



Mining Accident News No.1215

1 to 20 July 2012

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Sunday 1 July 2012

S.Africa: Gold Fields closes Kloof-Driefontein Mine after Fatal Accident

Extract from www.bloomberg.com

Gold Fields Ltd., (GFI) the fourth-largest producer of the metal, closed its Kloof-

Driefontein Complex mine west of Johannesburg after five miners died in an accident.

Another 14 miners were admitted to hospital after a fire broke out at the mine's No. 4 shaft, Johannesburg-based Gold Fields Ltd. said in an e-mailed statement. The mine will remain closed "until further notice," it said.

"Management deeply regrets the incident and has launched a full investigation," Gold Fields said. "The Department of Mineral Resources and union representatives have been informed."

Kloof-Driefontein Complex is Gold Fields's the largest mining operation. In April last year, a shaft at the Driefontein mine complex was closed for a week after two workers died in accident.

This week in mining accident history

1 July 1856

Chapelhall No.5 Colliery

Chapelhall, North Lanarkshire, Scotland, UK

Underground coal mine

4 killed, winding incident

Winding machinery getting out of gear by neglect of engineman not securing it properly to the engine

AUTUMN CIRCUIT COURT - John Ballantyne, engineman, was accused of the crime of culpable homicide, in so far as on Tuesday the 1st of July last, a while being employed as an engineman by the Monkland Iron and Steel Company to manage the steam engine at No. 5 coal-pit at Chapelhall, and when he was about to lower the now deceased John O'Donnell, coal drawer, Patrick O'Donnell, collier, Owen Crossan, coal drawer, and Henry Orrock, junior, coal drawer, down the dip side of the shaft of the pit to the mouth of the seam of splint coal therein, he did, in culpable neglect of his duty, fail to insert the gib key between the plumber

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services
Issue 15 of 2012

block and the shoulder or snug of the sole plate, or at least to insert it in a secure and proper manner, and the said John O'Donnell, Patrick O'Donnell, Owen Crossan,, and Henry Orrock, having entered a cage for the purpose of being lowered, and he having thereafter put the engine in motion, and lowered the cage for a short distance, the plumber block, in consequence of his neglect, was pushed aside by the action on one another of the toothed wheels fixed on the shaft of the axle, and the toothed wheels were thrown out of gearing, and freed from the control of said engine, in consequence of which the cage descended with great rapidity to the bottom of the pit, 90 fathoms in depth, whereby John O'Donnell and Henry Orrock were mortally injured, and soon thereafter died, and Patrick O'Donnell and Owen Crossan were suffocated by being thrown into a pool of water.

Mr. Moncrieff appeared for the prisoner, who pleaded not guilty

After a lengthened trial, the jury, by a majority, returned a verdict finding the prisoner not guilty; and the foreman stated that if permitted, they would add a vote of censure against the proprietors of the pit for the bad condition of the machinery. [*Glasgow Herald 3 October 1856*]

Tuesday 3 July 2012

Botswana: Fatal accident at Jwaneng Mine

Extract from Mmegi online, Botswana

It is with deep regret that Debswana announces the passing away of its employee, Motshwari Raseiteo, who met his death when the Jwaneng Mine pit experienced a slope failure at Cut 6 on June 29th at around 4am.

The rescue team reached the vehicle that Raseiteo was driving on Saturday evening.

He had been employed as a General Shift Foreman in the Mining department since March

2012. Raseiteo was 34 years of age and is from Bray in the Kgalagadi District.

He is survived by his wife and three children. May his soul rest in peace.

As a result of this tragic incident, all production activities have been suspended until all investigations have been completed.

Counseling services have been availed to all Jwaneng Mine employees to assist them during this difficult time.

Esther V. Kanaimba-Senai

Group Manager: Public & Corporate Affairs

Debswana Diamond Company

Thursday 5 July 2012

16 trapped in central China coal mine

Extract from Courier Mail, QLD, Aus

Sixteen people have been trapped in a flooded coal mine in central China, state media reports.

THE mine in Hunan province flooded on Wednesday evening and by late Thursday morning none of the 16 trapped miners had been rescued, Xinhua news agency reported.

Rescue work was ongoing, it added. The cause of the flood was not immediately known.

Accidents in China's mines occur frequently, although improved safety standards have appeared to be effective.

According to the latest government figures, 1973 people died in coal mining accidents in 2011, a 19 percent fall compared with a year earlier.

Labour rights groups, however, say the actual death toll is likely to be much higher, partly due to under-reporting of accidents as mine bosses seek to limit their economic losses and avoid punishment.

China is the world's biggest consumer of coal, relying on the fossil fuel for 70 percent of its growing energy needs.

QLD: Daughters recall day they lost dad

Extract from The Queensland Times, Aus

HENRY Clark packed more into his 52 years than most of us would manage in 100 lifetimes before he died in a tragic mining accident at the Cornwall Colliery in 1965.

The man known as Gunner Clark for his wartime heroism will be remembered on the Ipswich Rosewood Coalminers Memorial as one of the 185 people who lost their lives in local mines. The memorial will soon be erected in Limestone Park.



