



Mining Accident News No.1311

18 to 31 October 2013

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Friday 18 October 2013

USA: 6 injured in accident at Ala. mine

Extract from abc3340.com, USA

Six mine workers were injured in an accident in Jefferson County Friday afternoon.

One victim was airlifted to an area hospital with serious injuries while the other five were transported by ambulances to local hospitals with non-life threatening injuries.

The incident occurred shortly after 2 p.m. in an underground portal and the workers were injured in a collision between a motor and a mining buggy, according to a spokesperson with the local miners union.

Cliffs Natural Resources released a statement Friday regarding the accident at Oak Grove Mine that injured six workers Friday afternoon.

"Cliffs Natural Resources, Inc. said that at approximately 2:30 p.m. an incident occurred at its Oak Grove Mine in Jefferson County, AL, in which six individuals sustained injuries and were transported to local hospitals. Five of the individuals were taken by ambulance for treatment, while one was transported by helicopter. At the time of this release, Cliffs did not have information regarding the condition of those involved.

"Federal and state mine safety officials have been notified regarding the incident which occurred underground. Cliffs is working with federal and state officials to determine the cause of the incident."

4 killed in SW China coal mine blast

Extract from Xinhua

Four people have been confirmed dead after a coal mine blast Thursday afternoon in southwest China's Guizhou Province, local authorities said on Friday.

The accident happened at 4.15 pm at the Zheyang Coal Mine in Gaoshi Township in the city of Fuquan when 49 people were working underground, according to the city's publicity department.

Forty-five people managed to escape while four others were trapped in the shaft, the department said.

Rescue work continued until the bodies of the four trapped were recovered early Friday morning. An investigation into the cause of the blast is underway.

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not associated with ANY organisation, individual or publication

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Saturday 19 October 2013

Canada: Man trapped underground at Saskatchewan mine rescued

Extract from Global News, Ca

LA RONGE, Sask. – A man who was trapped underground at a northern Saskatchewan mine has been rescued.

Emergency services were called to a mining accident at the Bingo mine site northeast of La Ronge, Sask. around 9:20 a.m. on Saturday.

A worker there was rescued by the local mine emergency response team after being trapped underground for a short period of time.

He was taken to hospital in La Ronge for treatment.

RCMP and the Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Board are investigating the incident.

NZ: Pike River re-entry starts today

Extract from stuff.co.nz

After waiting for three years, the families of the Pike River Miners are finally getting what they have been fighting for; the first stage of re-entering the mine.

The project, which is expected to take six months, begins today, with the New Zealand Defence Force clearing the mine ventilation shaft and plugging the shaft to ensure control mine atmosphere.

While it is an important day for the families of the miners who were killed when the mine exploded on November 19, 2010, they were not "jumping over the moon," said the families' spokesman Bernie Monk.

Monk, who lost his son Michael in the explosion, said the families were realistic about the re-entry. "If we do find people up the drift, and we are confident they will find

people, there mightn't be much of them left. We have got to face that. We have got to face the fact that we have got some people that we will never see again."

However, it was an exciting day even if there was a long way to go, he said. "What we want is to get down there to have a look and re-appraise where we go to next. It's a very important day. All we have got to do now is pray for good weather. We're coming into what you call the most important time for the re-entry of the mine, from now until May. The atmospheric conditions outside affect the atmospheric conditions inside."

Carol Rose, mother of miner Stuart 'Stu' Mudge, said it was the "most excellent thing" that work was beginning and that was all she, her husband Steve, and the other families had ever wanted.

"All we want is for somebody to have a go. It's been a massive, massive fight for the families to finally get acknowledgement that this is going to be done. Steve and I want to acknowledge Solid Energy and the government, and we are happy that it's happening now."

She did not hold much hope that Stu might be coming home because he was at the far end of the time, and the men could be "anywhere" but she and Steve were feeling positive about the re-entry.

"If one family can get one man home, and that's all that ever happens, all the other families will be over the moon for that one family."

