secondary at the mine. State and federal officials cited the mine, run by a subsidiary of Oklahoma-based Alliance Resource Partners, more than 1,000 times between January 2009 and the day of the roof collapse. Among those citations 13 closure orders and at least 57 citations in the two years before the roof collapse.

Justin Travis, 27, and Michael Carter, 28, were clearing loose rock in the mine on the Hopkins-Webster County line when the roof collapsed, trapping and killing both men.

Eberley Davis, general counsel for Alliance Resource Partners, said the company hasn't seen the lawsuit and declined to respond to the specific allegations. But investigations by company, state and federal officials concluded that the subsidiary running the mine, Webster County Coal, could not have known about the geographic anomaly that caused the collapse, Davis said.

"We stand by those conclusions," Davis told The Associated Press. "It was just a tragic accident."

John Whitfield, an attorney representing both families, did not immediately return a call seeking comment. A spokesman for MSHA also did not immediately return messages seeking comment.

In July, the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing issued a notice of noncompliance to Webster County Coal for violations of state laws that require companies to have adequate roof control plans in underground mines.

Three months later, MSHA cited the mine operator, saying Alliance Resource Partners properly followed the roof control plan at the Dotiki mine. But MSHA said a non-detectable formation of slippery rock called slickensides or slips caused the roof to cave in an unsupported area being mined.

The federal report says the collapse couldn't be foreseen at the massive coal-mining complex in Kentucky. MSHA cited the mine for failing to adequately support the roof, causing a section up to 76 feet long, 19 feet wide and up to 10 feet thick to fall in.

In the claims against MSHA, Travis and Carter allege the agency did not properly document citations nor comprehensively inspect facilities and allowed the mining company to skirt regulations.

Death at Zambian Lumwana mine and output unaffected

Extract from SteelGuru, Zambia

Reuters reported that a worker was killed at Zambia's Lumwana copper mine run by Equinox Minerals but no impact was seen on production.



File photo: Zambia's Lumwana Mine

Lumwana Mining Company regrets to announce that a fatal accident occurred at the Lumwana mine on the morning of April 25th 2011 when a contractor employee working for Avantech was struck by a grader.

Mr Nathan Chishimba spokesman said that the incident would not materially impact production.

Tuesday 26 April 2011

Eight Dead in SW China Coal Mine Flood

Extract from Xinhua

Eight miners who were trapped in a flooded colliery pit in southwest China's Guizhou Province for nearly two days were found dead Tuesday, a work safety official said.

The accident occurred at about 7 p.m. Sunday, when 45 miners were working underground in the Xiao'aozi Coal Mine in the city of Liupanshui in Guizhou's Panxian County . Thirty-seven of the miners scrambled to safety, but eight failed to get out.

Rescuers found two bodies on Tuesday morning and retrieved the remaining six on Tuesday afternoon, said Cai Jun, head of the work safety administration in Liupanshui.

Several nearby mines have also filled with water, according to an initial investigation. A subsequent investigation into the cause of the flooding is still under way.

The mine, located about 330 kilometers away from the provincial capital of Guiyang, produces 150,000 tons of coal annually and was operating legally.

Wednesday 27 April 2011

Eight Die in Central China Blast

Extract from Xinhua

Eight people died and 17 others were injured in a blast that ripped through the homes of coal mine workers and nearby villagers in central China's Henan Province Tuesday evening, a local official said Wednesday.

The explosion, which occurred at about 8:40 p.m. Tuesday evening, hit part of a village in the city of Pingdingshan's Shilong district, said Zhang Wei, deputy governor of Shilong District.

Illegally stored explosives in a residential community were the cause of the explosion, Zhang cited an initial investigation as saying.

Police authorities are continuing to investigate the explosion, Zhang said.

Local police have detained 25 people, including the owner of the Tianshun Coal Mine, in connection with the illegally stored explosives, Zhang said.

Eighteen people, including several miners and their families, lived in a residential area located about two kilometers from the coal mine. Eight of them were killed and the remaining ten were injured in the blast.

The victims were from Pingdingshan's Shilong district and Lushan County, as well as Shaanxi Province.

Police have cordoned off the explosion site, where destroyed homes have been fully razed by shovel loaders. The blast severely damaged dozens of nearby homes.

"I fell asleep and suddenly there came a sound of thunder above the rooftop," recalled Tian Dexiu, who lives about 10 meters from the explosion site.

