

Famous December Mining Incidents

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December

December has produced **71 mine disasters** with 5 or more fatalities.

See more at <http://bit.ly/2S8ZWzb> 🔍👁

The **top 3 deadliest disasters** were:

Monongah (WV) - 362 dead

Darr (PA) - 239 dead

Orient No. 2 (IL) - 119 dead

December

December Mine Disaster Calendar 📅

Be sure to visit our December 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/2UwriBR> 🔍 👁

December 1

United Coal Company Naomi Mine Explosion Fayette City, Fayette County, Pennsylvania

December 1, 1907

No. Killed - 34

See more at <http://bit.ly/2r1UWTd> 🔍 👁

The work of rescue was made exceedingly difficult by the fact that the main entrance to the mine had been effectively blocked by the fallen roof and by the deadly fumes of the after damp that filled the shaft in which the rescuers were working and against which it was impossible to battle long at one time. Many of the passageways were blocked by old timbers that had been blown down.

December 2

Diamond Coal and Coke Company Diamondville No. 1 Mine Explosion Diamondville, Lincoln County, Wyoming

December 2, 1905

No. Killed - 18

See more at <http://bit.ly/2Y3Ws3t> 🔍 👁

Through telephonic communication with the mine offices at Diamondville it is learned that 18 men, all who were in the mine, were killed. Nearly all of these were English miners, who came to the Wyoming mines direct from England. At 11 o'clock Saturday five bodies had been recovered. Had the full night shift been at work in the mine, the loss of life probably would have been appalling.

December 3

Successful Rescue on Dec. 3, 1981 🍺

Stillhouse Run No. 1 Mine Roof Fall, Bergoo, West Virginia — On December 3, 1981, a roof fall occurred that resulted in the deaths of Robert Bennett, Doyle Gillis, and Donald Arbogast. Rescuers found Donzil Cutlip, 27, pinned under the block about **seven hours** after the fall, but it took **six more hours** to free him (**13 hours**

total). He was in serious condition after surgery to repair deep gashes in both arms. Larry Clevenger, 18, and Carl Hull, 24, were rescued earlier and were unhurt. Clevenger said the seven hours before rescuers found him was "the worst thing that ever happened to me." See more at <https://bit.ly/3nUBgLk> 🔍👁 or <https://bit.ly/3luJa5S> 🔍👁

December 4

Cardiff Coal Company Horton Mine Fire Horton, Kanawha County, West Virginia

December 4, 1905

No. Killed – 7

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

Successful Rescue 🍺

Seven miners who were in the more remote sections of the Cardiff Coal Company's Horton mine were unable to get out and were overcome by smoke. After an **undisclosed period**, they were rescued, but only two of these men could be revived after being brought out.

December 4

December 4, 1980

Four teenagers found suffocated in abandoned California mine.

Four teenage cousins exploring deep in the catacombs of a long-abandoned coal mine were suffocated by carbon dioxide.

Officials identified the youths as Joel Faulkner, 17, his brother, Dell, 16, both of Antioch, and their cousins, Gary Faulkner, 19, a Navy sailor stationed at San Diego, and his brother, Greg, 18, of Willits.

The four were found dead more than a mile inside the Nortonville Mine, near the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, about 50 miles east of San Francisco in what used to be the state's largest coal mining region. See more at

<https://bit.ly/4c1iauf> 🔍👁

December 5

Successful Rescue on Dec. 5, 1936 🍺

Pioche No. 3 Mine Cave-in, Pioche, Nevada — Six miners were rescued from a cave-in in the Pioche No. 3 mine after an **undisclosed period**. The first three were freed uninjured during the overnight hours and the last three were rescued shortly after noon. Only one the last three was injured having been buried to his chin in broken rock. One of his arms and 4 of his ribs were broken. See more at <https://bit.ly/33OTt6f> 🔍 👁

December 6

On December 6th we commemorate the anniversary of **the deadliest coal mine disaster** that has occurred in the United States. ✝️ 🙏

**Fairmont Coal Company
Monongah Mine Explosion
Monongah, Marion County, West Virginia**

December 6, 1907

No. Killed - 362

See more at <http://bit.ly/2L4D66v> 🔍 👁

Audio - <http://bit.ly/2L4FU3A> 🎧

The No. 6 and No. 8 Mines were slope openings about 1¼ miles apart. The mines were ventilated separately but were connected so that each mine could be ventilated from either opening in case of necessity.