Neville Rockhouse, father of Ben Rockhouse, said he was really "buoyed" that it was starting to take shape after three years.

"We're finally getting at least one attempt to get the boys home. Each and every one of these guys went off to work in good faith on November 19, 2010, and they didn't come home. They all deserve at least one attempt.

"It's quite exciting after all the risk assessment and rhetoric and various sign-offs in the government and Solid Energy, and finally we have got the initial go ahead to plug the shaft."

He was not sure if they would find anyone in the final 400m of the mine. "But if we do maybe find one person, then that family can put that person to rest as they should be able to.

"Ben was working as a driller's offsider. He was right at the top of the mine and well removed from where the fires were. As long as he hadn't wandered off, I think there is a reasonable chance of retrieving his remains."

Dean Dunbar, the father of the youngest miner Joseph Ray Dunbar, who was 17 at the time, said he did not have much hope that he would get his son back.

"Joseph is at the far end of the mine. The chances of Joseph coming home are pretty slim. The fight's going to begin when they get to the rock fall.

"We are gaining traction. It's taken nearly three years just to gain this traction. You will find things will be done rather quickly from now on, depending on the weather. Today's a big day. Who knows how many families will be gifted with bringing their guys home, but it won't be Joseph."

He was thankful to all the other miners' families, Mines Rescue, the British mining experts who helped the families to devise this plan to get into the drift, and "everybody's that's played a role in getting us this far".

"These are the people that I need to thank and these are the people who will take us past the rock fall.'

"It's a strange day. It's a horrible feeling. It's one thing to lose a child at that young age and it's another to have him entombed for so long. That's where the pain comes from.

"He deserves to come home, and every hard working miner deserves to come home."

Colombia: Four died at Gold Mine

Extract from American Herald Tribune

BOGORA – Four people were killed and 15 others remained missing Friday after a cave-in at a gold mine outside the northwestern Colombian town of Buritica, authorities said.

"Initially, we're talking about two injured, apparently four dead and between 10 and 15 missing," the emergency management chief in Antioquia province, Cesar Hernandez, said.

The Los Manrique mine lies about 30 minutes away from the centre of Buritica.

A hopper used to remove material from the mine ruptured around midday, causing a cave-in that buried the miners, authorities said.

Learning of the accident, Colombian POresident Juan Manuel Santos expressed solidarity with the families of the trapped miners. "we are monitoring the emergencuy and rescue operations in Buritica through the Risk Management Directorate. We join with all the families," the president said on Twitter.

Sunday 20 October 2013

Seven dead in Chinese flooded colliery

Extract from Business Standard

Over a week after a coal mine was flooded in China's Guizhou province, authorities confirmed seven trapped miners as dead Sunday.

Rescue work completed the evening, ten days after the accident happened at the Dachong Coal Mine in Changtian township, report Xinhua citing an government official.

Responsible officials, including head and Communist Party of China secretary of the township and chief of the county's work safety supervision bureau, were sacked or suspended from duty for investigation.

The flooding occurred around 1.30 pm Oct 11 when 33 miners were working underground. Twenty-six managed to escape, and seven others were submerged by water.

Monday 21 October 2013

Canada: Weekend mining accident in north Saskatchewan

Extract from The Canadian Press, Ca

Occupational Health and Safety investigating accident at Roy Lloyd mine

Police are releasing more details about an accident that happened on the weekend at a mine in northeast Saskatchewan.

A 58-year-old man was working at the Roy Lloyd mine site when the ground beneath him collapsed.

Crews had been doing some blasting at the time.

RCMP Sgt. Craig Cleary says the man was trapped for about an hour and was submerged up to his neck when his partner found him.

The man was released soon after he was taken to hospital in La Ronge.

Golden Band Resources Inc., which runs the mine, could not be reached for comment.

"As of yesterday his condition was listed as good. The last report had him getting some precautionary testing done at the hospital," said Cleary.

Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety is investigating.