"We rushed outside and there was dust all around in the courtyard. The dust settled an hour later," Tian said.

The explosion also damaged a nearby kindergarten and injured a child.

"At first, I thought it was an earthquake. So I woke up five children and led them downstairs," Wang Lina, a teacher who sleeps on the second floor of the kindergarten.

Mining accident kills eight workers in China's Gansu province

Extract from Newstrack India

Beijing, (ANI): At least eight more miners have died of carbon monoxide poisoning following a mining accident in China's Gansu province.

Xinhua quoted a local official as saying that rescuers had entered the lead zinc mine and were searching for the remaining three trapped people late Thursday night after carbon monoxide levels were reduced to safe levels.

The three inspectors had failed to return to the surface on Wednesday after entering the underground pit of the Changba Lead-Zinc Mine in Chengxian county, Longnan city, that morning to conduct routine inspections. Eleven workers were then sent to look for them in the pit.

Of the 14 people who entered the mine, five escaped unharmed and one was later rescued.

This week in mining accident history

28 April 1924

Benwood Mine

Benwood, West Virginia, USA

Underground coal mine

119 killed, methane explosion and afterdamp

Source: www.lindapages.com

New York Times - April 29, 1924

114 BELIEVED DEAD IN MINE EXPLOSION

Entire Day Shift of Wheeling Steel Corporation Trapped in Benwood Workings.

14 BODIES RECOVERED

Debris and Poison Gas Block Rescuers - Stricken Families Grieve in Drenching Rain.

Special to the New York Times.

Benwood, W. Va., April 28 - One hundred and fourteen men are believed to have perished in an explosion in the Benwood mine of the Wheeling Steel Corporation here at 7:30 o'clock this morning. Fourteen bodies have been recovered.

Rescue crews, working at both ends of the mine, had to break their way through a huge mass of stone that blocked the entrance. Late this afternoon they had reached a point 3,000 feet from the main entrance, where another complete blockade was encountered.

Two men were found still alive at 11 o'clock in an air shaft but they died before they could be carried to the surface. Two hours later the bodies of two other men, burned beyond

recognition, were found on a motor near the mouth of the mine. Three other bodies were carried out at the Elm Grove outlet on the east soon afterward.

The terrific force of the explosion tore away heavy ties used over the entrance to the mine. The concussion, officials believe, was sufficient to kill a majority of the workers.

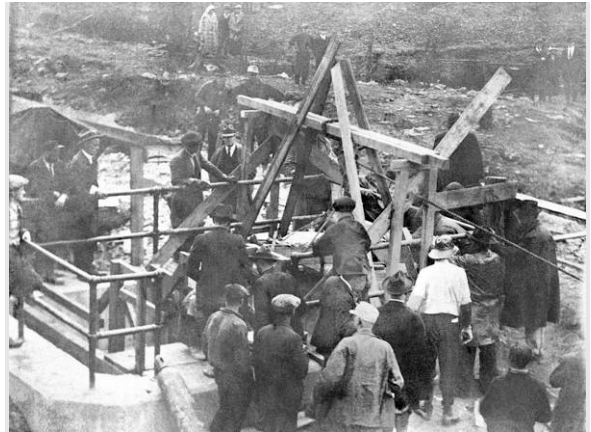
As if in sympathy with the frantic hundreds who thronged the streets near the steel company's gates, a heavy rain fell throughout the day. Wives and children of the miners, seemingly unmindful of the drenching downpour, stood about in pitiful groups, awaiting news of their loved ones, for whom hope was gradually dying.

At 2:30pm the pumps used by rescue workers had begun to pour gas from the main shaft entrance at Benwood. All outlets for the poisonous fumes had been cut off until this time. Inspector A. E. Lafferty, returning from a trip into the mine at Brown's Run air shaft, said there was absolutely no hope for the men then entombed.

The explosion occurred only five minutes after the crew on the day shift had gone into the mine. The regular morning work train carried at least 104 miners and their equipment. A man who had seen them start said he heard the explosion less than five minutes later. The train at this time had travelled at least a mile into the mine, it is believed.

At 8 o'clock, half an hour after the explosion, four cars from mine headquarters carrying rescue workers left Benwood at 10 o'clock for the Still Run air shaft, while reinforcements were sent at the same time to Brown's Run.

The mine rescue car Holmes, sent by the Pittsburgh division of the United States Bureau of Mines, arrived at noon and a crew of mine engineers under the supervision of J. W. Fene, system chief safety engineer of Pittsburgh, went into the mine soon afterward.