Lorraine Gray (left) and Elizabeth Waters hold the coal pick and watch of their father, Henry "Gunner" Clark (pictured right).

For two of his daughters - Lorraine Gray and Elizabeth Waters - he will always be remembered as a loving dad who rose from tough beginnings to become an Ipswich legend.

A young Henry came to Australia from England as a 14-year-old child immigrant and went to an orphanage in Western Australia.

He later joined the army and fought in the Second World War and he became known as "Gunner" Clark for his proficiency in the role. He gained numerous war medals including the Australia Service Medal 1939-1945, The War

Medal, The Defence Medal, Pacific Star, Africa Star and 1939-1945 Star. During the war he was on a ship bombarded by the Germans. Gunner Clark was left floating in the water after the attack but swam to safety.

He served in Libya, Egypt, Greece, Crete, Palestine, Tel Aviv, Borneo and New Guinea. On returning from the war he went to work in the mines in Ipswich. His wife, Laura Kathage, was from a mining family. Her father, August Kathage, owned mines in the area.

"Mum's father August started the first Westfalen Number One mine at Thagoona, which ran from 1931 to 1948 when the seam ran out," Loraine says.

"When dad came back from the war he helped mum's older brother Otto to start Westfalen Number Two (mine) at Dinmore."

Lorraine was 15 when her father died at Cornwall Colliery on that fateful day of August 26, 1965.

"As kids we lived down at Creek St and the mine at Blackstone, so it wasn't far away," she recalls.

"I can remember all the ambulances flying down Blackstone Rd. Mum said to us kids: 'I hope that is not the mine.' It wasn't until later that night that the minister and mum's brothers came to the house to tell mum that there had been a problem. Our sister Lynette, who was the second eldest, had been married a week before dad was killed and they had to bring her back from her honeymoon. It was a tragic time all round."

Mr Clark had only worked at the mine for a couple of years and often told his children it was unsafe.

"There were six or seven men in the mine and they heard the roof creaking," Lorraine says.

"Dad was working on the machine. The men got out and dad apparently went back to turn the machine off. At the start they said dad might have got under the machine...but he didn't."

The book, *Death in the Mines: The Year by Year Toll*, records the incident and how it could have been avoided. Queensland Miners secretary Cyril Vickers said that "the Queensland executive held that mechanisation had increased the risk of accidents because of... inadequate timbering for big machines and the noise of the machines". He said the tragedy could have been averted "if the roar of the machine had not prevented the men from hearing the working of the roof".

It was understood that better methods of securing the supports at the mine were needed.

The book records that "on August 26, 1965 Henry 'Gunner' Clark was caught under a fallen rock in West Moreton's Edward S. Cornwall mine at Blackstone. The rock covered an area of about 40 feet by 20 feet and it was estimated to weigh 200 tons".

Workmates, mining officials and rescuers dug for 13 hours to search for Gunner Clark and a doctor who went down into the mine found that he would have died instantly in the accident. The Ipswich community spirit was also in evidence. Women's Auxiliary members came to the pit-top to keep up a supply of hot drinks and food as the search continued.

Mr Clark had Elizabeth's nurse's watch with him at the time of the accident. The watch, with its hands broken, was subsequently found and is a prized possession of Elizabeth.

Lorraine still has her dad's mining pick that has his initials, HC, on it. Mr Clark's funeral was held at St John's Lutheran Church in Ipswich and Lorraine says it was "one of the biggest funerals that Ipswich had seen at that time".

"The church was packed and it was standing room only outside...and the miners gave him a guard of honour."

The two sisters adored their dad who they both agree was "happy-go-lucky" and the perfect father to them and their siblings Lynette, Jennifer, Gary and Deborah.

"He was a good husband and an absolutely wonderful dad," Elizabeth says.

"He would do anything for anyone."

"Dad was also a terrific swimmer and he used to go swimming with us when we went camping and he'd have three of us on his back going under the water - that is how strong he was."

Lorraine remembers her father as an immaculate man who was always perfectly groomed.

"He always had his hair in place with California Poppy hair oil. I can still remember the smell to this day," she recalls.

It was hard on the family afterwards with no compensation available as there is today.

Lorraine worked in the office of Wesfalen Number Two mine for eight years until 1974 when she became pregnant with her daughter.

"Mining was our life," she says.

Elizabeth says her dad "wasn't bitter about anything in his life" and his positive attitude rubbed off on the family.

As she puts it: "How much more could you pack into a life?"

Gunner Clark's legacy was one duty, hard work and loving his family. He will not be forgotten.

Sunday 8 July 2012

China coal mine blast kills seven

Extract from Dawn.com

BEIJING: A gas blast at a coal mine in China's central province of Hunan killed seven people on Sunday, state media said, the latest in a string of accidents in the country's dangerous mining industry.

The explosion killed the miners on Sunday morning at the mine in Lianyuan city, though 39 others escaped, the official Xinhua news agency said, quoting the local government.

The latest accident came as rescuers in another part of the same province were racing to save a dozen coal miners still missing nearly four days after their mine flooded, state media said.

Rescue workers pulled four miners out of the coal mine in Leiyang city on Sunday, but 12 remained unaccounted for, state television said.

