



# Mining Accident News No.1221

15 to 24 September 2012

## In this issue:

USA: CONSOL miner killed in rock fall .....	1
Indonesia: Worker dies at Kingrose mine site ..	2
Canada: Union questions decision of police investigators.....	2
Gleision Colliery anniversary: Explanation for disaster 'years away .....	4
NZ: Chief Inspector for mines appointed.....	5
Search ends for missing in SW China coal mine	6
Dozens Killed In DR Congo Mine Collapse.....	6
Quote of the week .....	7
India: Mine blast kills two, injures three at Lalpeth .....	7
195 miners survive coal mine fire in Ukraine ....	7
USA: Mining accident at Buckingham Coal.....	7
China to shut down illegal, unsafe mines.....	8
USA: Investigation continues in Perry County mining accident.....	8
'Mugabe mines better than SA's' .....	9
South African miners' wages fight continues .	10
USA: Five involved in mining accident released from hospitals .....	11
This week in mining accident history .....	11
USA: Event commemorates lost miners.....	12
USA: Number of factors led to mine accident .	13
22 workers trapped in three coal mine accidents in China.....	14
Mining dictionary .....	14

Saturday 15 September 2012

## USA: CONSOL miner killed in rock fall

*Extract from The Charleston Gazette, West Virginia, USA*

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A miner was killed Thursday afternoon in a rock fall at a Consol Energy operation in Monongalia County, state officials confirmed.

The incident occurred at Consol's Blacksville No. 2 Mine, which is permitted in West Virginia but includes mining of some coal reserves in

Pennsylvania, said C.A. Phillips, director of the state Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training.

Jesse Lawder, a spokesman for the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, said that the 3:50 p.m. incident involved a miner being struck by a rock from either the roof or the wall of the mine.

"The miner was removed from under the rock and CPR was administered, but the miner did not respond and was pronounced dead," Lawder said in a statement.

CONSOL identified the miner killed as William Edward Mock, 61, and said in a statement that "initial indications are that the miner was struck by a rock along the track haulage," a tunnel used to transport workers, coal and equipment in and out of the mine.

Blacksville No. 2 is a large underground mine that employs 545 workers and last year produced about 4.3 million tons of coal, according to MSHA records. The United Mine Workers union represents hourly workers at the mine.

In each of the last two years, Blacksville No. 2 recorded injury rates that were slightly worse than the national average, according to MSHA data. In April, the operation was targeted by an MSHA "impact inspection" that produced 20 citations, nearly half of which were listed as serious violations, according to MSHA.

During a quarterly inspection that started July 2 and is ongoing, MSHA officials cited the operation for 10 alleged roof-control violations, including eight that agency inspectors considered serious.

Thursday's death is the fifth coal-mining fatality in West Virginia in 2012, according to counts by both state and federal agencies.

**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 21 of 2012

It was also the second U.S. coal-mining death this week. On Tuesday, a 28-year-old UMW miner was killed at Drummond Mining Co.'s Shoal Creek Mine in Jefferson County, Ala.

This week's deaths push the total number of U.S. coal miners killed on the job in 2012 to 15, which is ahead of last year's pace of 13 miners killed through mid-September.

## Indonesia: Worker dies at Kingrose mine site

*Extract from Business Spectator, Indonesia*

A worker has died on an Indonesian mine site operated by Kingrose Mining Ltd (KRM) Ltd's 85-per-cent subsidiary PT Natarang Mining.

KRM said in a statement that the miner died overnight (Thursday) as the result of an accident on the Talang Santo mine at its Way Linggo project.

Operations have been temporarily suspended at the project while the miner and Indonesian authorities conduct an investigation.

The company said the board of directors and management of Kingrose and PT Natarang "express their sincere condolences to the family of the deceased".

## Canada: Union questions decision of police investigators

*Extract from thesudburystar.com, Canada*



Jordan Fram



Jason Chenier

The president of United Steelworkers Local 6500 is calling for a meeting with officials from Sudbury's Crown attorney's office to discuss why they and Greater Sudbury Police investigators determined no criminal charges should be laid in the deaths of two men at Vale's Stobie Mine.

Rick Bertrand said his union's executive and other members are angry charges won't be laid under the Criminal Code of Canada in the June 8, 2011, deaths of Jason Chenier, 35, and Jordan Fram, 26.

Vale is facing nine charges under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and one of its supervisors, Keith Birnie, is facing six charges under the act.

The union said its eight-month investigation into the men's deaths showed more serious charges were warranted.

"We found disturbing facts ... about what went on at Stobie Mine," Bertrand said Friday of his union's investigation.

