

Famous February Mining Incidents

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February

February has produced **72 mine disasters** with 5 or more fatalities.

See more at <http://bit.ly/2Uky0eu> 🔍👁

The **top 3 deadliest disasters** were:

Buffalo Creek Dam (WV) - 125 dead

Stag Canon No. 1 (NM) - 120 dead

Virginia City (AL) - 112 dead

February Mine Disaster Calendar 📅

Be sure to visit our February calendar page. There you'll find scores of successful rescues and incidents of rescuer death that we've uncovered from news archives and accident reports. To date we've collected information on more than **1,350**

rescues and over **475 rescuer deaths** dating back to 1846. See more at

<http://bit.ly/2OxyKcj> 🔍👁

February 1

Successful Rescue on Feb. 1, 1950 📄

Reliance Colliery Mine Asphyxiation, Shamokin, Pennsylvania — A 59-year-old Shamokin miner was killed, and another man narrowly escaped the same fate after an **undisclosed period** when a "pocket" of gas erupted while the two were working at the face of a pillar hole in the Reliance Colliery mine. In Shamokin Hospital following his rescue was **Nicholas Amato**, 26. Amato's condition was reported by hospital attaches to be satisfactory. Amato was the first of the two mine workers to be brought to the surface. A colliery first aid team used artificial respiration to partially revive the young man. Efforts of the first aid men to fully revive Amato continued while he was being taken in an ambulance to the hospital. In August 1950, during the annual first aid contest of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company, *Michael Dobson was awarded the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association medal of honor* 🏆 *for knowingly risking his life by entering a pitching pillar hole filled with gas to successfully rescue one worker and after several attempts.* See more at <https://bit.ly/3GwOSTZ> 🔍 👁

February 2

Successful Rescue on Feb. 2, 1917 📄

Isle Royale Mine Inundation, Houghton, Michigan — After more than — **50 hours** — imprisonment, three miners were found alive in the flooded Isle Royale mine. Owing to the weakness of the men they would not be moved through the water to safety until the next day. They had no knowledge of the fate of the two other men, also entrapped and still missing. The Isle Royale mine was flooded when a blast broke through the drift wall into an adjoining abandoned working. See more at <https://bit.ly/3oSpfE5> 🔍 👁

February 2

Successful Rescue on Feb. 2, 1891 📄

Grand River Mine Explosion, Denver, Colorado — What almost proved to be another Mammoth mine disaster occurred on February 2nd in the Grand River coal and coke mines. Just at 6 o'clock as the day shift, composed of seventy-five miners, were about to leave the mine a terrific explosion occurred, and immediately black

smoke came pouring out the side of the mountain. Many women and children rushed toward the entrance of the mine, only to be driven back by clouds of smoke. Above the roar of escaping gases, the pitiable cries of the imprisoned miners could be plainly heard by their wives and children. Soon the **seventy-five miners were brought to the surface, some of them more dead than alive**, and none of them any too soon, as the flames immediately reached the shaft and came up with such force that it drove everybody away. Explosions had followed every few hours. At 2 o'clock the next morning the excitement was so great that it was impossible to tell if anyone failed to get out. It was thought several had perished. Had the explosion occurred when the miners were at work not one would have escaped. This mine had been on fire several times before in the previous ten years, caused by miners' lamps igniting the gas, which had always troubled them. See more at <https://bit.ly/3o33RhT> 🔍👁

February 3

Successful Rescue on Feb. 3, 1875 📄

Osage Mining Company Fire, Osage City, Kansas — Thirty men and three boys were at work in the mine at the time as flames shot out of the shaft high into the air. Two hours after the fire started, the first of the trapped miners appeared at the surface. Anxious hands were stretched out, and as the man was drawn to the surface he fainted. Coming up one after the other, some with strength to hold on and others unconscious. **4½ hours** after the start of the fire, every man was saved, and the town was wild with rejoicing. Later in the evening, all the men were doing well. See more at <https://bit.ly/3fWpQIN> 🔍👁

February 4

**Davis Coal and Coke Company
Thomas No. 25 Mine Explosion
Thomas, Tucker County, West Virginia**

February 4, 1907

No. Killed - 25

See more at <http://bit.ly/2QfNn46> 🔍👁

Rescuer Death on Feb. 4, 1907 🚒

A rescue party of 7 men entered the mine and were exploring for survivors. They had penetrated as far as the third heading when suddenly the current of air died away.