Rescue of the remaining miners had been complicated since water levels were at head height in parts of the mine, it said.

Water rushed into the mine on Wednesday evening, trapping 16 miners underground as 24 others managed to escape, Xinhua said.

The accident was not reported to the government until the following day, delaying rescue efforts by 12 hours, it said, adding that the mine's owner, Liu Yaping, was now in police custody.

The local government could not be reached for comment.

Accidents in China's mines occur frequently.

However, tighter safety standards appear to have been effective according to the latest official figures, which say 1,973 people died in coal mining accidents in 2011, down 19 per cent on the previous year.

Labour rights groups say the actual death toll is likely much higher, partly due to under-reporting of accidents as mine bosses seek to limit their economic losses and avoid punishment.

China is the world's biggest consumer of coal, relying on the fossil fuel for 70 per cent of its growing energy needs.

Four of 12 Chinese miners rescued

Extract from www.skynews.com.au

Rescuers on Sunday pulled to safety four of about a dozen miners trapped underground for more than three days in a flooded coal mine pit in central China.

A coal mine safety bureau official in central Hunan province said four miners were lifted to the ground early Sunday in Leiyang city. The rescue of the fourth miner was shown live on state broadcaster CCTV's news channel. Rescuers in orange suits and helmets lifted out the man on a stretcher past an applauding crowd of workers and rescuers.



Sixteen miners were trapped by flooding on Wednesday and 11 of them were confirmed alive on Saturday, said the official who refused to give his name as is customary.

Many of the miners still underground were injured and receiving first aid treatment underground from medical personnel who had entered the pit with stretchers and equipment, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

The flood in the coal mine occurred when 40 miners were working underground, and two dozen escaped, Xinhua said.

But managers of the mine failed to report the accident in the required time, causing rescue efforts to be delayed at least 12 hours, the agency reported. Mine managers often do so to buy time and avoid punishment by either rescuing miners themselves or covering up the accident.

The survivors have been sent to hospital while the mine owner, Liu Yaping, is under police custody, Xinhua said.

Mine floods usually occur when miners drill through to an abandoned shaft that has been allowed to fill with water. Along with gas explosions and cave-ins, they make China's coal

mines the world's deadliest, although the death rate has fallen.

Safety improvements have cut annual fatalities by about one-third from a high of 6,995 in 2002. That improvement has come despite a tripling in the output of coal that generates most of China's electrical power.

Technological advances, better training and the closing of the most dangerous, small-scale mining operations have also made rescues more successful, even after several days.

In April 2010, 115 miners were pulled from a flooded mine in the northern province of Shanxi after more than a week underground. The miners survived by eating sawdust, tree bark, paper and even coal. Some strapped themselves to the walls of the shafts with their belts to avoid drowning while they slept.

Monday 9 July 2012

2 confirmed dead in flooded China mine

Extract from Xinhua

LEIYANG, Hunan- Two miners have been confirmed dead and six others remain trapped under a flooded colliery pit for the fourth day in Central China's Hunan province, rescuers said Monday.

The bodies of the two were lifted to the ground at 11 pm Sunday, hours after eight of their fellow miners were pulled out alive at the Qielichong colliery in Leiyang city.

It is yet to know the condition of the remaining six miners who are still trapped.

Tuesday 10 July 2012

S.Africa: Mine deaths must not happen, Oliphant

Extract from The Citizen, Johannesburg, South Africa

An accident that killed five miners at Goldfield's Driefontein mine should not have happened, deputy mineral resources minister Godfrey Oliphant said on Tuesday.

JOHANNESBURG - "This accident, amongst others, is one accident that was not supposed to have happened," Oliphant said at a memorial service for the five workers on the West Rand.

"We expect heads to roll if any negligence has been found on the part of any person."

The five miners died in the number four shaft (Ya-Rona) after a fire broke out in the mine on June 30. Fourteen miners were hospitalised. An investigation into the cause of the accident was underway.

Oliphant said ten Gold Field workers had lost their lives this year under the company's watch, with its Driefontein mine being the primary contributor.

"Now is the time that mine executives take responsibility for what is happening in their organisations, in respect of health and safety of mine workers."

The mining industry recorded its lowest number of deaths ever in April, but the recent accident was a serious regression regarding miner safety and health, he said.

Overall, 63 mine deaths had been recorded across the sector this year.

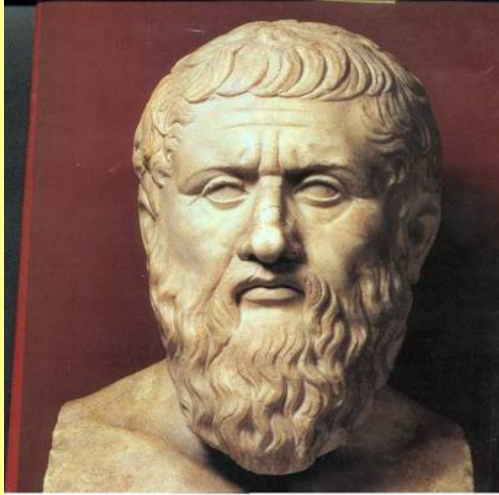
Gold mines accounted for 27 deaths, platinum mines 21, coal mines seven, and other mining operations eight.