USW Local 6500's investigation determined water was pooled as deep as four or five feet in the corridors of the century-old mine, known for its water problems.

The union also found Chenier had sent two emails to Vale management expressing his concerns about the "dangerous water levels," said Bertrand.

Chenier was so worried about water in the mine, he erected double guard rails to prevent the dumping of wet ore, but Vale management ordered "those safety guards ... taken down," said Bertrand.

"Yeah, we are very angry, we are upset. Vale management ignored the ongoing problems at their mine," said the union leader.

Bertrand learned Thursday afternoon that criminal charges wouldn't be laid under the Westray provision of the criminal code, as his union had demand.

"It's so upsetting, you have trouble sleeping. You think about your members, you think about the families," he said.

Vale spokeswoman Angie Robson said the decision not to pursue criminal charges "is one that is supported by our own internal investigation. While we are satisfied with this decision, it doesn't minimize the loss experienced by our community and, most importantly, by the Chenier and Fram families.

"The best way to honour the memories of Jordan and Jason is to continue to ensure control measures are put in place across our operations to ensure this kind of tragedy is never repeated. That remains our focus," she said.

Bertrand hasn't spoken about the decision with the Chenier and Fram families yet, saying he was giving them time because "it's very difficult when wounds are being reopened all the time."

This week, lawyers for Vale and Birnie were in the Ontario Court of Justice on the charges laid May 31 under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Vale and Birnie are charged with failing to take reasonable precautions to prevent the movement of material through an ore pass at Stobie Mine where Chenier and Fram were overcome with 350 tons of muck from the No. 7 ore pass.

They will appear in court again Oct. 10.

"With our report and with our facts (I thought) ... definitely there would have been (criminal) charges," said Bertrand. It's clear Vale "ignored workers' health and safety."

Labour ministry spokesman Matt Blajer said police made the decision not to lay criminal charges after conducting a concurrent investigation with his ministry.

There are "different levels of culpability that have to be found" in laying OCHA charges and criminal charges, he said.

"We have zero jurisdiction over the criminal code whatsoever. It is the police."

The maximum fine for the OCHA charges Vale is facing is \$500,000 per count upon conviction.

Birnie is facing a maximum fine of \$25,000 and 12 months' incarceration per charge, said Blajer, adding: "You can't jail a corporation."

The Westray provision of the Criminal Code calls for just that. It was enacted as a result of the 1992 Westray coal mining disaster in Nova Scotia, where 26 miners were killed after methane gas ignited, causing an explosion.

Despite serious safety concerns raised by employees, union officials and government inspectors, the company didn't address problems and the explosion occurred.

Police and the provincial government failed to secure a conviction against the company or three of its managers in the fatal accident.

A Royal Commission of Inquiry was established to investigate the disaster. In 1998, that commission made 74 recommendations, leading to the passage in 2004 of Bill C- 45, known as the Westray Bill.

There have been few convictions under the bill that establishes workplace negligence as a criminal offence by adding a new duty on organizations and individuals to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm and death among their employees.

A rare conviction was won in the case of four men who plunged to their deaths from scaffolding Dec. 24, 2009.



**Looking for more information on mine safety?**

Visit the NSW Government mine safety website where you will find safety alerts and bulletins, upcoming events and a wide range of mine safety publications

[www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety](http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety)

## Gleision Colliery anniversary: Explanation for disaster 'years away'

Extract from [WalesOnline.co.uk](http://WalesOnline.co.uk)



Wayne Thomas, centre, at the announcement of the closure of the miners' appeal fund

A leading member of the National Union of Mineworkers says it may take “years rather than months” to find out exactly how the Gleision Colliery disaster happened.

Wayne Thomas spent two days at Rhos Community Centre last September comforting the families of the four miners who died as they anxiously waited for news about their loved ones.

The union leader, who has been an integral part of the Swansea Valley Miners' Appeal said it would be a long time until the families of David Powell, Charles Breslin, Philip Hill and Garry Jenkins would have complete closure.

Speaking on the anniversary of the pit collapse in the Swansea Valley, he said: “Under normal circumstances when the funerals were held last year families would have been allowed to grieve and time would have healed their wounds somewhat, but this is a different situation because there are so many questions that remain unanswered, it has been far more difficult for anybody who knew these men to deal with the bereavement.

“It was a tragedy in horrific circumstances, unheard of in South Wales and for that reason alone it is still in everybody's minds regardless of whether they are family, friends or strangers.

“There is still strong feeling out there in the Neath Valley and the mining community in terms of the affect of Gleision, it reached far further than the immediate families.”