The motor which operated the large fan above the entrance had burned out. Now exposed to the blackdamp, 4 of these men were quickly overcome. **Dan R. Jones** died from asphyxiation and the other 3 were removed by reinforcements and revived under the treatment of physicians.

February 4

On February 4, 1957, thirty-seven miners perished in a rumbling gas explosion deep in the giant Bishop No. 34 coal mine that burrows under the mountains of the Virginia-West Virginia line. At the time, it was the deadliest mine disaster since 119 died in a blast at West Frankfort, Illinois, on December 21, 1951. This same mine would experience another explosion in October 1958 which killed another 22 miners. 😬

Pocahontas Fuel Company
Bishop No. 34 Mine Explosion
Bishop, Tazewell County, Virginia

February 4, 1957

No. Killed - 37

See more at <http://bit.ly/2ARvC18> 🔍👁

February 4

J. C. Hayden and Company
Spring Mountain No. 1 Mine Inundation
Jeansville, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

February 4, 1891

No. Killed - 13

See more at <http://bit.ly/34WwHVx> 🔍👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

13 miners died in Jeansville, Pennsylvania after they were trapped by water in the Spring Mountain No. 1 Mine operated by J. C. Hayden and Company on February 4, 1891. These were killed by the onrush of water from abandoned workings and asphyxiated by gas from a fire built by imprisoned men. Four others were rescued —

19 days — later. They were **John Tomaskusky, Joe Mautchwitch, Bosso Franko, and John Berno.**

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No. Killed - 37

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February 5

Commemorating the Anniversary of the Milford Mine Inundation

**Milford Mine Inundation
Cuyuna-Minneapolis Iron Company
George H. Crosby, owner
Crosby, Crow Wing County, Minnesota**

February 5, 1924

No. Killed - 41

See more at <http://bit.ly/2m5CSSJ> 🔍🔗

Forty-one miners perished when the bottom fell out of a small pond and flooded the workings of the Milford Iron Mine.

Successful Rescue 🍺

Fourteen-year-old **Frank Hrvatin** was responsible for saving the lives of two **men** when a surface cave-in caused water to flood the Milford mine from nearby

Foley Lake a few miles north of Crosby, Minnesota. Frank reached the mine's one vertical shaft and began to scurry up the ladder.

With water climbing fast, Frank wormed around an older miner, Harry Hosford. But another exhausted miner, Matt Kangas, clogged their escape route. Frank recalled the "superhuman strength" that took over and enabled him to squirm between Kangas' legs and hoist the man rung-by-rung up to safety. Then he reached back down and grabbed the wrist of Hosford, who was up to his waist in rising muck, hollering: "For God's sakes, hurry!" The three miners were among only seven that got out.

February 5

Successful Rescue on Feb. 5, 1995 🍺

Solvay Minerals Trona Mine Rescue, Green River, Wyoming — Two miners were rescued after becoming lost when a 5.4 magnitude earthquake hit the area. **The first miner was lifted to safety after a day** and was in good condition at a hospital. **The second miner was rescued after nearly two days.** He suffered a heart attack as he was being lifted out of the mine and died hours later. See more at <https://bit.ly/36GbnGF> 🔍👁

February 6

Successful Rescues and Rescuer Deaths in connection with the **Standard Mine explosion** on February 6, 1930, in Standardville, Utah. 23 miners were killed in the blast. See more at <http://bit.ly/2t54ezb> 🔍👁

Rescuer Deaths 🚒

Three men in the connected No. 3 mine were killed by the forces, and 17 of those in No. 1 mine died in the afterdamp. Three men of a fresh air crew were killed by a falling roof slab on February 7th.