Oliphant said it was regrettable that most deaths were in gold and platinum mines, since it was expected such mines would have proper health and safety measures in place.

"The question... in my mind is whether the mining industry is genuinely committed, beyond various statements that they have been made, [to] improving health and safety of mine workers.

"In a country where a better life for all has been promised, we cannot continue robbing family members of their loved ones."

Quote of the week



Bust of Plato

"If women are expected to do the same work as men, we must teach them the same things."

Plato, Greek philosopher (427 BC - 347 BC)

Wednesday 11 July 2012

15 miners trapped in coal pit in Meghalaya

Extract from Deccan Herald, India

Two teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) are in Meghalaya to rescue 15 miners trapped in a coal pit in South Garo Hills since July 6, an official said.

The 31-member NDRF team is from Guwahati, District Magistrate R.P. Marak told IANS. The miners got trapped after they accidentally punctured the wall of an abandoned mine, filling their own mine with gallons of water.

"The chances of survival of the miners are very bleak. We are pumping the water out of the coal pit but the water level has not receded," Marak said.

"Had the mine owner come informed us about the tragedy in time, the government would have acted in time," he added.

Meanwhile, Meghalaya Police have arrested the Punjab-based mine operator Gurdeep Singh on charges of negligence.

"We have registered a case under section 304 (a) of the Indian Penal Code," said Davis R. Marak, the district police chief of South Garo Hills.

Coal mine accidents are common in the mountainous state because of unscientific mining commonly known "rat hole mining".

Due to this, the water sources of many rivers, especially in Jaintia Hills district, have turned acidic.

Meghalaya holds an estimated 640 million tonnes of coal that is mined mainly to generate electricity and to fuel operations in cement plants in India and neighbouring Bangladesh.

The country's worst colliery disaster occurred in December 1975 when an estimated 372 miners perished after an explosion caused a flood in a mine in the coal-rich district of Dhanbad in eastern India.

USA: Family of Killed Miner says Company's decision caused collapse

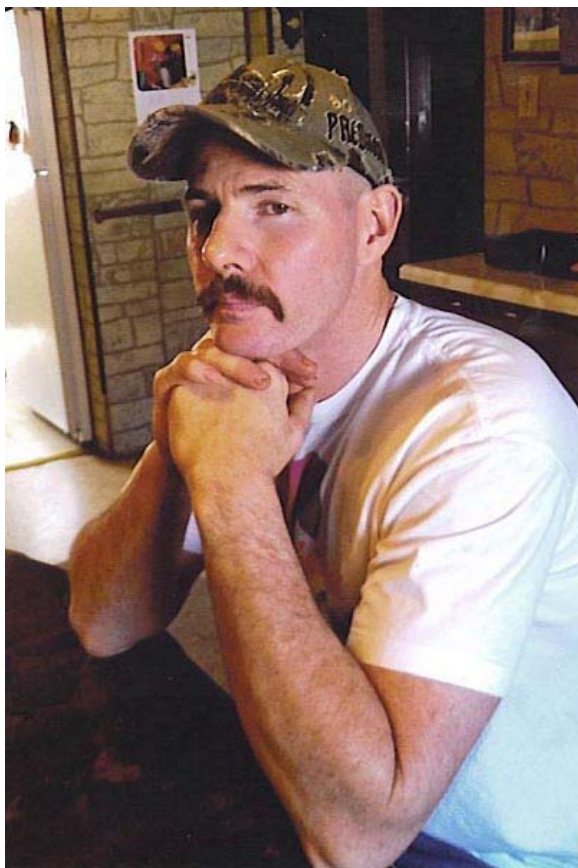
Extract from OPB News, USA

PINEHURST, Idaho - Later this month, the Lucky Friday Mine in north Idaho will begin rehiring workers. It closed seven months ago for federally mandated safety improvements. Inspectors took a sharper look at the mine after a series of tragic accidents last year. Now, as the mine prepares to re-open, the family of one dead miner is speaking out for the first time. The family of Larry Marek told correspondent Jessica Robinson they believe the company still hasn't taken responsibility for what happened.

To understand this story, you first need to know something about mining. And that is: miners work in pairs.

"Oh we check on each other just safety-wise, make sure you're alright, because a lot of things can happen in mining. A tremendous amount of things," says Mike Marek. His mining partner Larry was also his brother.

And on a cold day in April 2011, Mike was standing outside the Lucky Friday Mine when he heard his brother was gone forever. He could see Larry's car still in the parking lot.



"Just to see his car sitting there with that snow on it and just knowing that he drove up there and never did get to get in his car and go home," Mike says. "Bad choices – bad choices were made and it cost him his life."

Because Larry Marek was his mining partner, Mike Marek is now in an unusual position. Mike witnessed the accident that killed his brother. Not only that, he says, he knows what caused it.

The two brothers come from a mining family in north Idaho's Silver Valley -- one of the most productive silver producing regions in the world. And after 30 years underground, Larry Marek was considered among the valley's best.