Turkey: 15 trapped in mine collapse

Extract from Xinhua

Fifteen miners are trapped in a mine collapse in western Turkey on Sunday, private Dogan news agency reported.

Six miners have been rescued, but 15 others are still trapped underground after the mine collapse in the Aegaan province of Manisa, according to the report.

Rescue efforts are ongoing to save the trapped workers, said the report, adding an investigation into the accident has been launched.

Tuesday 22 October 2013

NSW: Lucky escape for drivers after collision at BHP coal mine

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

Mining giant, BHP Billiton says it was lucky one of its workers was not seriously injured in an accident at its Upper Hunter mine.

Last Friday a dozer and a light vehicle collided at the Mt Arthur open cut mine at Muswellbrook, crushing the passenger side of the smaller vehicle.

In a brief statement, BHP Billiton says it is fortunate no-one was injured in the incident and an internal investigation is underway to determine its cause.

The mining giant says once the investigation is complete, it will take any necessary actions to ensure a similar incident does not happen again.

NSW Trade and Investment has confirmed its mine safety investigation unit is looking into the matter.

A safety officer from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union has gone to the mine and is doing its own investigation.

USA: Man injured in mining accident in McDowell County

Extract from Bluefield Daily Telegraph, WV, USA

BISHOP, Va. — One person was injured Tuesday following a mining accident in McDowell County.

The accident was reported around 8 a.m. at the Red Fox Mine (surface mine) in Bishop. A male subject fell onto an endloader. He was transported from the scene of the accident by the McDowell County Ambulance Authority, according to a squad spokesman.

The man's identity and condition wasn't immediately known.

No other details regarding the accident were immediately released.

Quote of the week

"The advantage of a bad memory is that one enjoys several times the same good things for the first time."

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)
German philologist, philosopher, cultural critic,
poet and composer

Wednesday 23 October 2013

NZ: First stage of Pike River re-entry complete

Extract from 3news, NZ

The first phase of a re-entry at the West Coast's Pike River mine has been completed this morning, the NZ Defence Force says.

The five day operation saw a combined team of 21 Royal New Zealand Airforce (RNZAF) personal and 12 NZ Army specialists working to lift debris away from a key ventilation shaft.

The move will make way for a second recovery team who hope to plug the shaft with concrete to eventually see the main entrance reopened.

Squadron Leader Anna Shaw said the complicated operation went smoothly.

"We were unable to fly operations on Tuesday because of the weather in the area, but this allowed our crews to break from their hard work," she says.

"The flexibility and skills of the army crews at both ends certainly allowed the operation to go as well as it did."

Using a powerful RNZAF NH90 helicopter, the NZDF teams were able to remove 18 loads of debris away from the mine – a total of 35 tonnes of waste.

Lance Corporal Zeke Lytollis, one of the army representatives onsite, says the work was an "excellent" test of the crew's skills.

"Some of the loads we were removing were far from conventional and at the upper end of our weight limits," he says.

"It's one thing doing this kind of work from flat ground during training, but when you're on top of a hill in the middle of nowhere, it really puts our skills to the test."

Some of the individual loads were as heavy as three tonnes, which is twice the weight most civilian helicopters are able to carry.

It's hoped the next stage of the recovery will get underway within a couple of weeks, with crews hoping the plan to block the ventilation shaft will prove successful.

Next, the entrance shaft will be sealed off and fresh air pumped in to allow mine rescue staff to walk down the 2.3 kilometre shaft.

The operation to recover the remains of the 29 men, killed in a series of explosions almost three years ago, could take up to six months in total and will be weather-dependent.