Successful Rescue 🍺

Five were rescued by crews from nearby mining communities. The five, taken out after an undisclosed period, had bratticed themselves from the deadly gas fumes, far

back in the workings and had left notes directing their rescuers where to find them. See archived news at <http://bit.ly/2FJCimP> 🔍 👁

February 7

Successful Rescue on Feb. 7, 1957 🍺

ACA Fluorspar Mine Cave-in, Rosiclare, Illinois — Two miners were rescued unhurt after being trapped **90 minutes** behind a wall of ore and waste which spilled into a mine tunnel when a timber support snapped. John Reed and Grant Ralph, both about 40, were freed from a working tunnel of the Aluminum Company of America Fluorspar Mine. Reed was pinned in rock up to his knees. A timber support for an ore bin snapped, allowing several tons of the broken rock to fall into the tunnel at the 300-foot level. 125 men were working on various levels in the mine. See more at <https://bit.ly/3u57BD4> 🔍 👁

February 8

On February 8th we commemorate the anniversary of the **16th deadliest coal mine disaster** in the U.S.A.

**Phelps Dodge and Company
Stag Canon No. 1 Mine Explosion
Dawson, Colfax County, New Mexico**

February 8, 1923

No. Killed - 120

See more at <http://bit.ly/2ARHErz> 🔍 👁

Video — <http://bit.ly/2D2TUvk> 🎥

At about 2:20 p.m., an explosion on the main entry spread out the entry to the drift mouth and over most of the workings, killing 120 of the 122 men underground. The explosion demolished rockdust barriers on the main entry and aircourse without stopping. A locomotive had put two loaded cars on the track after dragging them 100 feet, knocking out several timbers in doing so. The trolley and feed wires came down on the steel cars, and arcs ignited the dense cloud of dust dislodged from the timbers.

On October 22, 1913, 263 miners died in an explosion of the Stag Canon No. 2 Mine, also operated by the Phelps Dodge and Company. This was the **2nd deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States.

February 8

Successful Rescue on Feb. 8, 1912 🍺

With 140 rescuers tearing at the rock and earth blocking the shaft of the **Bunker Hill Mine at Sutter Creek, California**, freedom came at noon on February 8 for sixty-two miners trapped for **23 hours**. Wives and daughters of the trapped men held torches through the nights while rescuers assailed the jam. See more at

<https://bit.ly/2QWXdMa> 🔍👁

February 8

Successful Rescue on Feb. 8, 1977 🍺

Newfield Mine Cave-in, Penn Hills, Pennsylvania — John R. Bazella helped to rescue Donald J. McCully from a cave-in at the Newfield mine of Republic Steel Corporation, Penn Hills, Pennsylvania, February 8, 1977. When a cave-in occurred in the Newfield mine, McCully, 46, was completely buried alongside a mining machine but was able to breathe because the shale and sandstone rock that had fallen was partially supported by collapsed wooden beams. Bazella, 31, coal mine mechanic, and other workmen gathered to assist in the rescue of McCully.

After another machine had removed enough rocks to uncover the end of the collapsed boom of the mining machine, a tunnel was dug by hand alongside the boom. It was necessary to cut through a fallen beam along the way as, with the men crawling in and out, the careful removal of rocks finally extended the tunnel to McCully. Rocks were removed from around him.