Larry's daughter Hayley remembers visiting him the weekend before his death.

"We were driving by the mine and talking about it," she recalls. "And I remember asking him, 'Is it scary?' and he kind of blows it off like 'You just do it, you go to work.'"

Larry Marek was on his 12th year at the Lucky Friday Mine. The "Friday," as it's known, is owned by Coeur d'Alene-based Hecla Mining. And for a long time, the Marek brothers didn't have any complaints. But Mike Marek says in early 2011, that changed.

One day, Larry told Mike they were going to remove a certain pillar.

"My exact words? I said, 'What the f--- for?' And he said 'Well that's what they want.' And I said 'God that's stupid.' That was the beginning of that stuff."

Let's just pause here. Mike mentioned a "pillar." To get an idea of what's happening, imagine a house with only two rooms and a wall down the middle separating them. That's the pillar he's talking about. Normally, Mike would expect to go in and mine the ore out of the rooms separately. But in this case, the company decided to remove the wall. That made one really big room. And this house – its ceiling is made of several tons of solid rock and cement.

The day before the accident, Mike remembers walking into that big room – it's actually called a stope – where Larry was working.

"He said, 'What are you doing?' I said, 'I'm sitting here' and I go, 'I don't like this place.' And he didn't say nothing for a long time. Then he goes, 'Me neither.'"

Now here's the part that Mike Marek says he wishes he could do over. Despite the Mareks' concerns, they never lodged a formal complaint.

In part, Mike worried it would land the brothers in a less lucrative position at the mine. Mike says Larry did question supervisors about the pillar one day, but he doesn't remember who and the company has no record of it.

What we do know, is this: on April 15, their fears were confirmed. At around 5:30 p.m., more than a mile underground, Mike heard a noise and felt a rush of air.

"Like loud thuds like, 'Vvoof, vvoof.' And instantly it's just dust. Couldn't even see anything for like minutes. Then I went over there and ... I seen it."

A pile of broken rock, sand and cement. Federal investigators later calculated the fall was approximately 90 feet long, 20 feet wide and 30 feet high.

Mike started yelling.

"Screaming his name. And moving rocks with my hands, trying to throw them – unbury him. Beyond me why a person would try to do that," Mike says. "I think back and there was no way you could do that by hand, ever."

Soon the entire Marek family rushed to the mine and spent the next nine days on cots and air mattresses, clinging to each update. For a time, rescuers had hoped Larry Marek might still be alive, but trapped.

Marek's daughter Hayley says at first, the family wanted to believe that too and they put the cause of the accident out of their minds.

"I remember we even saying we're not going to discuss that," she says. "It's not an issue right now. It's just getting him out and getting to him. And that can all come later. But I think a lot of people were angry. Because they knew what had happened and why it happened."

"Second day, I started, 'I want to know what this looks like,'" says Danny Marek, Larry Marek's younger brother. Danny is also a miner in the Silver Valley. "I said I want to go over in the office and see the stope, the map of it. And I'll tell you right now it took me probably 10

seconds to look at the stope and see the pillar they took out and knew they should have never took that out. That's what got him."

On the day before Easter, crews finally broke through to Larry Marek. They learned he had been dead the whole time, killed by blunt force trauma.

Federal investigators later concluded that the company had engaged in poor mining practices, including mining a stope that was too wide. But that investigation did not identify who made the decision to take out the pillar or whether supervisors recognized the same danger the Mareks saw.

More than a year after his death, the Marek family has come to believe that Larry was killed not by a mining accident, but by a bad decision – the decision to take out the pillar. Danny Marek says he can't believe someone at Hecla didn't see the risk ahead of time.

"And yeah I'm pissed at them," Danny says. "They did it for a little bit of ore in the middle of that pillar and it cost my brother his life over that. But yet they go on TV and act like they did nothing wrong. And they did."

Last December, Hecla Mining held a press conference on the accident that killed Larry Marek. And here's the key difference between the Marek family's version of the accident and the company's: To the Mareks, the possibility of a fall was obvious from the beginning. But Hecla President and CEO Phil Baker told reporters company managers had no idea there was a problem.

"I mean the way this was designed, you would have expected it to stay in place," Baker said in the press conference. "No one is absolutely sure what happened."

Baker declined speak on tape for this story. But he did sit down for an interview. He told me the design of the stope Larry Marek was in had been used several times in the past at the Lucky Friday without incident, and that supervisors and other crew members checked the area daily. He

disputes the claim that the pillar was removed for its silver ore. And, he says, when workers return to the Lucky Friday, they will get more safety training -- including how to alert managers to their concerns.

But that doesn't satisfy Hayley Marek. Larry's daughter is also disappointed that federal regulators fined Hecla just \$360,000 for her father's death.

She reads from the official federal report on the incident: "Mine management has engaged in aggravated conduct constituting more than ordinary negligence by directing the pillar to be mined as the stope advanced and allowing miners to work under inadequately supported ground. This is an unwarrantable failure to comply with a mandatory standard."

"So it's hard to take that in and then have them not accept responsibility for it," Hayley says. "When it says right there what happened."