South Wales Police is working with the Health and Safety Executive to investigate the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

Malcolm Fyfield, 55, who was the manager of Gleision Colliery on the day of the accident, and who managed to escape the fast-rising floodwater, remains on bail after being arrested at his Swansea Valley home on suspicion of gross negligence manslaughter last October.

A spokesman for South Wales Police said yesterday: “A 55-year-old man who was arrested in connection with the Gleision Colliery incident in Cilybebyll remains on police bail.

“The man was arrested on suspicion of gross negligence manslaughter.

“The investigation into the deaths of Philip Hill, 44, Charles Breslin, 62, David Powell, 50 and Garry Jenkins, 39, on September 15, 2011 is ongoing.”

Mr Thomas said that there have been no changes to mining health and safety procedures since the tragedy because the rules already in place should have been sufficient enough to avoid such a disaster.

He said: “There's a consultation currently going on in terms of mining legislation in the UK but that was not as a result of the Gleision disaster.

“Nothing in the industry has changed specifically since the disaster and that is because the health and safety procedures in the UK were already robust enough, the fact is that this should not have happened anyway.

“Without criticising or condemning anybody, within the existing legislation now and at the time, this should never have happened.”

He added: “As far as I am aware, from the mines inspectors side of things or the Health and Safety Executive side of things, there are just so many issues.

“The mining investigations have been done articulately and I believe the conclusion of those investigations have now been handed to police.

“All I can say is this, in normal, horrendous accidents in coal mines it does tend to take a very long time to find answers because of the intensity required.

“Tie that in with the criminal investigation and I expect that it will take years to conclude rather than months.

“We have had partial closure but it could be many years until the families have complete closure.”

Last week it was revealed that the appeal fund that raised £1m in the wake of the colliery tragedy will help set up trust funds for four young children of the miners who died.

As the Swansea Valley Miners’ Appeal fund officially closed, details were released of how the £1,091,667 will help the families of the four colliers.

Disabled family members have been helped to buy mobility equipment, while funerals and memorial headstones for the four colliers have been paid for.

The trustees said trust funds would be set up for dependent children under the age of 18 of the miners who died.

Mr Thomas said the Gleision tragedy continues to have a profound affect on South Wales and the mining community.

“The disaster has not been forgotten,” he said.

“Whenever I travel the UK now, or speak to people even abroad, Gleision has put a spotlight

on that part of the Swansea Valley, for many reasons.

“But even with all the grieving and pain there has been positivity, from the collective support from Cilybebyll in the first place, Pontardawe and the whole of the Swansea Valley.

“The way they got behind those families in phenomenal.

“The way money was raised.

“It was humbling and overwhelming to be honest.

“We all thought that community spirit had died, Gleision showed that it hadn’t.”

## **NZ: Chief Inspector for mines appointed**

*Extract from [www.national.org.nz](http://www.national.org.nz)*

Labour Minister Kate Wilkinson had announced on Tuesday the appointment of Tony Forster as Chief Inspector for mines in the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment’s High Hazards Unit.

Mr Forster will head a team of four specialist inspectors. He will lead the Ministry’s health and safety regulatory work in relation to mines including both underground and opencast.

This is a significant appointment for the High Hazards Unit. It is the result of an international search to find the best person from a very small pool of candidates, Ms Wilkinson says.

Mr Forster has 40 years experience in British mining. He has deputised as the United Kingdoms HM Chief Inspector of Mines and is currently HM Principal Inspector of Mines.

We are very pleased to have someone of Mr Forster’s calibre in this role.

The High Hazards Unit was established to strengthen the capacity and expertise to inspect mines and ensure safety in the mining industry.

Mr Forster will start in the role in mid-January. Until then the Chief Inspector role has been filled

temporarily by the Queensland Chief Mines Inspector Gavin Taylor who will continue to provide support to the High Hazards Unit.

Mr Taylor has been seconded from the Queensland Government and has made a significant contribution to the safety of New Zealand mining.

### **Biography**

Tony Forster has 40 years experience in the British mining industry and is moving to New Zealand from the United Kingdom to take up the role. He started working in mines as a coalface production worker and worked his way up to become mine manager of a large colliery. He was also an active member of a Mines Rescue Team for 14 years, taking part in several underground rescue and recovery operations.

He has deputised as the United Kingdom's HM Chief Inspector of Mines and is currently HM Principal Inspector of Mines.

Mr Forster holds a Master of Science in Occupational Safety and Health and is a chartered Mining Engineer, a fellow of the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining and a member of the Institute of Mining Engineers Technical Committee.