As a result of the efforts of Bazella and the other men, McCully then was pulled from under the rock fall via the tunnel — **nine hours** — after the cave-in occurred. **John Bazella**, 31, *coal mine mechanic*; **Thomas V. Damico**, 29, *coal miner*; **Lawrence P. Rankin**, 23, *coal miner*; **Vincent J. Shilobod**, 26, *coal miner*; and **Clayton R. Wall**, 59, *coal miner* were each awarded the Carnegie Hero Medal for their bravery. 🏆 See more at <https://bit.ly/390Awg5> 🔍👁

February 9

Successful Rescue on Feb. 9, 1937 🍺

Robert Johnson spent — **8 days** — without food in utter darkness in an **abandoned Flemington, West Virginia coal mine**. Guided by his weak cries, Bill McDonald, Minor Cleavenger and Lon Smith found the man and brought him out on a stretcher. See more at <http://bit.ly/2sUASDb> 🔍👁

February 9

**Carbon Coal & Coke Company
Cokedale Mine Explosion
Trinidad, Las Animas County, Colorado**

February 9, 1911

No. Killed - 17

See more at <http://bit.ly/2rdC7fO> 🔍👁

Rescuer Death 🧑‍🚒

On February 9, 1911, **E. A. Sutton**, assistant superintendent of the Cokedale mine of the Carbon Coal and Coke Company, Carbondale, Colorado, lost his life while wearing a Draeger helmet-type oxygen breathing apparatus after an explosion in this mine in which 17 men were killed.

For more information regarding fatalities related to self-contained breathing apparatus, visit <https://bit.ly/3ERIWrg> 🔍👁

February 10

Successful Rescue on Feb. 10, 1940 🍺

Independent Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania — Frank Ostroski, 37, was rescued after being trapped for — **49½ hours** — in a cave-in on the property of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company. Frank's brother Boley, 26, was rescued — **14½ hours** — earlier and suffered a broken left leg, a fracture of the left arm, and suffered from shock. The independent mine where the brothers were trapped,

located on Lehigh Valley Coal Company ground, is in the old Morris Ridge section of the abandoned Sayre Colliery workings.

The Ostroski brothers and Thomas Reiner, 21, were in a heading about thirty-five feet from the slope when the accident occurred. The men were engaged in shifting coal with scoop shovels in relays, when the sides of the heading caved in. The falling material knocked the shovel from Reiner's hands, completely covered Boley and entombed Frank Ostroski. Reiner, who barely escaped being caught by the falling material and unable to rescue his buddies single-handed, raced back to town for help. See more at <https://bit.ly/2YI2GHe> 🔍👁

February 10

Successful Rescue on February 10, 1891 🍺

Susquehanna Colliery Inundation, Grand Tunnel, Pennsylvania — Following the firing of a blast, water rushed into the Susquehanna Colliery trapping Michael Schilling, William Cragel, and John Riner. Freedom from the flooded mine came for the trio when rescuers found them after **115 hours**. They had to wait out the **4¾ days** perched on a piece of timber 3 inches wide. When found, the men were almost completely exhausted and would require care to bring them through. See more at <https://bit.ly/3sE2idh> 🔍👁

February 10

Rescuer Deaths on Feb. 10, 1943 🧑‍🚒

Two miners were buried in an initial collapse, which occurred while they were preparing to shoot down a section of the rock suspected of being weak. Six others were buried in a second cave-in, which occurred while they were attempting to dig out the bodies of the first two men.

C. F. & H. Mining Company

Mulcahy Mine Cave-in

Shullsburg, Lafayette County, Wisconsin

February 10, 1943

No. Killed - 8

See more at <http://bit.ly/2YxM5VC> 🔍 👁

February 11

Jefferson and Clearfield Coal Company

Ernest No. 2 Mine Explosion

Ernest, Indiana County, Pennsylvania

February 11, 1916

No. Killed - 27

See more at <http://bit.ly/2OUvyrU> 🔍 👁

At 3:20 in the afternoon an explosion killed 27 men in the section of the mine that was affected and burned 4 others who escaped. The 150 men in other sections and those on the outside were not aware of the explosion until word was brought out.

Gas over falls in a pillar area was ignited by an open light. The force was not great, and the explosion was local. Dust was ignited but did not carry the explosion, as haulageways were damp. Open lights were used, except in some pillar sections and in a section in which an explosion in 1910 killed 12 men.