Mike Marek eventually went back to work at the Lucky Friday Mine. On his first day, they asked if he would be willing to work in the area just below where Larry was killed – and he said yes.

"I know a lot of people would say I don't know how you did that, but to me, I thought that's the closest thing I got to him," Mike says. "That was it."

Mike now has a tattoo of Larry on his left shoulder. These days he feels a mix of sadness and anger – at the company and also, at himself.

"When you lose someone like that, important to you in life, it really takes the air out of you, it really does. And it's going to haunt me the rest of my life because I didn't go and tell them, 'Hey, we're not doing that.' I could have stopped that."

In November, another miner died at the Lucky Friday. A month later, seven more miners were injured. The series of incidents led federal regulators to order major safety improvements. All the Lucky Friday Miners were laid off, including Mike Marek. To him, it was a relief.

He's working at a different silver mine now, this time alongside one of his sons. When Hecla starts rehiring, Mike Marek won't be going back.

On the Web:

Federal Report on Larry Marek's death:

<http://www.msha.gov/FATALS/2011/FTL11m04.asp>

Lucky Friday Mine:

http://www.hecla-mining.com/operations/operations_luckyfriday.php

Thursday 12 July 2012

MSHA fines Harlan County coal mine \$594,100 for 2011 accident that killed miner

Extract from The Courier-Journal, USA

Federal regulators on Thursday fined a Harlan County coal mine nearly \$600,000 for flagrant safety violations in connection with a June 2011 accident that killed a miner.

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration said operators of Manalapan Mining Co. Inc.'s P-1 Mine near Smith, Ky., failed to support the sides of the rock pillars in the mine where the accident occurred and in other locations. The mine also failed to identify and correct other "numerous hazardous conditions" involving the mine roof and pillars, MSHA said.

Manalapan's mine also did not have an adequate roof control plan to deal with changing geological conditions and to properly support the sides of the mine pillars, known as ribs, regulators said.

David A. Partin, 49, was killed in the June 29, 2011, collapse of a mine rib. He was struck by a section of rock nearly 7 feet long, 3 feet wide and 11 inches thick.

"Dozens of miners are injured by rib and roof falls every year and, tragically, some are killed," MSHA chief Joseph A. Main said in a statement. "The accident investigation found that, had the mine operator properly secured the mine's ribs

and revised its roof control plan to address changing geologic conditions, this tragedy might have been averted.”

MSHA investigators issued five citations carrying total proposed penalties of \$594,100.

“The operator has engaged in aggravated conduct constituting more than ordinary negligence in that management did not take measures to ensure safe working conditions around ribs,” MSHA’s accident investigation report said.

Inspectors found unsupported sections of loose coal and rock in three locations in the mine, according to the report.

The company is contesting the fines. The P-1 Mine currently is listed as non-producing, according to MSHA’s safety database. The mine last produced coal in the second quarter of last year and at that time had 64 employees. The operation currently lists two employees.

Kerry B. Harvey, U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky, indicted three mine officials and the company in February for allegedly allowing miners to work in dangerous conditions.

Indicted were the mine operator, Jefferson Davis, 53, of Harlan, Ky.; mine superintendent Joseph Miniard, 45, of Smith, Ky.; mine foreman Bryant Massingale, 52, of Cawood, Ky.; and the company itself.

The company has disputed the charges.

NSW: 1979 Appin Colliery disaster marked with new memorial

Extract from Macarthur chronicle, NSW, Aus

THE Wollondilly shire community will unite this weekend to honour the 14 people killed in the Appin mine disaster of 1979.

Appin Historical Society will host the family members of those killed in the Appin Colliery disaster at a special unveiling of an upgrade to the town's Mine Memorial Garden on Sunday.

The improved garden at Gordon Lewis Oval will boast 14 trees, each fitted with a plaque bearing the names of those killed in the Appin Colliery at approximately 11pm on July 24, 1979.

On that night a gas explosion in the K panel, about 3km underground, resulted in the death of the 14 employees, which left 38 children fatherless.

"This project will install individual plaques at the base of the tree with the name and occupation of each miner and the age they were at the time of the accident," Appin Historical Society president Ray Slee said.



Appin Historical Society president Ray Slee, with dog Rex, examine the site of the new memorial, which will honour the 14 people killed in the Appin Colliery disaster of 1979.

"We have spoken to most families and their feelings were all very similar.

"They had two clear objectives; one, that their miner would never be forgotten and two, that lessons would be learned from the disaster and would hopefully never be repeated."

Mr Slee said the new memorial, worth \$20,000, was funded by BHP Billiton, with installation carried out by Macarthur Concrete at cost price.

A barbecue hosted by the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union will follow the unveiling at 11.30am. For more information visit appin200.com.au or write to the Media Officer, Appin Historical Society, PO Box 11, Appin, 2560.

Sunday 15 July 2012

USA: Coal mine disaster persists among victim families

Extract from www.examiner.com

The coal company that bought Massey mining is now trying to settle with families that lost loved ones to the disaster that is now two years old. This story is "politics" because government and politicians failed to protect workers and because they continue to fail to protect workers.