Body of victim being removed from air shaft, Benwood Mine Disaster

A corps of nurses from the Wheeling Chapter of the American Red Cross and five Wheeling physicians were on the scene, while Red Cross headquarters at Washington, D. C. has assured that any other medical assistance needed would be sent.

On the embankment overlooking Marshall Street, at the gate of the steel company, hundreds are crowding the hills in the rain, which has poured down all day. An ink-black sky forms a background for the mine entrance, while in the rear of the Marshall Street hill flames from the steel furnaces cast a lurid glow over the scene.

Benwood is the steel city of the Wheeling District. It is five miles below Wheeling on the river and the mine is one of the oldest in this district. Officials announced that 104 men received their "checks" before entering the mine. While some might have entered without "checking in," they said the number entombed would not be more than 110.

By the time the rescue operations were largely complete a week later, it was known that at least 111 men had been killed in the explosion- some by the blast itself but more by what was known as the "afterdamp" caused by the explosions that ripped through the mine.

Afterdamp was determined as the cause of death in many cases by the fact that many bodies were found in the mine with coats, clothing and handkerchiefs wrapped around the men's heads and no evidence they had been

burned to death as those close to the explosion were.

The cause of the explosion could not be determined by onlookers and news personnel since what was seen as strict censorship was put into place quickly the first day.

It was not until the next Monday, May 5, that news came out that it was believed there had been two explosions in the mine which caused the disaster.

The first explosion was in a pocket of gas (usually methane gas is liberated from the coal seam in deep mines), press accounts said.

The second explosion was of dust, most likely coal dust, which was raised into the air and then ignited by the methane explosion. The second explosion was believed to have caused the deaths of the miners, press accounts said.

As rescue efforts began, help poured in, in the form of extra manpower from other towns, including mine rescue cars from Pittsburgh and Tug River, and United Mine Workers of America personnel from the union's headquarter's in Bridgeport.

It was learned the first day that the superintendent of the mine, George Holliday of 510 Water St., Benwood, was one of the men trapped in the mine, along with his son, George Jr., who was in charge of the motors in the mine.

Neither survived the disaster, perishing with the rest of the men underground when the explosions occurred. It normally took 40 to 45 minutes to walk underground from the main entrance to the area where the explosion occurred, and it was about three miles through the main entrance to the point where the explosion was near the Brown's Run air shaft.

The mine fan was still operating the first day after the disaster, news accounts said, pumping 40,000 cubic feet of air into the mine and 100,000 cubic feet of air out.

By Wednesday of that week, the Benwood steel mill ceased operation due to no more coal being available from its mine. It was estimated it would

be several before months before the coal supply resumed due to necessary repairs being made to the mine.

It also was discovered that day the main entrance was blocked by solid rock and rescue efforts at that location were stopped by Chief Mine Inspector R.M. Lamble, who was personally directing the search efforts. Excavation efforts and body recovery were handled only from the Brown's Run air shaft after that time.

By then it was slow going in search operations due to various roof falls in the depths of the mine where the actual workings were located. It was not until Sunday, May 3, that a total of 83 bodies were taken from the mine. On Monday, May 5, 115 dead miners had finally been removed from the mine.



[Burying the dead miners](#)

Cribbing works, commonly used to shore up the roof in underground coal mines, were being set by work crews.

By Wednesday, May 7, the burials were under way and the story had dropped off the front pages of the newspapers.

The final number killed, from Bureau of Mines report by JW Paul, was 119 men – mostly Polish, Italian and Hungarian immigrants. As a result of the disaster, the chief inspector of the State recommended rock dusting, use of electric caplamps, and permissible equipment in all mines in the State in which gas was present.

[Thursday 28 April 2011](#)

NZ: Miners may have survived first Pike River blast

Extract from stuff.co.nz

A fully-clothed body has been seen inside the Pike River mine, where 29 workers were killed, and there is evidence some miners may have survived the first blast.

Police said today a senior forensic pathologist had confirmed a video image taken in February looked like a fully-clothed person lying face down in the mine.

Images also show a firefighting box had been opened, police said. This suggests some miners might have survived the first blast on November 19 last year.

Assistant Commissioner Grant Nicholls said he had briefed the victims' families on the latest information at their regular weekly meeting in Greymouth last night.

"A series of videos were taken via borehole 47 in February.

"Initially it was unclear as to the nature of an object in the mine and it appeared after Electronic Crime Laboratory enhancement improbable that the image was that of a body," Nicholls said.

"To be sure police requested that Dr Martin Sage, a senior forensic pathologist, view the video images and make an expert opinion on one of eight images. Dr Sage indicated last week that in his view the shape is suspiciously that of a body. A review yesterday of a CAL scan (the scanning technology gives an impression of objects in the environment rather than a detailed image) of the same location has located an image consistent with that reported by Dr Sage.

"An important next step is to arrange with a suitable expert in the technology to further enhance the CAL scan images so that better information is available to police," Nicholls said.

Police were also investigating getting a different type of camera, imported from the United States,

to be lowered into borehole 47 to try and get better images, Nicholls said.

"It is important to note that the images we currently have are not that clear. More refinement and interpretation of what currently appears to be a body is needed."

Nicholls said police had also briefed the families on the possible state of three equipment boxes in the slimline area of the mine.

"Preliminary indications are that there are three boxes and one of these, thought to contain fire fighting equipment, appears to be open. It appears that the other two boxes, which are thought to contain self-rescuers, are closed."

'GET THEM OUT'

Kokshoorn said Pike River's receivers needed to get into the mine and recover the men's bodies or pass the responsibility to an organisation that could.

"It is really bringing it home to us now that there are miners down there and family members want their loved ones out of that pit," he said.

"It's been five months now and it's time for the receivers to get down that hole - either they get in and recover those bodies or they need to get out."

Kokshoorn suggested the receivers change "tack" and pass the responsibility over to Solid Energy, a possible buyer of the mine.

"Put Solid Energy around the table, they have access to equipment and are capable of accessing the mine.

"It is not fair. There is evidence that there are bodies down there, so get down there and stop sitting up here looking down a hole."

Kokshoorn said he had "always suspected" the miners' bodies were still lying in the mine.

"From the footage we have seen, the heat from the fire was not as great as what was anticipated. We knew two months ago there must be bodies down there, but nothing has been done.

"Just get on with the job and get those bodies out," he said.

Rescuers Locate Miners Stranded in NW China Mine

Extract from Xinhua

Rescuers said late on Thursday that they have located the three miners who have been stranded for over a day in a lead-zinc mine shaft in northwest China's Gansu Province.

It remains unknown whether the trapped miners are still alive.

Five of the miners' co-workers were confirmed dead as of 6:40 p.m., due to inhalation of toxic carbon monoxide in the shaft.

Though rescuers have installed ventilation equipment to vent the toxic gas, they will not be able to enter the pit until early on Friday, said Shi Xinshun, head of the rescue team.

Three inspectors were performing routine inspections in an underground pit at the Changba Lead-Zinc Mine in Chengxian County, Longnan City, at 9 a.m. on Wednesday.

After the inspectors failed to return that afternoon, mine managers sent 11 workers to look for them. Of the 14 people who entered the mine, five returned unharmed and one was later rescued. One rescued worker remains in critical condition.

The mine belongs to Baiyin Nonferrous Metal Group Co., Ltd., a major Chinese producer of non-ferrous metals.

Saturday 30 April 2011

USA: Feds - West Virginia mine may be permanently sealed

Extract from CNN, USA

The owners of a West Virginia mine where 29 people perished in an explosion last year have agreed to permanently seal it, federal regulators said.



The Upper Big Branch Mine accident was the worst mining disaster in the United States since 1972.

Massey Energy has filed a plan with regulators and the two sides are set to meet next week, said Amy Louviere, a spokeswoman with the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

The April 5, 2010, explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine was the worst mining disaster in the United States since 1972, when 91 miners died in a fire at the Sunshine Mine in Kellogg, Idaho.

Don Blankenship, the company's now-retired CEO, had previously indicated the company hoped to reopen the mine.

The Big Branch Mine had a spotty safety record prior to the explosion, with three deaths reported over the previous 12 years.

Most of the blast victims were working in an area where long-wall cutting was taking place. The technique uses a large grinder to extract coal and creates large amounts of coal dust and methane gas, both of which are explosive.

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

A

APPARENT STEEL PRODUCTION



The term applied to measure the crude steel production (expressed in terms of crude steel equivalents which adjusts for processing losses during production of crude steel) of a country after adding back the crude steel equivalent tonnage of imported steel minus crude steel equivalent tonnage of exported steel.

-Ed