February 12

Rescuer Deaths on Feb. 12, 1899 🧑‍🚒

Ten brave men were risking their lives endeavoring to reopen the Diamondville No. 1 coal mine. They were all knocked down, one by one, by blackdamp. When help arrived, two were already dead, and the others were resuscitated with great difficulty. The names of the dead were **John L. Russell and Lee Wright**. See more at <http://bit.ly/2YqynDX> 🔍 👁

Diamond Coal and Coke Company

Diamondville No. 1 Mine Asphyxiations

Diamondville, Lincoln County, Wyoming

February 12, 1899

See more at <http://bit.ly/2QlpTug> 🔍 👁

February 13

Rescuer Death on Feb. 13, 1957 🧑‍🚒

Doyak Mine Asphyxiations, Finleyville, Pennsylvania — Two miners suffocated in black damp in a pit just across the Allegheny County line near Finleyville. The victims were brothers-in-law, and mine officials said one apparently died while trying to rescue the other. They were identified as Martin Brandis and George Bero. Both were dead when fellow-miners dragged them from an abandoned borehole a short distance from the main shaft of the Doyak mine, operated by the Curry Coal Co. of Broughton. Another miner, John Webster of Library, had tied a rope around his waist and crawled into the hole 30 inches in diameter-in search of the missing pair, but It was too late. George Boyka, who leases the 23-acre Washington County site to the coal firm, said Mr. Bero apparently had wriggled into the horizontal tunnel to investigate. When he failed to return, he was followed by Mr. Brandis. Both collapsed In the oxygen-starved air. Both victims had reported on the 7 a.m. shift. Their absence was noted around 7:43. See more at <https://bit.ly/3oeHVQT> 🔍👁️

February 14

Rescuer Deaths on Feb. 14, 1921 🧑‍🚒

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.

Sahara Coal Company

Sahara No. 8 Mine Explosion

Eldorado, Saline County, Illinois

February 14, 1921

No. Killed - 3

See more at <http://bit.ly/361PsHG> 🔍👁️

For more information regarding fatalities related to self-contained breathing apparatus, visit <https://bit.ly/3ERlWrg> 🔍👁️

February 14

Anaconda Copper Mining Company Pennsylvania Mine Fire Butte, Silver Bow County, Montana

February 14, 1916

No. Killed - 21

See more at <http://bit.ly/33QXgde> 🔍 👁

Rescuer Deaths 🧑‍🚒

A fire was discovered between the 800- and 1,400-foot levels in the vicinity of the downcast air shaft of the Pennsylvania Mine on February 14, 1916. Subsequently, two men lost their lives while wearing Draeger apparatus during rescue and recovery work. It is thought that 19 men who were unable to escape died from suffocation.

For more information regarding fatalities related to self-contained breathing apparatus, visit <https://bit.ly/3ERIWrg> 🔍 👁

February 14

Successful Rescue on Feb. 14, 1993 🍺

Abandoned Mine Animal Rescue, Tooele County, Utah — On February 14, several members of the Tooele County Search and Rescue were called and asked to participate in an unusual rescue. **A lion hunter and his dogs had chased two mountain lions to an abandoned mine.** One dog and both lions fell down an 80-foot-deep vertical shaft. The dog was miraculously lassoed and pulled from the shaft the day before, however, the two lions remained trapped. Randy Calliccoat was repelled into the shaft by members of the rescue team with the very much alive lions. A tranquilizer dart was used to incapacitate the two animals. The lions were then hoisted from the 80-foot shaft. See more at <https://bit.ly/2XmbEwS> 🔍 👁

February 16

In memory of those killed in the Greenwich Collieries No. 1 Mine in 1984.



Pennsylvania Mines Corporation
Greenwich Collieries No. 1 Mine Explosion
Green Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania

February 16, 1984

No. Killed - 3

See more at <http://bit.ly/2SNyFm4> 🔍 👁

At about 4:30 a.m. a shuttle car operator warned other miners working on D-5 that he had heard a strange sound and then rose to leave the mine. But immediately upon standing up, the alarmed shuttle car operator was knocked down and severely burned by an explosion ripping through D-1, D-3, and D-5. Three other D-5 miners were also severely burned. Nevertheless, the entire D-5 crew survived. All three D-3 miners, however, perished in the explosion.

February 16

Rescuer Deaths on Feb. 16, 1926 🧑‍🚒

Immediately after the blast, Cecil Fulkerson, manager, led a squad of rescue men into the pit. With him were Archie and Leonard Huter and George Brandon, Jr., whose fathers were killed in the explosion. Archie Huter, Brandon, and two others were asphyxiated by blackdamp. Fulkerson and Leonard Huter were overcome by the gas, and their condition was serious.

Nelson Creek Coal Company
Nelson Mine Explosion
Nelson Creek, Muhlenberg County, Kentucky

February 16, 1926

No. Killed - 8

See more at <http://bit.ly/2QnEgPO> 🔍 👁

February 16

Pacific Coast Coal Company Cannon Mine Inundation Franklin County, Washington

February 16, 1914

See more at <http://bit.ly/38fJOTt> 🔍👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

Andrew Churnick, 50, was killed by an inrush of water and gravel in No. 11 chute on the water level in the Gem seam. His body was recovered 4 days later near the first crosscut in the No. 12 chute. His partner, Mike Bobchurnick, was rescued after being imprisoned for — **7 days** — near the 6th crosscut in the same chute.

February 16

Wilmington Coal, Mining and Mfg. Co. Diamond Mine Inundation Braidwood, Will County, Illinois

February 16, 1883

No. Killed - 69

See more at <http://bit.ly/2RnGVKp> 🔍👁

The tragedy was unique as it was devastating. A section of prairie land, forty by ninety feet, over which the floods had extended until the water stood three or four feet deep, suddenly caved in, the result being the instantaneous flooding of a mine in which 300 men and boys were at work. Inside of half an hour the water had extended to all parts of the workings.

February 17

Successful Rescue on Feb. 17, 1932 🍺

Bootleg Anthracite Mine Cave-in, Pottsville, Pennsylvania — **24 hours** after he was pinned under a coal and rock fall in an abandoned tunnel of anthracite mine, Joseph Petorick was tugged free and brought to the surface. He was still conscious

and apparently not badly hurt. A first aid squad immediately rushed him to a Pottsville hospital for examination and treatment for exposure.

Petorick was said to have gone into the mine by a little used tunnel with three companions to bootleg coal for their families. The others escaped the cave-in. When the colliery officials heard Petorick was trapped, they assembled eight of the most skilled miners at the plant to dig through the tunnel, little more than a crevice through the rocky hillside, toward the entombed man. See more at <https://bit.ly/3YmnEYY>



February 19

Successful Rescue on Feb. 19, 1897 🍺

Reliance Mine Lost Person, Shamokin, Pennsylvania — After wandering around the dark underground chambers of the Reliance mine for — **four days** —, Willie Majorisik, age 11, was rescued in an exhausted condition by a party of miners. The boy had been without food, drink, or light. Majorisik entered the mine with two companions by way of an old drift, but he got separated from them while stopping to light his lamp. He failed to get a light and wandered about seeking an exit until he dropped in exhaustion. See more at <https://bit.ly/3kxtxSD>



February 20

Successful Rescue on Feb. 20, 1933 🍺

Lucky Baldwin Mine Fall of Person, Placerville, California — Lester Simmons, engaged with companions, climbed about 30 feet down the shaft, part of the abandoned Lucky Baldwin mine, to bring out some iron ore. He slipped from the ladder, his friends said, and fell about 5 feet before his clothes caught on a piece of timber. He dangled in the shaft for an **undisclosed period**, which mining men said was between 1,000 and 1,500 feet deep, until his companions lowered a rope and brought him to the surface. See more at <https://bit.ly/2OTtSkY>