In a *Washington Post* report, a father and mother grieve for their son who suffocated to death in the blackened tomb where he worked, thousands of feet below the Earth. The mine was known for its build-up of toxic gases and the owners continuously violated the laws, failing to protect the workers. Mine inspectors, government officials, failed to act forcefully beyond writing infraction tickets. The miners went to work until their luck ran out to the failings of their employer and government.

Apparently, government, the U.S. Congress continues to fail to protect mine workers. The former Governor and now Senator is on point and should be held responsible too.



Blankenship, unnatural person representative
Photo credit: washingtonindependent.com

The real crime in this comes from the fact that none of the persons, natural persons I should say, have been criminally charged and tried for what wasn't just an accident, but was criminal negligence.

"More than two years after an explosion that an independent panel appointed by former West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin blamed on a corporate culture that put "the drive to produce coal above worker safety," no former high-ranking Massey executives have been criminally charged. No new federal mine safety legislation has passed, a matter Gary Quarles and other families pressed in Washington recently, carrying posters of their lost sons, brothers and husbands into the red-carpeted offices of senators and representatives."

Washington Post

After Massey mine disaster killed their son, settlement of millions is worth little

By Stephanie McCrummen, Published: July 14

The company's first offer was \$3 million, an amount Gary and Patty Quarles called a "slap in the face." Three million dollars for their only son, Gary Wayne Quarles, 33, one of the 29 workers killed in the worst U.S. coal mining disaster in four decades.



Meaningless millions: The Upper Big Branch coal mining disaster in West Virginia in 2010 killed 29 people, including Gary Wayne Quarles. His parents eventually settled their lawsuit with the mining company, but there is little solace to be found.

"They couldn't pay us enough for our son," said Gary Quarles. "We said, 'No way, no way. We don't care how far we go, we don't care if we go in front of a jury.' We was going."

Full story at:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/after-massey-mine-disaster-killed-their-son-settlement-of-millions-is-worth-little/2012/07/14/gJQAMpXikW_story.html?hpid=z1

Tuesday 17 July 2012

Trapped New Zealand miners rescued

Extract from Aljazeera

Twenty-eight miners have been rescued from New Zealand's Trio gold mine in the North Island town of Waihi after a fire trapped them underground for more than five hours.

The miners were forced to take shelter in three underground refuge chambers after a truck engine caught fire at about 5am local time (16:00 GMT) on Monday.

They were trapped for about five hours after the accident while the ventilation system pumped smoke through the mine, until rescuers reached 13 miners in two of the chambers, Gold producer Newmont said.

New Zealand media reported the remaining 15 in the third chamber were brought to the surface by about midday.



Map locating Waihi mine in New Zealand where 28 miners were rescued on Tuesday after a fire forced them to take shelter in underground refuge chambers

Initially, 28 men were trapped about 150 metres underground in safety chambers.

Kit Wilson, the mine spokesperson, said one man was being checked by medical officials for suspected smoke inhalation but the rest are fine.

"Apparently they are all in good spirits and are raring to go home and have a sleep," he said.

The men were two hours from finishing a 10-hour overnight shift when the fire broke out.

Wilson said that the cause of the fire in the diesel engine was not yet clear and that diesel vehicles regularly enter the mine.



The gold mine at Waihi

The mine is owned by Denver-based Newmont, one of the world's largest gold producers. Newmont has 43,000 employees and contractors in a number of countries.

The company said the mine was a hard rock gold mine and there was no danger of an explosion caused by underground gases.

Linda Willoughby, another mine spokesperson, said mine officials were in telephone contact with the trapped miners throughout their ordeal.

She said that unlike some coal mines that contain volatile methane gas, the hardrock mine faced no threat of an explosion.

Willoughby said the men followed their training after the fire by taking refuge in the underground chambers.

Twenty-nine miners died in November 2010 when methane gases exploded at the South Island's Pike River colliery, in New Zealand's worst mining disaster for almost a century.

S.Africa: Harmony reports fatal accident at Unisel mine

Extract from www.miningweekly.com

JOHANNESBURG – JSE-listed gold miner Harmony Gold has stopped all mining operations at its Unisel mine, near Welkom, following a fatal accident.

The company stated that a worker had died in an orepass incident on Tuesday morning.

It said in a statement that investigations were under way to establish the cause of the accident.

The Harmony accident comes less than a week after gold miners were singled out as the main culprits of mine deaths in the country, accounting for over 40% of the deaths so far this year.

USA: MSHA cites Ky. mine where worked died

Extract from bgdailynews.com, USA

Federal mine safety officials have cited a coal company for violations related to the death of a worker.

The Lexington Herald-Leader reports the Mine Safety and Health Administration cited the Hubble Mining Company LLC Mine No. 9 in Letcher County in relation to a modification made to a personnel carrier and allowing it to be used in a dangerous way.

The accident on Nov. 7 killed mine foreman, 47-year-old Jerry E. Britton, who suffered severe head injuries when the carrier lurched forward and pinned him against the side of a mine.

According to MSHA's report on Friday, the carrier is made to transport miners, but workers were using it to haul wooden blocks at the time of the accident. In addition, the report said a safety feature on the device had been modified.

