



## Incidents of Rescuer Death Believed Caused by Breathing Apparatus

1. 1911 Cokedale Mine Explosion, Trinidad, Colorado  
On February 9, 1911, **E. A. Sutton**, assistant superintendent of the Cokedale mine of the Carbon Coal & Coke Company, Carbondale, Colorado, lost his life while wearing a Dräger helmet-type oxygen breathing apparatus after an explosion in this mine in which 17 men were killed. In the same incident, Robert Meek, a volunteer rescuer, also lost his life. Meek fell unconscious from blackdamp after venturing ahead of the air circuit. He died a few minutes after he was carried out of the mine. Source document 
2. 1913 Cincinnati Mine Explosion, Courtney, Pennsylvania  
Sixty-seven miners escaped from the Cincinnati Mine following the explosion that claimed 98 lives on April 23, 1913, including one apparatus wearing rescuer. Two miners were rescued after 60 hours. See more. Source document.
3. 1913 Dawson No. 2 Mine Explosion, Dawson, New Mexico  
Of the 284 men working in the mine, 14 men escaped from an unaffected area of the mine, and nine others, unconscious at the bottom of the shaft were later rescued by a crew wearing apparatus. Two helmet men, **James Laird and William Poyser**, were lost that night when they overtaxed the oxygen supply by overexertion and going in farther than instructed. The oxygen was supplied at a fixed rate and when they tried to remove the oxygen bottles to breathe from them, they were overcome by afterdamp. Source document.
4. 1915 Smokeless Valley No. 1 Mine Explosion, Johnstown, Pennsylvania  
Apparatus man succumbed during recovery work. **Mr. Gomer Phillips** was an employee of the Cambria Steel Company of Johnstown, PA. Mr. Phillips was a voluntary rescue man in the Johnstown explosion and came to his death while wearing the apparatus in attempting to rescue the men in the explosion. Mr. Phillips was the captain of the rescue team.
5. 1915 Alta-Quincy Tunnel Exploration, Salt Lake City, Utah  
On September 17, 1915, **Thomas Hendrickson**, a foreman of the International Exploration Company, lost his life while wearing a Dräger 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus during an exploration in the Alta-Quincy tunnel, near Salt Lake City, Utah, leased by the Albion Mining Company.

6. 1916 Pennsylvania Mine Fire, Butte, Montana  
Approximately 195 men were hoisted to the surface in less than 45 minutes after the discovery of the fire. Six men escaped through the 1,000-foot level to the Tramway mine. Subsequently, two men lost their lives while wearing Dräger apparatus during rescue and recovery work.
7. 1917 Hastings Mine Explosion, Hastings, Colorado  
On May 6, 1917, **Walter Kerr**, a member of a mine rescue team of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company, died wearing a Dräger 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus, while helping to recover bodies, after an explosion in the Hastings mine of the Victor-American Fuel Company, Hastings, Colorado, in which 121 men were killed. The explosion was caused by a mine inspector striking a match to relight his safety lamp about 120 feet from the face of 7 South entry.
8. 1917 Primrose Mine Fire, Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania  
While fighting the fire in the Glendon section of the Primrose mines, eleven miners were overcome by the fumes of white damp and dropped unconscious in the mine. After an undisclosed period, a searching party brought them to the surface, where they were treated in the mine rescue car. It was thought all would recover. The men were sent out from the supply base properly equipped with helmets and when they failed to return, rescuers were sent over the same route. It was believed their breathing apparatus failed to work properly. Source document 
9. 1917 Jamison No. 7 Mine Explosion and Fire, Barrackville, West Virginia  
On November 13, 1917, in an incident related to the initial disaster which occurred in October 1916, **Samuel T. McMahon and Bryce Warren** lost their lives while wearing Fleuss oxygen breathing apparatus in a sealed fire area in the No. 7 mine of the Jamison Coal & Coke Company, Barrackville, West Virginia.
10. 1918 Carthage Fuel Company, Mine Exploration Fatality, Carthage, New Mexico  
On February 26, 1918, **David Murphy**, an experienced mine rescue volunteer from Dawson, New Mexico, lost his life while wearing a Fleuss mouthpiece-type oxygen breathing apparatus during an exploration trip in the Government mine of the Carthage Fuel Company, Carthage, New Mexico.
11. 1919 Confined Space Fatality, Trinidad, Colorado  
On August 25, 1919, **James S. Cunningham**, foreman miner of Bureau of Mines rescue car No. 2, died while wearing a Salvus ½-hour apparatus in a gasoline storage tank of the Sinclair Oil & Refining Company, Trinidad, Colorado.

12. 1920 Black Diamond No. 2 Rescue Training Fatalities, Black Diamond, Washington  
On July 10, 1920, **Henry DeWinter, Hugh Hughes, and James Hudson** lost their lives while wearing oxygen breathing apparatus in an abandoned slope of the Black Diamond No. 2 mine of the Pacific Coast Coal Company, Black Diamond, Washington.
13. 1921 Sahara No. 8 Mine Explosion, Illinois  
Three men lost their lives by suffocation in oxygen apparatus while opening a fire sealed area to see if the fire was extinguished. The oxygen of one of the three-man crew was fully consumed and the two other men used up all their oxygen in attempted rescue of the one man who went down.
14. 1921 No. 1 Mine Explosion, Ellsworth, Pennsylvania  
On December 31, 1921, **Albert Gilmore**, a section foreman, lost his life in the No. 1 mine of the Ellsworth Collieries Company, Ellsworth, Pennsylvania, while wearing a Gibbs 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus following a local mine explosion.
15. 1924 Castle Gate No. 2 Mine Explosions, Castle Gate, Utah  
Before experienced apparatus men arrived, a member of a crew from a neighboring mine was killed by inhaling carbon monoxide due to removing his nose clip in some way.
16. 1927 Connellsville By-Product Mine Asphyxiation, Morgantown, West Virginia  
Two mine rescue men sacrificed their lives in a fruitless effort to save a fellow rescuer from deadly gas in the Connellsville By-Product Company mine near Morgantown, WV. The three victims were part of a crew from Parnassus, PA. Crews of helmet men were sent in to explore sealed workings to determine whether flooding of the mine had extinguished a fire. **C. Roy Rushton, Frank Burns and William Heagy** formed this crew. For some unexplained reason, Rushton removed the mouthpiece of his breathing apparatus. He soon collapsed, a victim of carbon monoxide.
17. 1930 Dalton Coal Company Mine Fire, Dalton, Ohio  
On October 8, 1930, **Rush D. Hiller**, an undertaker of Canton, Ohio, lost his life while wearing a ½-hour McCaa oxygen breathing apparatus on the property of the Dalton Coal Company, Dalton, Ohio.
18. 1940 Anthracite "Bootleg" Operation, Eastern Pennsylvania  
On May 16, 1940, **Andrew Wolfgang**, a foreman of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Co., and captain of a mine rescue team, lost his life while wearing a McCaa 2-hour oxygen breathing apparatus, in an attempt to rescue a miner at the bottom of a 50-foot, almost vertical, shaft at a "bootleg" mining operation.

19. 1940 Wanamie Colliery Mine Fire, Wanamie, Pennsylvania  
On October 6, 1940, **Reese Phillips and Gray Lacey** lost their lives while wearing Gibbs oxygen breathing apparatus after entering a sealed fire area at the Wanamie Colliery of the Glen Alden Coal Co., Wanamie, Pennsylvania.
  
20. 2002 Storm Decline Exploration, Elko, Nevada  
Team trainer, **Theodore Milligan** and team member, **Dale Spring** were fatally injured when they collapsed from excessive heat while evaluating the conditions in an inactive gold mine. The pair's failure to have coolant cartridges installed in their breathing apparatus was identified as a principle contributing factor.