February 20

Honoring the memory of 19 miners that were killed in 1884 in West Leisenring, Pennsylvania. 🛐

**Connellsville Coal and Iron Company
West Leisenring Mine Explosion
West Leisenring, Fayette County, Pennsylvania**

February 20, 1884

No. Killed - 19

See more at <http://bit.ly/2DwhX3g> 🔍👁

February 20

Honoring the memory of 19 miners that were killed in 1884 in West Leisenring, Pennsylvania. 🛐

**Connellsville Coal and Iron Company
West Leisenring Mine Explosion
West Leisenring, Fayette County, Pennsylvania**

February 20, 1884

No. Killed - 19

See more at <http://bit.ly/2DwhX3g> 🔍👁

February 20

On February 20th we commemorate the anniversary of the **22nd deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States. 🛐

**George and Everett Schuler, owners
Virginia City Mine Explosion
Virginia City, Jefferson County, Alabama**

February 20, 1905

No. Killed - 112

See more at <http://bit.ly/2E8qCaX> 🔍👁

"The chief inspector expresses his belief that a windy shot was made by one of the miners in the 5th entry left, in which too much dynamite or powder was used. This shot caused a dust explosion. The damage to the mine was not serious. In the Flat Top mines, where 154 state convicts are worked, besides many county convicts, they found that short fuses were being used, and mining rules not strictly carried out. Coal dust was reported, and the operators were instructed to sprinkle the mine and take out an accumulation of dust."

February 21

Raleigh-Wyoming Mining Company Glen Rogers No. 2 Mine Explosion Glen Rogers, West Virginia

February 21, 1934

No. Killed - 4

See more at <https://bit.ly/34Tozdb> 🔍👁

Successful Rescue 🍺🍷

38 miners were rescued from behind a barricade **several hours** after an explosion in the Glen Rogers No. 2 mine in West Virginia. Four miners were killed in the incident.

See more at <https://bit.ly/3tvcbKr> 🔍👁

February 22

Successful Rescue on Feb. 22, 1912 🍺

Western Coal and Iron No. 5 Mine Fire, McAlester, Oklahoma — Mexican youth, Reifne Rodriguez, was rewarded for his bravery by the United Mine Workers' 21st district executive board. When it was discovered that the No. 5 mine was on fire, Rodriguez ran through the workings warning all 100 workmen except for 9 of the danger allowing them to exit before the fire gained headway. Nine miners died from suffocation in the fire. For his bravery, the board authorized to set aside sufficient funds for the education of the young Mexican. See more at <http://bit.ly/3nQfhCP>



February 23

The tale of William A. "Big Bill" Murphy, the hero of the 1911 Belmont Mine Fire.

Tonopah-Belmont Company

Belmont Mine Fire

Tonopah, Nye County, Nevada

February 23, 1911

No. Killed - 17

See more at <http://bit.ly/2ASejNt> 🔍 👁

Rescuer Death 🧑‍🚒

William A. "Big Bill" Murphy, a 28-year-old cage operator, twice successfully descended into the Belmont Mine inferno to bring confused and unconscious co-workers to the surface. Said to say, "he was nearly done in," he made his third descent into the mine. This would be his last. In 2006, a statue was erected and dedicated in Tonopah to "Big Bill," the hero of the Belmont Mine Fire.