On that Friday morning, 367 men were in the mine and work progressed as usual until 10:28 a.m. when the explosion killed nearly all the men, wrecked the ventilation system, smashed motors, and cars, and destroyed the No. 8 openings, together with the boiler house and fan, but did little damage to the No. 6 slope. **Four men escaped through an outcrop opening and 1 man was rescued.** Rescue crews restored ventilation by building brattices to conduct the air from No. 6 fan. Three fires were found and extinguished with water. All props and timbers were blown down, causing heavy falls of roof, except in one entry.

December 6

December 6 is also the anniversary of the horrific Robena mine explosions which killed 37 miners in Greene County, Pennsylvania in 1962. 🏛️ 🙏

U. S. Steel Corporation Robena No. 3 Mine Explosions Carmichaels, Greene County, Pennsylvania

December 6, 1962

No. Killed - 37

See more at <http://bit.ly/2Kwo4Zq> 🔍 👁️

December 6

December 6th is National Miners' Day 🍺

In 2009, Congress proclaimed that each December 6th would be recognized in remembrance of the 1907 Monongah coal mine disaster which resulted in the deaths of 362 miners.

See more:

Video - <http://bit.ly/33CKzU4> 🎬

Monongah Disaster - <http://bit.ly/2L4D66v> 🔍 👁️

MSHA Observance - <http://bit.ly/2WYdfEo> 🔍 👁️

December 7

In memory of the eight miners needlessly killed in this 1981 mine explosion. 🏛️ 🙏

Adkins Coal Company No. 11 Mine Explosion Kite, Knott County, Kentucky

December 7, 1981

No. Killed - 8

See more at <http://bit.ly/2wvY2Bn> 🔍 👁️

MSHA investigators concluded that a coal dust explosion occurred when a blown-out shot from the right corner blasthole of the No. 1 entry face on the south main

section ignited coal dust that had been put into suspension by the blasts of this face and the face of the right crosscut.

December 7

Albuquerque and Cerrillos Coal Company

Morgan Jones Mine Explosion

Madrid, Santa Fe County, New Mexico

December 7, 1932

No. Killed - 14

See more at <http://bit.ly/2r3HkXL> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

Following the first impact of the explosion, some ten men near the outer edge of the area made a dash for the main passageway. Three of these, including Jimmie Taylor, 19, son of H. L. Taylor, assistant superintendent of the company's Madrid mines, were overcome. They were picked up and carried out safely by their comrades. Andrew Sampria, rushing out, picked up a prostrate form and carried it with him. When he had reached the area of clean air, he learned that it was his own son, Pete, he had rescued.

December 7

This incident continues to haunt me thinking about this sole survivor being **trapped for more than two weeks with 5 dead guys** following a cave-in. 💀 👻

Edison Power Company

Edison Camp No. 1 Tunnel Cave-in

Bakersfield, Kern County, California

December 7, 1906

No. Killed - 5

See more at <http://bit.ly/2JaCwa2> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

Rescuers worked around the clock to release Lindsay B. Hicks from his tomb in the Edison Tunnel near Bakersfield, California. Trapped there with five other miners on December 7, Hicks' freedom finally came after his **15-day entrapment**. He was the only survivor. On December 12, speaking through a pipe, Hicks told rescuers

that he had survived on 40 cents of chewing tobacco. Victory finally came for his rescuers on December 22nd at 11:25 p.m.

December 8

Given the year, here's another one that should have never happened. 🏠 🙏

Grundy Mining Company, Inc.

No. 21 Mine Explosion

Whitewell, Marion County, Tennessee

December 8, 1981

No. Killed - 13

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

It was concluded that a miner using a cigarette lighter ignited the methane-air mixture, causing the explosion. Apparently, the miners saw the burning flame front just after ignition. This observation is supported by the fact that 12 of the 13 victims were headed outby when they were overcome by the explosion. In further support of this conclusion, personal effects (miners' hats, a hammer, two flame safety lamps, and a jacket) were located inby the bodies of the victims.

December 9

Offering prayers for the thirty-seven miners that lost their lives in the Francisco No. 2 mine explosion and fire. 🏠 🙏

Francisco Coal Company

Francisco No. 2 Mine Explosion and Fire

Francisco, Gibson County, Indiana

December 9, 1926

No. Killed - 37

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

December 9

Harlan Fuel Company Zero Mine Explosion Yancey, Harlan County, Kentucky

December 9, 1932

No. Killed - 23

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

A coal dust explosion occurred and resulted in the death of 23 men. Eight men died of carbon monoxide, while others were severely burned. The explosion originated in a crosscut between rooms 5 and 6, 1st left off 2 South. Two holes were fired in the crosscut, both of which blew through as holes were drilled on the solid and within 14 inches of being drilled through. Both were windy shots; but the second ignited coal dust, which propagated an explosion over almost one-third of the mine before forces died away.

December 9

Commemorating the 125th Anniversary of the Carbon Hill No. 7 Mine Explosion in Washington 🏛️ 🙏

Carbon Hill Coal Company Carbon Hill No. 7 Mine Explosion Carbonado, Pierce County, Washington

December 9, 1899

No. Killed - 31

See more at <http://bit.ly/2OFz0Xa> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🧑🚒

Two men were rescued — **more than 18 hours** — after the explosion. They were Peter Merp, a Frenchman, and Michael Kulsh, a Pole. Merp had been blindly groping around in the darkness most of the night on his hands and knees, seeking for some avenue of escape.

December 9

Great Northern Development Company Copper Mountain Avalanche Cordova, Alaska

December 9, 1912

No. Killed - 9

See more at <http://bit.ly/2LaS3qh> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

Nine miners were killed when a snow slide on Copper Mountain carried away seven buildings of the Great Northern Development Company. Two miners, John McCarthy and a Japanese named Kee, were rescued after an **undisclosed period**. McCarthy was seriously injured about the body and Kee's legs were broken.

December 9

Successful Rescue on Dec. 9, 1970 🍺

Leckie Coal Company Mine Cave-in, Anjean, West Virginia — On December 9, 1970, Loren Hinkle was rescued from his **24-hour roof fall entrapment**. Rescuers delivered water and orange juice through a two-inch emergency air vent while they dug him out. Killed in the accident were R. B. Crookshanks and Charles Pitzenbarger. Ironically, Hinkle had previously escaped death in a mine fire and another roof collapse. See archived news for more at <http://bit.ly/2LFreJw> 🔍 👁

December 9

On December 9th we commemorate the anniversary of the **35th deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States. ✚ 🙏

Knoxville Iron Company Cross Mountain Mine Explosion Briceville, Anderson County, Tennessee

December 9, 1911

No. Killed - 84

See more at <http://bit.ly/2L3mZGf> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

Four miners were found alive after an **undisclosed period** following an explosion in the Cross Mountain mine at Briceville, Tennessee. Discovery of Andrew Johnson was made when a dead miner was found in a sitting position in one of the interior chambers. Johnson and the other three were suffering from blackdamp.

December 10

On December 10th we commemorate the anniversary of the Overton No. 2 mine explosion in Alabama. 🛖 🙏

Alabama Fuel and Iron Company Overton No. 2 Mine Explosion Acmar, St. Clair County, Alabama

December 10, 1925

No. Killed - 53

See more at <http://bit.ly/2Ja9SG2> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue (by mule) 🍺

A Negro miner owed his escape to his mule. Back somewhere in the pit when the gas was worst and conditions appeared darkest for the entombed men, out through the slope opening flashed a big fat mule. Clinging to the mule's tail was the Negro who had become temporarily blinded by the blast and took this means of saving himself. **He said he knew the mule would "get out if there was any getting."**

December 11

M. S. & W. Coal Company No. 2 Slope Mine Explosion Carlstown, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania

December 11, 1985

No. Killed - 3

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

Rescuer Death 🚒

Rick Wolfgang helped his injured brother from the No. 2 Slope of the M. S. & W. Coal Company but perished when he returned to the 4-foot-wide tunnel to try to save his father, Gene Wolfgang. Toxic gas flooded the area after the men set off a dynamite charge in the mine. Frank Benner also perished in the accident.

December 11

Successful Rescue on Dec. 11, 1969 🍺

Arkwright No. 1 Mine Roof Fall, Granville, West Virginia — William Nabors was rescued after spending — **five hours** — trapped deep in the Christopher Coal Company's Arkwright No. 1 mine, which tunnels through Granville and Indian Creek, West Virginia. Nabors, 60, of Cheat Creek in Monongalia county, and two other miners on a work shift of 125, were operating a continuous mining machine, when the roof collapsed. Robert Moss, 30, and William Crigler, 40, escaped the massive slate fall with minor injuries, but Nabors was entombed beneath a maze of slate. Work stopped at the mine, and rescue workers began a piece-by-piece task of tunneling to Nabors, who remained in contact with them and a physician, Dr. Jerome Johnson, throughout his ordeal. Nabors was removed from the mine and transported to the West Virginia University Hospital University hospital where his condition was described as "good." See more at <https://bit.ly/36768Tc> 🔍👁

December 12

Successful Rescue on Dec. 12, 1936 🍺

Neighborhood Coal Hole Rescue, Scranton, Pennsylvania — The drive for legislation to prevent mine caves was given impetus with the rescue of four persons from a 35-foot pit in their own back yard and announcement of a program by the Scranton Surface Protective Association. **Guido Ciaucci, 12, walked into his backyard and plunged headlong into the pit, caused by a mine cave-in. His sister, 19, answered his cries for help and also was trapped. She was followed by Mrs. Mary Zibi, 40, and her daughter, Esther, 5.** Firemen rescued them with ladders. The protective association, pioneer in the fight to prevent caves, adopted a legislative program calling for creation of a State Anthracite Commission to have powers over the principal problems of the industry. The commission would deal with cave problems, mining and marketing, control of bootleg mining, and would study means to halt unemployment. See more at <https://bit.ly/3dHahxt>



December 13

Reedy and Ryan Coal Company Fidelity No. 9 Mine Explosion Stone City, Cherokee County, Kansas

December 13, 1916

No. Killed - 20

See more at <http://bit.ly/35XyKZm> 🔍 👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

Eleven miners were rescued from the Fidelity No. 9 mine after an **undisclosed period**. Overcome by the toxic gases, these men had to be resuscitated by pulmotor. Some of those rescued were badly burned. It occurred on the 13th of the month, but it wasn't a Friday. 🐱

December 14

Successful Rescue on Dec. 14, 2011 🍺

Lucky Friday Mine Rock Burst, Mullen, Idaho — Seven miners were pulled safely from the Lucky Friday mine after an **undisclosed period** following a sudden rock burst which left them injured more than a mile below the surface. Hecla Limited officials said this incident did not appear to be connected to blasting activity in the underground shaft. Hecla Vice President Melanie Hennessey said the miners were installing a safety system to contain rock bursts when precisely the kind of burst the company was seeking to protect against occurred. Such a burst, a spontaneous fracture in the rock, can be triggered by blasting in deep mines, or by "seismic activity," she said in an interview. See more at <https://bit.ly/3nXPgE9>



December 14

This disaster is not included on the CDC/NIOSH list; however, it was found in the Annual Report of the West Virginia Department of Mines.

Pulaski Iron Company Pulaski Mine Powder Explosion Eckman, McDowell County, West Virginia

December 14, 1906

No. Killed - 6

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

At the Pulaski Mine at Eckman in McDowell County, a carload of about **400 kegs of powder** had been unloaded into four mine cars and was being hauled to the magazine by an electric motor attached to the cars.

The men who had been engaged in unloading the powder were riding on the mine cars, some on the kegs of powder.

Just as the trip of cars was passing a tenement house the powder exploded, due to the electric current forming an arc with some of the powder cans.

One woman was by a window within the house, and another woman was in the yard near the house at the time of the explosion. The house was demolished and the women and the men on the trip of cars so badly burned that the two women and four of the men died, one man dying while enroute to the Miners' Hospital at Welch and the others dying at the Hospital.

Deceased:

Steel, Joseph (Male, age 19; Single)

Witcher, James (Male, age 34; Married; 3 Children)

Mullins, Ad. (Male, age 22; Single)

Finey, Alex (Male, age 36; Married)

Rhodes, Parthena (Female, Non-employee; Married; 2 Children)

Johnson, Martha A. (Female, Non-employee; Married; 1 Child)

Source: 1907 Annual Report of the WV Dept. of Mines

You can see the NIOSH list at <https://bit.ly/3smLiGB> 🔍 👁

December 15

Wyatt Coal Company

Laing No. 1 Surface Haulage Disaster

Laing, Kanawha County, West Virginia

December 15, 1942

No. Killed - 5

See more at <http://bit.ly/2Y9IRrh> 🔍 👁

Fourteen coal miners took a terrifying ride down a mountainside on a man-hoist out of control today, at a cost of five lives and injury to six men. The only miner to escape remained with the speeding car to the bottom of the 1,620-foot incline from the Wyatt Coal Company's mine at Laing on Cabin Creek. All the others jumped and were either killed or hurt.

December 16

Rocky Mountain Fuel Company Vulcan Mine Explosion New Castle, Garfield County, Colorado

December 16, 1913

No. Killed - 37

See more at <http://bit.ly/33M5zXN> 🔍 👁

Of the forty men working in the mine only two escaped, and they chanced to be in an upper gallery away from the main workings. The men who were in the lower levels were terribly burned and mangled, and though most of the bodies have been recovered, identification proceeds very slowly.