This week in mining accident history

20 October 1903

Mary Pit

Lochore, Ballingry Parish, Scotland, UK

Underground coal mine

1 killed, fall down shaft

FIFE MINER'S TERRIBLE DEATH- A fatal accident occurred early this morning at the new Mary Pit, Lochore, Lochgelly, belonging to the Fife Coal Company. A man named M. Brown was working in the shaft, when he fell off the kettle, dropping down the pit, a distance of 70 feet, and being instantaneously killed. He was about 40 years of age, and lived in a Lochgelly lodging-house. His head was frightfully smashed, the bones protruding, and the body otherwise mangled. [Edinburgh Evening News 20 October 1903]

24 October 1898

New Monkland Parish, Scotland, UK

Coal mine

1 killed

Fatal Accident to a Boy- A boy named Campbell, 13, a picker, residing at 53 East Longrigg Rows, New Monkland, met his death in a very sad manner on Monday. He had been employed at the coal-crushing machine at Messrs James Nimmo & Company Limited, but was at the time of the accident amusing himself by swinging on a rope tied round his waist, and fixed round the shaft which turns the travelling tables. The poor lad was drawn close up to the shaft, and was dead before he could be released. [Scotsman 26 October 1898]

28 October 1937

West Cameron Colliery

**Greengairs, New Monkland Parish,
Scotland, UK**

Underground coal mine

1 dead, fall of stone

Airdrie Miner Killed - Crushed By Fall of Stones at Greengairs

An Airdrie miner employed in a Greengairs pit met his death about 6 o'clock on Thursday morning when a fall of stone pinned him to the ground. The victim of the accident, Francis Gallagher, aged 42, miner, 23 Reid Street, Rawyards, Airdrie, was working in the Drumgray coal seam in the West Cameron Colliery of the Brownieside Coal Company. A large quantity of stone known as lype collapsed at his working place and crushed him against the pavement. Workmates hurriedly extricated him from the stone, but he died before medical aid could be summoned. A doctor later certified death as due to crushing and shock. [Airdrie & Coatbridge Advertiser 30 October 1937]

Wednesday 23 October 2013

WA: Mine worker seriously injured after being pinned in truck at FMG mine site

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

A 42-year-old man has been seriously injured in a truck crash on a mine site in the Pilbara.

Police say the man was injured when a dump truck ran into the back of another at about midnight at Christmas Creek mine, south-west of Nullagine.

The man was pinned in the rear truck's cabin for more than five hours and suffered serious leg and pelvis injuries.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service flew the man to Royal Perth Hospital this morning where he remains in a critical condition.

Two inspectors from the Department of Mines and Petroleum are on site to investigate the circumstances surrounding the incident.

The victim was an employee of Macmahon Holdings Limited but the mine is owned by Fortescue Metals Group, and it is the second serious incident at the same site within months.

In August, a 26-year-old contractor was killed at the same mine.

The New Zealand man died while working at the mine's processing plant operated by a subcontractor.

Following the fatal incident, FMG took over the management and supervision of ore processing facilities at the mine.

Thursday 24 October 2013

WA: Mining giant BHP and a subcontractor fined over fatal accident at mine site

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

Mining giant BHP and a sub-contractor have been fined for a fatal workplace accident in Western Australia's North West.

Paul Sparkes, 29, was struck by a tyre from a dump truck while working at BHP's Yandi mine, near Newman, in 2008.

The Perth Magistrates Court heard Mr Sparkes and another worker were fitting the tyre without the proper training.

The Magistrate found it was not a case of a blatant disregard for safety, but more a system failure that had dire consequences.

BHP was fined \$102,000 and sub-contractor HWE Newman Services, which was found to have prime responsibility for the incident, was fined \$136,000.

Mr Sparkes' family had called for harsher penalties but says they are glad the matter is finally over.

Thursday 31 October 2013

WA: Workers rescued after seeking refuge chamber in nickel mine

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

Nine miners have been brought to the surface, after a small earthquake near a Goldfields

nickel mine forced them to enter a refuge chamber.

Earlier today, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum Bill Marmion told Parliament that nine fitters made their way to a refuge chamber at BHP's nickel mine at Leinster.

A spokeswoman for BHP says all the individuals have been brought safely to the surface.

None of the workers were injured.

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

C

Chain pillar

The pillar of coal left to protect the gangway or entry and the parallel airways.