February 24

Successful Rescue on Feb. 24, 1942 🍺

Unnamed Mine Cave-in, Mecur, Utah — Three miners were rescued after — **49 hours** — of imprisonment behind a mud slide that blocked the mouth of the tunnel where they had been working. The men, Mark and Max Jorgenson and William Peterson blinked at the sunlight as they emerged and told of "just waiting" while their rescuers drilled thru a rock wall to reach them. See more at <https://bit.ly/33kn732>



February 25

Federal Mining and Smelting Company

North Star Gold/Silver Mine Snowslide

Hailey, Blaine County, Idaho

February 25, 1917

No. Killed - 16

See more at <http://bit.ly/2RqpSYd> 🔍 👁

Sixteen men were killed when a giant snowslide destroyed the bunkhouse, compressor houses and warehouse of the North Star mine, 12 miles northeast of Hailey, Idaho. A fall of two and one-half feet of snow during the previous three days, followed by rain, had resulted in numerous slides in the North Star district.

February 26

Rescuer Death on Feb. 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**. See more at <http://bit.ly/2QG9eCY> 🔍 👁

For more information regarding fatalities related to self-contained breathing apparatus, visit <https://bit.ly/3ERlWrg> 🔍 👁

February 26

Buffalo Mining Company Retaining Dam Collapse Saunders, Logan County, West Virginia

February 26, 1972

No. Killed - 125

See more at <http://bit.ly/2D5uZHy> 🔍 👁

Listen - <http://bit.ly/2D3Wh0V> 🎧

A coal refuse retaining dam near the mouth of Middle Fork, Saunders, Logan County, West Virginia, failed about 8 a.m., Saturday, February 26, 1972. The dam failure released water, refuse, and silt into the valley traversed by Buffalo Creek and created havoc in the narrow valley.

The flooding resulted in the confirmed deaths of 125 persons, destruction of 502 permanent home structures and 44 mobile homes, major damage to 268 additional permanent home structures and 42 mobile homes, and minor damage to 270

additional homes along Buffalo Creek from Saunders to Man, West Virginia, a distance of about 17 miles.

MSHA 50th Anniversary Memorial - <https://bit.ly/3hh1S5C> 🔍 👁

More Audio Files:

<https://bit.ly/3501ENT> 🎧

<https://bit.ly/3t3OQ0U> 🎧

February 27

On February 27th we commemorate the anniversary of the Smith No. 3 mine explosion in Carbon County, Montana. ✚

Montana Coal and Iron Company Smith No. 3 Mine Explosion

Located between the towns of **Bearcreek and Washoe, Carbon County, Montana**
February 27, 1943

No. Killed - 74

See more at <http://bit.ly/2E9mPdA> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

As told in the book "Red Lodge Saga of a Western Area" by Shirley Zupan and Harry J. Owens, three miners were rescued from the Smith No. 3 mine disaster. At the time of the explosion, Alex Hawthorne, Willard Reid, and Eli Houtonen felt unusual pressure in their ears with no sound. A terrible wind came at them from inside the mine, blowing debris. Hawthorne reached a phone and sent word that something was wrong, and that he was coming out. He was then overcome by gas. Reid and Houtonen were knocked off their feet by the force of the wind. Reid managed to get up and tried to waken Houtonen. Guided by Reid's lamp, rescue men found the three and took them above ground. The three survived the explosion; 74 others did not.

February 28

Liberty Bell Mining Company Liberty Bell Mine Avalanche Telluride, San Miguel County, Colorado

February 28, 1902

No. Killed - 19

See more at <https://bit.ly/33umyzM> 🔍 👁

Rescuer Deaths on Feb. 28, 1902 🧑‍🚒

As many as 3 rescuers were killed when a second avalanche hit the Liberty Bell mine at Telluride. In all, 19 miners were killed on February 28 when the buildings and equipment were smashed, and lives were dashed by 4 separate snow slides.

February 28

Successful Rescue on Feb. 28, 1913 🧑‍🚒

Draper Colliery Inundation, Gilberton, Pennsylvania — Three miners were imprisoned for — **3 days and 3 nights** — when the Mahonoy River flooded the Draper Colliery near Gilberton, Pennsylvania. The face of an old breast collapsed allowing the river to flow in upon them. The rescued miners were Joseph Drobos, William Kokas, and John Servillas. See more at <http://bit.ly/37j5XCG> 🔍 👁