He is the chief adviser to the UK Health and Safety Executive on mines rescue and emergency planning, is a Board Member of the International Mines Rescue Body and is a Principal Judge at International Mines Rescue competitions.

## **Search ends for missing in SW China coal mine**

*Extract from Xinhua, China*

Authorities have halted their search of a coal mine in southwest China's Sichuan province after confirming that no signs of life have been detected from miners who went missing after a gas explosion occurred there five days ago.

The Yongsheng coal mine, still filled with dense flammable gas and dust, was sealed off on Friday, ending the search for six missing miners.

An official in charge of the rescue efforts said it would be extremely dangerous to continue the search, as new explosions and cave-ins are likely to occur at any time.

"The environment where the six were trapped was extremely bad. No signs of life have been found," said the official, who declined to be named.

He said the decision was made after consulting four experts called in by the State Administration of Work Safety to assist in the rescue. The relatives of the missing miners were also notified and counseled.

Three people were killed when the explosion occurred in the city of Wanyuan on September 9. Thirteen of the 24 miners working underground at the time of accident managed to escape. Rescuers pulled two survivors and three bodies out of the mine two days later.

The government has started accountability-related procedures and several top officials from the city's work safety and production supervision authorities have been suspended from their posts.

The owners of the mine are in police custody.

## **Dozens Killed In DR Congo Mine Collapse**

*Extract from RTT News*

At least 60 miners have been killed after the shaft in which they were working collapsed in a remote region in north-eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, local media reports citing officials said late on Wednesday.

The accident involving illegal miners reportedly happened at Pangoy in north-east Orientale Province on Monday. Local media reported that the shaft sides suddenly caved in and buried the miners some 100 meters under the ground.

According to the U.N.-backed Radio Okapi, the mishap occurred as miners rushed to be the first in the bottom of the pit. The Kinshasa-based radio said the local government confirmed the death toll.

The radio said the type of mine was still unknown, and quoted the local government chief as saying that the mine had been abandoned after clashes between the regular army and a local militia group headed by Paul Sadala alias Morgan.

Such accidents are common in the region, which is rich in minerals such as gold and tin. Notably, hundreds of Congolese make a living by mining in illegal open-pit mines, where safety precautions are almost non-existent.

### Quote of the week



“Speech is conveniently located midway between thought and action, where it often substitutes for both.”

John Andrew Holmes  
Poet and critic, USA (1904-1962)

Monday 17 September 2012

## India: Mine blast kills two, injures three at Lalpeth

*Extract from The Times of India*

CHANDRAPUR: Greed of excavating more and more coal resulted in ghastly accident in Hindustan Lalpeth Opencast Mine (HLOC) which claimed lives of a miner and a mine

manager, and left three other miners seriously injured on Sunday morning.

Victim includes mine manager AK Verma and shovel operator Rajkumar Bajpayee. Condition of two of the three injured is critical and they have been rushed to Nagpur for emergency treatment. After the incident, miners stalled the work in the mine that falls under Chandrapur area of WCL.

## 195 miners survive coal mine fire in Ukraine

*Extract from TwoCircles.net*

Some 195 miners managed to escape unscathed when a fire broke out at a coal mine in Ukraine early Monday, officials said.

According to Ukraine's Emergencies Ministry, the blaze broke out at 2 a.m. in Samsonovska coal mine in Lugansk region when 195 miners were working underground. All the miners returned to the surface safely, Xinhua reported.

The operations at the mine were halted.

A probe, meanwhile, has been launched into the incident.

Wednesday 19 September 2012

## USA: Mining accident at Buckingham Coal

*Extract from whiznews.com, Ohio, USA*

Emergency personnel are responding to an accident at Buckingham Coal between Corning and Glouster.

The Perry County Sheriff's Office said two deep mine cars carrying miners into and out of the mine collided.

Squads are on the scene and a medical helicopter is on stand-by.

Scanner reports indicate that five or six miners were injured in the accident that took place around 7:30 Wednesday morning.

A WHIZ-TV crew is on its way to the scene.

## China to shut down illegal, unsafe mines

*Extract from Xinhua, China*

BEIJING - China will shut down about 20,000 illegal and unsafe mines by 2015 in an effort to pursue safe mining, an official said Wednesday.

Yang Dongliang, director of the State Administration of Work Safety, said at a work conference on mine safety that there are more than 90,000 non-coal mines across China, 95 percent of which are small mines.

"The designs of most small mines are substandard and their mining techniques are outdated, so they don't have sufficient capability to ensure safe mine production," Yang said.