Wednesday 18 July 2012

India: After mine mishap, Meghalaya to come up with safety norms

Extract from Deccan Herald, India

Shillong -- In the wake of the mine mishap in South Garo Hills district in which more than 15 miners went untraced, the Meghalaya government now wants to hold private mine

owners responsible for any mishap in their mines.

"We would soon come with an executive order as the government is concerned over the lack of safety norms in mining areas across the state which is posing a serious threat to the life of the thousands of labourers who are working in these mines," said Deputy Chief Minister Bindo Mathew Lanong and Minister-in-charge of Mining and Geology department.

Mineral-rich Meghalaya, at present, does not have a mining policy in place and as such coal and other minerals are extracted by mine owners at their own risk and wisdom without having any mechanism to check on the welfare and safety of miners.

Last week, a special team from the National Disaster and Rescue Force (NDRF) pulled out from a rescue mission at Nongalbibra after they failed to trace 15 trapped miners during their intense 14 hours search in the 'rat-hole' coal mine.

After more than 200 hours of being untraced, the district authorities said their hopes to find the trapped miners alive is shut.

Vietnam: 3 dead, 7 injured in gold mine collapse

Extract from tuitrenews.vn

Three workers in Nghe An Province died and seven others were injured when a pit at an illegal gold mining site suddenly collapsed on them yesterday, local authorities reported.

The deadly accident occurred at 12 pm at an illegal gold mining site in Nga My Commune, Tuong Duong District, when a large amount of rocks and soil slid and fell onto a group of ten workers there, said Vi Tan Hoi, deputy chairman of the district People's Committee.

Rescue efforts began immediately but three victims, all of them women, were found dead under the rubble.

The dead victims were La Van Hoa, 40, Le Van Tu, 24, and Vi Van Ca, 18. All three were local residents.

The seven injured workers, in critical condition, were taken to the Tuong Duong General Hospital for emergency treatment.

After intensive care, all stabilized and were removed from fatal condition by last night, doctors said.

The district authorities gave VND5 million (US\$240) to each of the dead victims' families and VND500,000 to each injured worker.

According to initial investigations by police, the workers were digging deep into the pit and created a vaulted hole at its bottom to sift for gold, and underground water then penetrated and softened the layers of rocks and soil around the hole, causing them to fall down.



Workers at an illegal gold mining site in Tuong Duong District, Nghe An Province (for illustration only)
Photo: Dan Viet

"The accident is very heart-breaking. We have many times warned people not to take part in illegal and unsafe gold mining in the district, but many have neglected our warning. After this incident, we will take strong actions against illegal mining activities," Hoi said.

Last year, a similar accident occurred in the district's Tam Dinh Commune on May 1, 2011, killing 5 gold miners, authorities said.

UK: Fatal mining accident may result in legal case

Extract from Slater & Gordon, UK

An accident at work that resulted in a man passing away could lead to a compensation claim being launched by his family.

Ian Cameron died at the age of 46 in October 2009 from crush injuries he suffered while employed by UK Coal at the Kellingley colliery when a powered roof support lowered spontaneously and trapped him.

Mr Cameron - who had 30 years' experience working in the mining industry - was crushed against a large amount of debris, which had gathered near the walkway of this piece of equipment.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) established that UK Coal had failed to take proper measures to ensure its workers could use this machinery safely.

Meanwhile, manufacturer Joy Mining Machinery was also found to have breached regulation by not notifying customers of a defect in their roof supports.

Paul Bradley, principal inspector of mines at the HSE, commented: "This is the fifth prosecution HSE has had to take against UK Coal in the past five years involving the deaths of five miners, each under very tragic circumstances."

Friday 20 July 2012

NSW: Cadia contractor dies at mine

Extract from Central Western Daily, Aus

A CONTRACTOR working at Cadia Valley Operations (CVO) collapsed and died yesterday morning while working underground.

Cadia general manager of projects Leigh Cox said it was with great sadness that he confirmed the man's death.

"The deceased collapsed from unknown causes while working underground at the Cadia East mine," he said.

"Efforts to revive him on scene and at Orange Base Hospital were unsuccessful."

Mr Cox said the man's next of kin had been notified and CVO was working with the NSW Police and the independent health and safety body Mines Inspectorate to investigate the matter.



"CVO has provided counselling to personnel involved, and offered assistance to the deceased's employer," he said.

"We extend our sincerest condolences to family, friends and colleagues, and we will provide whatever assistance we can at this difficult time."

Police have not released the man's name.

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

B

Blasting agent

Any material consisting of a mixture of a fuel and an oxidizer.

-Ed



**Trade &
Investment
Mine Safety**

ENGINEERING SAFETY SEMINARS

Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar

The 22nd Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar will be held at Sydney Olympic Park, on Wednesday 8 August and Thursday 9 August 2012. A conference dinner will be held on Wednesday evening.

Information on accommodation and registration form available at:

www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences

Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar - NEW VENUE

The 22nd Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar will be held at a new venue this year, **Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour**, on Wednesday 7 November and Thursday 8 November 2012. An agenda and information on accommodation options will be available when registrations open prior to the event.

Information available at:

www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences