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# Mining Accident News No.0915

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Thursday 7 May 2009

## Ukraine: Three miners rescued at Novodzerzhynska mine

*Extract from UNIAN News Agency, Kiev, Ukraine*

Three miners have been rescued at Novodzerzhynska mine in the morning on May 7, another two were found dead.

According to the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine, referring Victor Turmanov, head of the Coal Industry Workers Trade Union, around 7 a.m., rescuers found three live miners, who had been under the debris for more than two days. "They were lifted on the ground and taken to hospital. Their state of health is satisfactory", V.Turmanov said.

Another three miners are still missing. In the evening of May 6, a dead coalminer was found

at Novodzerzhynska. A rescue operation is underway.

As UNIAN reported earlier, nine coalminers remained trapped underground on Tuesday following a rock slide at a mine in eastern Ukraine`s Donetsk Region.

The collapse occurred on Monday in a section of the Novodzerzhynska mine at a depth of 585 meters (1,900 feet).

Fourteen miners were working in the area at the time. Five of them managed to escape and received no injuries, the Zavtra newspaper said.

## USA: Charges dismissed in Schuylkill mine fatality

*Extract from Allentown Morning Call, PA, USA*

For the second time this year, a Schuylkill County man saw a judge dismiss charges that he was at least partly responsible for an underground explosion that killed a fellow coal miner in 2006.

When District Judge Carol A. CQPankake of Tremont announced her decision after nearly a three-hour preliminary hearing this afternoon, members of the victim's family muttered "murderer" toward Jeffrey T. Klinger.

Klinger, 43, had been arrested for involuntary manslaughter and other charges after the Oct. 23, 2006, explosion at the R&D Coal. Co. mine in Tremont that killed Dale Reightler.

Chief Deputy Attorney General Glenn A. Parno, who prosecuted the case, was disappointed with the decision.

"We feel there was sufficient evidence to have this case bound over for trial" in Schuylkill County Court, he said, adding he needs time to determine his next step.

Defence lawyer James Conville had argued successfully that the state had not proven that Klinger acted recklessly. The state filed charges against Klinger, of Tremont, in 2008, but county Judge Jacqueline L. Russell in March dismissed the charges for lack of evidence. The

state refilled the charges the next month, which led to today's hearing.

Involuntary manslaughter and related charges are pending in county court against mine owner David Zimmerman and his son, Steven.

Friday 8 May 2009

## **Guinea gold mine collapse kills 13 - government**

*Extract from CNBC.com, USA*

CONAKRY - At least 13 miners were killed in Guinea when their mine collapsed, the government said on Friday. The miners were digging for gold near the village of Touletoni in the Siguiri region, around 60 km (40 miles) from AngloGold Ashanti's operations in the country and 800 km east of the capital Conakry, when the mine caved in on Wednesday. "The provisional death toll is terrible, 13 dead, five seriously injured, and ten missing," government spokesman Justin Morel Junior said on state radio. So-called artisanal mining in Africa, often one of the few means of earning money in isolated areas, is fraught with danger as the mines are poorly built and diggers do not wear protective equipment. Last November at least 14 illegal gold miners were killed, also near Siguiri, when disused mineshafts in which they were working collapsed.

Saturday 9 May 2009

## **Chinese coal mine covers up gas poisoning deaths**

*Extract from Xinhua, China*

ZHENGZHOU, - Seven people died of gas poisoning in a central China coal mine last week, but the management attempted to conceal the accident, the local government revealed Saturday.

A government investigation found that five bodies had been removed to other places and one who died in a hospital went unreported, according to the city government of Dengfeng, where the accident took place.

Police have detained the manager, Liang Zhanwei, and four other production and management directors of the privately-owned mine.

The mine only reported one death to authorities on May 2, when carbon monoxide burst out in a shaft where 69 miners were working underground.

Investigators were told that one worker died at the site and 54 escaped, but they discovered that five died on the way to hospital and another died after medical treatment failed. Eight others recovered, said Yang Zhanwei, head of the city's coal industry bureau.

The investigation team comprising officials with the city's work safety bureau, public security, discipline inspection and coal industry authorities, questioned workers' families and miners who were at the site, and checked the work attendance records after receiving public reports about the alleged cover-up, finding out that the mine had concealed six deaths.

Police are still questioning the five suspects.

The licensed Xinfeng Coal Mine belongs to Guangxian Industrial and Trading Co. Ltd. with a designed production capacity of 600,000 tonnes a year.

## **USA: Six Stuck in Underground Mine Wait as Flood Water Recedes**

*Extract from State Journal Charleston, WV, USA*

**The miners have been trapped since early Saturday**

MINGO CO. Six miners continue to hang tight as they wait for high water to recede from an underground coal mine.

The mine is in Ben Creek in Mingo County at the base of Horse Pen Mountain. Emergency dispatchers said water rose and the men were moved to a safer area inside the mine early Saturday. Pumps are being used to remove the water.

No injuries have been reported and it is not considered to be life threatening.

Officials from the Miners Health, Safety and Training Division are also on site. Crews were able to get food and water to the miners.

### This week in mining accident history

Date Mine / Country (Aust unless stated)
<p><b>10 May 1897</b></p> <p><b>Snaefell Mine, Laxey, Isle of Man</b> <b>Underground metal mine</b></p> <p>Source: <i>Alwyn Piggott &amp; The Times</i></p>
Incident
<p><b>20 Lives lost from underground fire, caused by naked light igniting timber</b></p> <p>A lamentable affair occurred yesterday morning at the Snaefell lead mines, Laxey, Isle of Man, the result of which, it is feared, will be the loss of several lives. The mine was not worked on Sunday, and the last shot fired was half-past 1 on Saturday. From that time till 6 o'clock yesterday morning no one had any occasion to enter the mine, but when the men went down the shaft at 6 o'clock it was found to be filled with poisonous fumes, and the air was intensely hot. There were no flames, and it was impossible to see what was the cause of the fumes which filled the place. The result, however, was that as each man descended he was overpowered, and no fewer than 19 went down the ladders before it was found that anything was wrong. Three men came up the shaft nearly fainting and said there was something wrong with the air. No answer could be got from those who had gone down. Rescuers at once set to work, but owing to the deadly fumes they could get no further than the 50-fathom level. At 11 o'clock one of the explorers was brought up in an unconscious state, and it was feared he would not live, but he regained consciousness at 2 o'clock. A large gang of men arrived to help in the rescue. Five men proceeded down the shaft at 2 o'clock, and reached a man named Corkhill at the 60-fathom level. He was alive, but unconscious. All the other men were deeper down the shaft, and it is feared they are dead. Captain Kewley, of the mines, acted with conspicuous bravery. In the face of the doctor's orders, he continued to descend the mine time after time with exploring parties, and went down ten times in all at the risk of his life. At 8 o'clock last night Thomas Hinds, a Douglas diver, and Bernard</p>

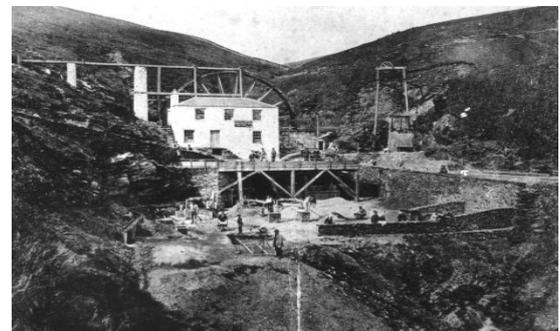
Rogers, his assistant, arrived at the scene of the disaster with diving apparatus, and prepared to descend. Captain Kewley stated that he was afraid that the case was hopeless. He feared that all the men had perished. He had seen eight men lying apparently dead. One of the miners said that several of the men might have been saved if they had had presence of mind. The men who were able to render service only did so by putting their heads into the ventilation shaft at intervals, and thus obtaining fresh air. Had the others done this they might have been saved. The rescue operations were being continued last night with the utmost vigour. Most of the men in the mine were married, and leave wives and large families. At a meeting of the Spencer Walpole Lodge of Freemasons, at which the Provincial Grand Master of the Isle of Man, Sir John Goldie-Taubman, was present, a fund in aid of the sufferers was opened.

Further reading:

<http://www.dmm.org.uk/reports/8880-01.htm>



The rescue party. Captain Kewley is seated front centre



A picture of the Snaefell mine around 1870. The water wheel used for pumping was fifty feet in diameter and was the fourth largest working on the Island at the time. The wheel now lies disassembled at a mine in North Wales. On the right can be seen the shear legs over the shaft for raising the kiddles and in the foreground the men are at work constructing the washing floors.

Sunday 10 May 2009

## **UPDATE: Miners Rescued in Mingo County, WV, USA**

*Extract from WOWK, Huntington, WV, USA*

Mingo - As of 5:57am Sunday morning, the miners who were stuck in the Mountaineer Alma A Mine since early Saturday, have all been rescued.

According to a report issued by Amy Louviere, Public Affairs Director for Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), all seven miners are now out of the mine and all appear to be OK.

### **Quote of the week**

**We cannot control the evil tongues of others; but a good life enables us to disregard them.**

**Marcus Porcius Cato (Cato the Elder)**  
(Roman statesman, died 149BC)

Tuesday 12 May 2009

## **Court allows mining death evidence**

*Extract from APP*

BRISBANE - A mining giant has failed to stop an industry safety inspector from giving evidence to a coronial inquest into a miner's death.

George Elliot Blee died when he was crushed between a shuttle car and a mine wall at the Moranbah North Coal Mine in central Queensland on April 9, 2007.

Walter Mining Pty Ltd sought to exclude the evidence of one of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union's (CFMEU) industry safety inspectors, Stephen Smyth, from an ongoing inquest.

But, Justice Duncan McMeekin dismissed the application in the Queensland Supreme Court in Rockhampton.

Walter Mining Pty Ltd's application claimed Mr Smyth's evidence lacked expertise and was biased.

In his judgment, Justice McMeekin said Mr Smyth had 20 years experience in underground coal mining, including working as a mine deputy for seven years, and was the full-time industry health and safety representative when the incident occurred.

Justice McMeekin said that as the coroner was conducting an investigation, not a trial, all evidence should be submitted.

"What weight the coroner will give to the testimony of Mr Smyth is unknown," Justice McMeekin said.

"It is clear from her decision that she is very much alive to the limitations inherent in its receipt."

He also acknowledged that while Mr Smyth's opinions could be deemed as biased because the CFMEU was a respondent in the case, it "did not afford a ground for a rejection".

CFMEU vice-president Stuart Vaccaneo welcomed the decision, saying inquests were about finding the truth.\

"(To not allow the evidence) seems completely at odds with a search for the truth into this tragic death," Mr Vaccaneo said.

He said the company owed Mr Blee's widow an apology for making her wait longer for a coronial finding.

Wednesday 13 May 2009

## **Crandall Canyon disaster settlement reportedly exceeds \$22m Utah record**

*Crandall Canyon, Utah mining disaster families and mine owners have reportedly reached a record settlement in the 2007 coal mine collapse, which ultimately resulted in nine deaths and seriously injured six other victims.*

RENO, NV - Sixteen families impacted by the deaths and injuries in the 2007 Crandall Canyon coal mine disaster have settled civil lawsuits for a confidential amount which the Salt Lake City news media reported as the largest settlement in Utah mining history.

The settlement is the result of almost a year of negotiations involving 16 groups of plaintiffs, seven defendants and six insurance companies. It is believed to exceed the \$22 million agreement reached with the heirs of 27 miners killed in a 1984 fire at the Wilberg Mine.

Six miners were killed on August 6, 2007, when the Crandall Canyon coal mine near Huntington collapsed. In the months before the accident, pressure on pillars supporting the mine resulted in bounces, causing the coal to explode from mine walls. Rescuers were trying to reach the trapped men when, 10 days after the initial implosion, three rescuers were killed and six others were injured when another bounce hit them.

However, Brett Tollman, the U.S. Attorney for Utah, recently said his office is still gathering information for investigations ordered by the Mine Safety and Health Administration and a U.S. congressman.

In a joint news release, the plaintiffs, the defendants, and their insurers "recognized the extent of federal complexities and novel questions of law, and the time and expense of resolving them. Rather than engaging in lengthy, expensive, and unpredictable litigation, the parties decided to work together toward an amicable, reasonable settlement to put these matters in the past, provide for the victims' and their families' futures, and allow all concerned to move forward."

In a statement, UtahAmerican Energy attorney Jason W. Hardin, said, "The geomechanics of coal mining under a mountain are extremely complex and difficult to access. We have spent considerable time and effort attempting to determine what happened at the Crandall Canyon Mine. And, while we have learned from

the accidents, we realize that no one may ever know what actually cause those accidents."

UtahAmerican Energy is the parent of the Genwal Resource, which operated the Crandall Canyon Mine. UtahAmerican's parent company is Cleveland, Ohio-based Murray Energy.

Edward Havas, the attorney for 50 or more plaintiffs in the Crandall Canyon case, said, "It is in everyone's interests to move forward. It is a time to focus on the future, even as we remember the past and time to concentrate on the living, even as we remember those who were lost." He told the *New York Times* that the settlement required an immediate payout and future periodic payments.

Thursday 14 May 2009

## **South Africa: Death halts operations at Modikwa mine**

*Extract from The Business Report, South Africa*

Johannesburg - Work stopped at Modikwa platinum mine on Thursday after miners protested against the death of a colleague.

The mine is a 50 percent joint venture held by African Rainbow Minerals (ARM) and Anglo Platinum.

Spokeswoman for ARM Monique Swartz told Sapa the death was not due to a mine accident.

"At the end of a shift on Wednesday, one of the workers was found dead in a change room.

"Medical experts who examined the body said it had been a natural death but until a full autopsy is done, we can't confirm this."

Swartz said the workforce had proclaimed a day of mourning, in spite of the fact the death had not been caused by a mining accident.

Management would have been happy to have given miners some time off during the day to mourn their colleague.

**The 19th Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar** will be held at Sydney Olympic Park, on Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 August 2009. For more information: [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety)

Friday 15 May 2009

## CFMEU welcomes mine safety spending

*Extract from ABC News Online, Aus*

CFMEU general secretary Andrew Vickers says the National Mine Safety Network is critical to ensure consistent mine standards and practices

Mr Vickers says it is money well spent.

"It's not a huge amount of money considering the economic benefit of the mining industry and of course the importance of occupational health and safety," he said.

"The whole concept of the framework is simply to try and achieve consistency across all the various jurisdictions, both state and territory throughout Australia in occupational health and safety legislation."

Member for Capricornia Kirsten Livermore says consistent standards are vital, with many workers moving from mine to mine.

"We must never forget what a dangerous job mining is but equally the employees and companies involved do recognise the crucial importance of maintaining a very high standard of safety," Ms Livermore said.

"This national safety framework will help make sure that there is consistency when it comes to safety training, improving the protections that are there for workers in this industry."

Saturday 16 May 2009

## 11 die of asphyxiation in Chinese coal mine

*Extract from the Taiwan News*

Eleven miners died of asphyxiation Saturday while doing construction work in a coal mine in northern China, authorities said.

A duty officer at the State Administration of Work Safety said six people were also injured in the accident in the shaft on the outskirts of the city of Shuozhou in Shanxi province. The

Xinhua News Agency said four escaped unharmed, but it only put the injured toll at two.

Inspectors were on their way to the scene to determine the cause of the accident, said the officer, who like many Chinese officials would give only his surname, Zhang. He said no other information was available.

No details were given about the injuries and calls to the local Suozhou work safety bureau rang unanswered.

China's mining industry remains the world's deadliest, despite government promises to improve mining safety.

Xinhua said the mine was run by Zheneng Majialiang, a division of the Datong Coal Mine Group.

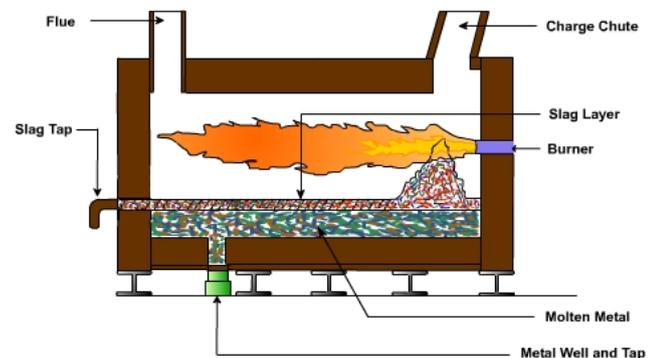
## Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

### R

#### reverberatory furnace

A brick furnace used for smelting concentrates. The crushed and concentrated ore and a flux is loaded into the furnace and intense fire maintained at one end in an external firebox, the hot gasses passing over the ore and reverberating from the low ceiling of the furnace. Once molten, the metallic components separate from the lighter slag, and the metal and slag are drawn off separately.



Schematic of a Reverberatory Furnace

- Ed.