The campaign against unsafe mines will focus on shutting down mines in serious violation of the law, including mines without required licenses, mines that illegally resume production after being ordered to shut down and mines that conduct mining activities beyond their approved areas.

The campaign will also target mines with severe safety hazards, those that fall short of safe production requirements and mines with outdated techniques and weak safety protection capabilities, according to Yang.

The country will protect mines with advanced technologies and eliminate outdated ones, encourage large, advanced mines to acquire other mines and popularize a batch of state-of-the-art mining technologies, Yang said.

Thursday 20 September 2012

## USA: Investigation continues in Perry County mining accident

*Extract from NewarkAdvocate.com*

CORNING -- The investigation continues after two rail cars collided Wednesday morning in a Perry County coal mine.

Five workers were injured in the collision -- two were flown by medical helicopter to Columbus --

but it appears the injuries are not life-threatening, according to the Mine Safety and Health Administration.

The incident happened at a Buckingham Coal Co. mine in Corning, about 55 miles southeast of Columbus, in the Wayne National Forest area.

Officials from Buckingham Coal did not return phone calls Wednesday, but according to a news release, the Perry County Sheriff's Office received a 911 call at 7:13 a.m., requesting EMS crews for the incident. Mine General Superintendent James Riffle said mine safety officials will be investigating the incident, according to the release.

Two victims -- John Reich, of Woodsfield, and Brian Post, of Corning -- were flown by a medical helicopter to Wexner Medical Center at Ohio State University in Columbus. One allegedly struck his head and was hospitalized for precautionary reasons, while the other suffered a hip injury, according to MSHA.

The third victim, Jeremy Hasman, of Glouster, was taken to Genesis Good Samaritan Hospital, where he was treated and released, hospital officials said.

And two victims -- Brian McLaughlin, of Glouster, and Todd Sinifit, of Corning -- were taken by local EMS to an Athens hospital with what are thought to be minor injuries. Sinifit was treated and released. McLaughlin was not listed in the hospital's system Wednesday afternoon.

Buckingham Coal has two underground mines it has been operating in Perry County since 2003 and 2004. Neither ever has had a fatal injury, according to MSHA, but so far this year, nine injury incidents have occurred between the two.

### ABOUT THE BUCKINGHAM'S MINES

Buckingham Coal Company has two underground mines, Mine No. 6 and Mine No. 7. Neither mine ever has had a fatal accident, but so far this year, they have had nine injury incidents:

#### MINE NO. 6

1. July 12: An employee's right index finger was cut off after it got caught in machinery.
2. May 7: An employee got a cut under his left arm after he was hit by a belt rail he didn't see.
3. April 2: A loose piece of rock fell and hit an employee's right thumb, cutting and fracturing it.
4. Feb 14: An employee cut his left thumb while stripping a ground wire, requiring four stitches.
5. Jan 25: An employee needed eight stitches in his right middle finger after he picked up a coupler pin with a sharp edge.

Mine No. 6 has been in operation since March 2004. During the first two quarters of this year, the mine:

- Logged 181,181 operator hours and produced 887,706 tons of coal;
- Was cited 120 times for violations relating to the Mine Act, health or safety standards or other industry rules;
- Was cited twice for hazards relating to hauling or hoisting practices;
- Was fined \$20,623 for the above citations.

#### MINE NO. 7

1. Sept 19: Five employees were injured when two rail cars collided.
2. May 13: An employee was cutting a metal band off a cable when the band sprung up and cut his left forearm.
3. Feb 14: An employee pulled a back muscle while replacing a rub rail.
4. Jan 24: An employee was hit in the chin with a piece of machinery, causing him to need two stitches.

Mine No. 7 has been in operation since December 2003. During the first two quarters of this year, Mine No. 7:

- Logged 192,678 operator hours and produced 546,026 tons of coal;
- Was cited 81 times for violations relating to the Mine Act, health or safety standards or other industry rules;
- Was fined \$10,646 for those citations.

*Source: Mine Safety and Health Administration*

#### 'Mugabe mines better than SA's'

*Extract from iafrica.com*

Zimbabwe's platinum mines were an example of well-run and socially aware operations where their black management operated by the book "because they are afraid of the president", The Bench Marks Foundation's senior researcher, David van Wyk, said yesterday.

Answering questions before Parliament's portfolio committee on mineral resources yesterday, he said South African platinum and other miners had been less than honest about their recruitment of labour and corporate social responsibility programmes.



*Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe. AFP*

The presentation from the non-governmental organisation was part of a process of trying to understand what led to the Marikana massacre. A month ago police shot and killed 34 workers and injured another 78 as tensions at the Lonmin mine escalated.

In all, 45 people were killed while the labour unrest also spread to other mines.

The Bench Marks Foundation said research on conditions at and around the North West's

platinum mines was conducted last year. The report was released two days before the massacre on August 16.

Mr van Wyk said Zimbabwean platinum mines were safe with few accidents, good living conditions and a 100 percent worker literacy rate. " All the mine management are black and they are afraid of the president so they do everything by the book ."

This showed that Zimbabwe regulatory compliance was high, unlike SA where the mining companies often bought government officials.

Mr van Wyk said women were employed wisely on those mines and even operated machinery. "Women are known to operate machinery more carefully than men and so the machinery lasts longer."

Zimbabwe has the world's second-largest platinum deposits.

Mr van Wyk said because the Zimbabwe platinum mines used women as truck drivers, this lessened the spread of HIV/AIDS. "The roads to the mines are rivers of HIV/AIDS as truck drivers pick up prostitutes who stand alongside the roads.

"Women drivers were less likely to stop and spread the disease."

Implats spokesman Rob Gilmour said the company's Zimbabwe and SA operations could not be compared. "The Zimbabwe mine is shallow and highly mechanised, while our Rustenburg mine is a deep operation and manpower intensive.

"The Rustenburg mine employs 47,000 workers compared to a couple of thousand in Zimbabwe."

Mr Gilmour said the Zimbabwe mineworkers were highly literate compared with their South African counterparts and this was a function of that country's education system. The Rustenburg mine had an influx of people from

around SA and neighbouring countries looking for work, and not the Zimbabwe operation.

Mr van Wyk said President Robert Mugabe was right to take a 51 percent shareholding in the mines as Zimbabwe and SA produced 86 percent of the world's platinum. "They (the companies) have not run as they have nowhere to run to."

The last known accident on a Zimbabwean platinum mine occurred in June.

Mr van Wyk said South African mineworkers were unfairly criticised for being less productive than their foreign counterparts. He gave examples of other countries where better pay and working conditions helped to boost productivity.

"(SA mineworkers) conditions are poor," Mr van Wyk said. "It is no wonder that a person who is receiving low wages, living in a shack and whose only entertainment is a prostitute and drinking, struggles to be productive at work."

## South African miners' wages fight continues

*Extract from ABC News Online, Aus*



Striking platinum miners in South Africa have signed a wage deal bringing to an end five weeks of bloodshed and unrest. The police massacre last month of 34 protesting miners at Marikana was the worst display of state violence since the end of white dominated rule in South Africa. But the agreement is not the end of the matter. Miners elsewhere want a similar deal.

Friday 21 September 2012

## **USA: Five involved in mining accident released from hospitals**

*Extract from athensohiotoday.com, USA*

GLOUSTER — All five miners who were injured in an accident at Buckingham Coal Co. this week are out of the hospital and home with their families, according to Perry County Sheriff William Barker.

The accident — which occurred Wednesday morning at the company's mine site in Perry County, just north of Glouster — resulted in the injury of five people, two of whom were flown via medical helicopter to hospitals for treatment. A wreck between two mining carts carrying the miners was allegedly the result of miscommunication during a mid-morning shift change.

"I talked with head representatives of Buckingham Coal, and they reported that all five miners have been treated and released and all are home now," Baker said. "They were all very fortunate. It was pretty much a communication dispatcher error."

At the time of the mishap, two of the injured — John Reich, of Woodsfield, and Brian Post, of Corning — were — as a precaution — taken to Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus by MedFlight while three other miners were taken to local hospitals by emergency medical service squads.

Brian McLaughlin, of Glouster, and Todd Sinift, of Corning, were taken to O'Bleness Memorial Hospital in Athens and Jeremy Hasman, of Glouster, was taken to Genesis Good Samaritan Hospital in Zanesville. According to Media Specialist Heidi Hetzel-Evans of the ODNR's Office of Communication, these three miners were treated and released soon after the accident.

Evans stated, "Basically, two mining carts collided around a dip in the tracks at No. 7 Mine

during a shift change, and five miners were injured. It all seems to boil down to a miscommunication during a shift change-day shift coming in to relieve night shift workers. I understand the mine currently has an excellent safety rating, and there will be a full investigation possibly leading to better communication methods."

Sunday 23 September 2012

## **This week in mining accident history**

**23 September 2001  
Blue Creek Mine No. 5  
Brookwood, Alabama, USA  
Underground coal mine  
Two methane gas explosions  
13 killed**

Thirteen coal miners are dead as the result of two gas explosions September 23 at the Jim Walter Resources Blue Creek No. 5 Mine in Brookwood, Alabama. Ten of the victims were miners who refused to evacuate and rushed to help coworkers after the first explosion.

Rescue workers are flooding sections of the mine to extinguish fires that have made it impossible to retrieve bodies trapped a half mile underground. Officials estimate that it will take at least six days to begin recovering the miners' bodies in what is the worst US mining disaster since December 1984, when 27 workers were killed in the Wilberg mine near Orangeville, Utah.

The Blue Creek mines are located between Birmingham and Tuscaloosa. No. 5 is the nation's deepest vertical shaft mine, and is considered by the federal government to be "ultra-gassy" because of the large amounts of methane released during the mining process.

The first explosion erupted when falling rock struck a battery charger and ignited a pocket of methane gas. A second, much larger explosion some 45 minutes later was probably caused by

methane that was trapped when the first explosion damaged ventilation shafts. The blasts hit equipment up to 6,000 feet away and sent temperatures in the mine soaring to 2,500 degrees. Methane gas flames can travel through mine tunnels at about 900 feet per second.

Miners told the *Birmingham News* that rising levels of volatile methane gas had been ignored by company officials. "They wouldn't listen. They didn't do anything," said Shirley Hyche, a miner with 20 years at No. 5. She said there had been three ignitions in recent weeks in which methane gas quickly flared and went out. "It was like a little bomb," she stated. Company officials stated that an investigation into the explosions is under way.

Jim Walter Resources (JWR) is the southernmost Appalachian coal producer. Formed in 1976, the company is now one of the 25 largest coal producers in the US. The three Jim Walter mines in Brookwood, employing 1,300 workers, produce about 7 million tons of bituminous coal a year for use in electric generating plants. Jim Walter's No. 5 was the site of a fatality on November 10, 1995 when the chute portion of a refuse bin and refuse material fell on a heavy equipment operator. Four fatalities have occurred at the company's No. 4 Mine since 1995: one electrocution in 1995, an asphyxiation in 1996 and falling deaths in both 1999 and 2001.

Last year the company had double the industry average of serious injuries, according to the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA). MSHA records indicate that JWR has paid nearly \$600,000 in fines for violations of federal safety rules since 1995. The agency has recorded 32 fatalities in the US coal mining industry to date in 2001.

In the Brookwood area, virtually all the residents are connected to the mine. Janice Nail, the widow of Charlie Nail, 59, a 25-year veteran of the mine, told the *Birmingham News* that her husband was putting his own safety mask on another miner, who had been pinned under rock

after the first explosion, when he was lost in the second explosion.

Ray Ashworth, 53, was the only miner to come out of the mine alive after the second blast, but later died at the University Hospital in Birmingham. Clarence Boyd, 38, had 16 years in the mine. His widow, Teresa, told a reporter: "He's saved many people before.... I know he was the first to raise his hand to go back in. I wish he wasn't so brave, but that's just him." His brother Michael, who also works at No. 5, said: "He wasn't going to leave anybody, he would have been the last one out."

Wendell Johnson, 52, worked seven days a week for the past five years at No. 5. He made it out of the mine after the initial blast, but, like the others who died, went back to help.

Others who perished were Nelson Banks, 52; Dave Blevins, 52; Gaston Adams Jr., 56; John Knox, 44; Joe Riggs, 51; Terry Stewart, 44; Joe Sorah, 46; Charles Smith, 44; and Dennis Mobley, 56.

The miners were members of United Mine Workers of America Local 2368.

## USA: Event commemorates lost miners

*Extract from Tuscaloosaneews.com, USA*

### 11th annual memorial remembers those who died in mining accidents

BROOKWOOD | It's been 11 years since 13 miners lost their lives in Brookwood during the explosions at the Jim Walter Resources Blue Creek Mine No. 5. But while it has been more than a decade, the tragedy will never be forgotten, said Daryl Dewberry, international vice president for the United Mine Workers Southern District.

"Coal miners have a bond with one another, we are our brother's keeper," Dewberry said. "It's a tight-knit family, evident by the crowd today."

More than 150 people gathered at the Miners' Memorial Monument at West Brookwood Church

— just yards from Mine No. 5 — to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the 2001 mining accident, but also to those who have died in mining accidents since. In the past 11 years, 35 more miners have died in Alabama.

The annual event is important, Dewberry said, because an accident like that should never happen again,

“Lest we forget, we are bound to repeat,” Dewberry said.



Beth Ennis, centre, embraces her two children, Nora, 12, and Courtland, 8, during the 11th annual service at the Miners' Memorial Monument at West Brookwood Church on Sunday. *Erin Nelson | The Tuscaloosa News*

The Sept. 23, 2001, accident occurred when there were explosions in Mine No. 5 — one of the deepest, most gas-rich mines in North America. On that day, 32 miners descended into the mine in Brookwood to conduct routine maintenance. But within hours, what started as a routine day turned into a tragedy that would claim 13 miners' lives.

At the time, it was the nation's worst mining disaster in 17 years.

“Hopefully, this (annual memorial) will focus on what happened so that it won't happen again,” Dewberry said.

“This is important because it gives the community a chance to come together and remember all who died,” added Larry Spencer, UMW field representative for District 20.

During the memorial service, the Rev. Vic Hutchins of West Brookwood Church reassured

the attendees that God was with them and knew their sorrow.

“These men, their life was not in vain,” Hutchins said. “God wants to mend your broken hearts today.”

The service was especially important for Beth Ennis and her daughter and son. Ennis' husband and the father of her children, Harold Ennis, died six months ago while working at the Shoal Creek mine as an electrician.

During the memorial service, she and her children lit a candle in memory of him and others who have died in mining accidents.

“I think (the memorial) is a good thing because it means their life mattered — to someone just besides us,” Ennis said. “It reminds us that we aren't the only ones who lost him.”

Monday 24 September 2012

## **USA: Number of factors led to mine accident**

*Extract from [www.whiznews.com](http://www.whiznews.com), USA*

Investigators at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources release preliminary findings into a Wednesday morning mining accident at Buckingham Coal.

A spokesperson for ODNR said their initial report indicates the accident took place because of a miscommunication between the track and traffic coordinator.

Investigators said the accident occurred during a shift change while the day shift was going into the mine and the night shift was coming out.

One of the rail cars was carrying ten people the other had five miners. One miner was ejected.

The report also said that the collision took place in a blind spot on the track. None of the miners suffered life threatening injuries and the five injured have been released from the hospital.

ODNR said they have an extensive mine safety program and will work with Buckingham Coal and make recommendations to improve safety.

## 22 workers trapped in three coal mine accidents in China

*Extract from The Hindu Business Line, India*

Beijing: Three separate coal mine accidents over the week-end have left 22 miners trapped in northeast and east China.

Eleven people were trapped after a fire broke out Saturday morning at a coal mine in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

The accident that occurred at the Longshan coal mine in Youyi County of Shuangyashan City was previously reported to have happened yesterday as a result of the mine owner's attempt to cover up, the rescue headquarters said.

Local people reported the accident to the authorities a day later. An initial investigation showed that a total of 13 people were working underground. Two were lifted out after the accident, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported.

The Government said the county's coal management bureau had ordered the mine to suspend production on September 3, after its licence expired a day earlier. Illegal production was being blamed for the accident, the government said.

The underground fire was put off on last night, rescuers said.

Saturday saw flooding at another coal mine in Jidong County, also in Heilongjiang Province, which trapped six miners.

Five other miners were trapped after a ceiling collapse at a coal mine in east China's Shandong Province yesterday.

The accident took place at a colliery of the Dongtai Mining Company in Zibo City. Rescue efforts are under way at the three mines.

Coal mine accidents in China are a common occurrence as mines work overtime to extract coal which continues to be a premium energy resource.

## Mining dictionary

### A guide to coal mining terminology

#### B

**Bottom** Floor or underlying surface of an underground excavation.

-Ed



**Trade & Investment  
Mine Safety**

### Registration is now open for electrical safety seminar

The 2012 Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar is on again and bigger than ever. The focus of the seminar is identifying and managing risks and sessions include;

- Presentations from industry experts on a range of electrical issues including lightning, welding and electric shocks, power tools in wet environments and designing/assessing exi systems.
- A key note presentation on risk from Michael Rosengren of BHP Billiton.
- Initial observations on Pike River from Darren Brady of Simtars.
- Updates on legislation changes and the national harmonisation process.
- Information on online safety solutions.
- A practical case study on design registering a shaft sinking winder.

A seminar dinner is being held with special guest Wayne Bennett, one of rugby league's most influential and innovative coaches.

The seminar is on 7 & 8 November 2012 and for the first time it will be held at Darling Harbour. Delegates are encouraged to book accommodation early.

To register for the seminar, or for information on accommodation options and parking visit the NSW Mine Safety website at

[www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/events/electrical-engineering-safety-seminar](http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/events/electrical-engineering-safety-seminar)