December 16

On December 16th we commemorate the anniversary of the **58th deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States. ✚ 🙏

Yolande Coal and Coke Company Yolande No. 1 Mine Explosion Yolande, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama

December 16, 1907

No. Killed - 57

See more at <http://bit.ly/2JjH5Pg> 🔍 👁

Yolande Mine is a few miles from Virginia City, where a similar explosion occurred two years earlier when 112 men were killed. The Yolande Coal and Coke Company, owner of the mine, is headed by Dr. G. B. Crowe of Birmingham.

December 17

On December 17 we commemorate the anniversary of the **53rd deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States. 🕊️ 🙏

Old Town Mining Company

Old Town Mine Explosion

McAlester, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma

December 17, 1929

No. Killed - 61

See more at <http://bit.ly/2Ja7b7o> 🔍 👁️

Successful Rescue 🍺

Two miners found their exit blocked after the explosion. At this point, one of these men, Frank Gonzales, saw a third miner, Arnold Kissinger, collapse. Mr. Gonzales and the second miner, Joe Ponsella, next dragged Mr. Kissinger into a room where there wasn't much smoke and worked with him for about three hours, "After a while, said Gonzales, when no one came to help us, we believed we would die. I said my prayers, but I was not scared." Rescue workers reached the three men **five hours** after the explosion.

December 17

Successful Rescue on Dec. 17, 1942 🍺

Consolidation Coal Mine No. 32 Cave-in, Shinnston, West Virginia — A slate fall at the number 32 mine of the Consolidation Coal Company trapped five miners for **11 hours**. The rescue crew needed to dig thru 90 feet of slate and earth. The men, **George Horsey, Henry Mullinaex, Louis Mazza, Walter Watson, and Carl Debarr** were not injured although exhausted by the ordeal. Faint tappings on the shaft walls encouraged the rescuers all day until a hole was drilled into the chamber where they were trapped, and the trapped miners took turns talking to the rescue squads. See more at <https://bit.ly/3fEDkCG> 🔍 👁️

December 18

Susquehanna Coal Company

Nanticoke No. 1 Mine

Inrush of Quicksand

Nanticoke, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

December 18, 1885

No. Killed - 26

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

Successful Rescue 🍺

Of the dead, many were fathers and sons of families throughout Nanticoke. One family lost three sons in the disaster, with the fourth being rescued "with difficulty," according to the Wilkes-Barre Record.

December 19

On December 19th we commemorate the anniversary of the **4th deadliest coal mine disaster** in the United States. 🏠 🙏

Pittsburg Coal Company

Darr Mine Explosion

Van Meter, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

December 19, 1907

No. Killed - 239

See more at <http://bit.ly/2L45iXe> 🔍 👁

The Darr Mine was the site of one of the deadliest mining disasters in the nation. On December 19, 1907, a gas and dust explosion killed 239 miners. An inquiry into the disaster afterwards concluded, as was usually the case, that the Pittsburg Coal Company was not at fault. The explosion was presumed to have occurred in an area that the Fire Boss had cordoned off, but a group of miners had entered anyway carrying open flame mine lamps. This finding was not accepted by all involved: a number of those investigating the disaster could not agree on exactly where the explosion occurred. Secondly, the company permitted the use of open flame mine lamps in the mine, a practice it abandoned after the horrible events at the Darr Mine.

December 19

Emery Mining Corporation

Wilberg Mine Fire

Orangeville, Emery County, Utah

December 19, 1984

No. Killed - 27

See more at <http://bit.ly/37rwif5> 🔍 👁

Twenty-seven miners and company personnel died in this tragic mine fire. The company officials were in the mine to observe as workers tried to set a 24-hour world production record. Emery spokesman Bob Henrie downplayed the production speedup, saying there was "absolutely no correlation" between the record attempt and the fire. Included in those killed was one woman, Nannette Wheeler.

December 19

Langdon-Heshey Coal Mining Company

Egypt Mine Explosion

Cumnock, Lee County, North Carolina

Dec. 19, 1895

No. Killed - 39

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

Successful Rescue 🍺

After pumping fresh air into the shafts following the Egypt mine explosion, several miners were prevailed upon to venture down and investigate. They found and brought out 24 men from shafts Nos. 2 and 3. Five or six of them were badly wounded and some of them would probably die; others were slightly wounded.

December 19

Successful Rescue on Dec. 19, 1916 🍺

Oliphant-Johnson No. 1 Mine Explosion, Bruceville, Indiana — 42 miners were rescued from behind two barricades **2¾ hours** after an explosion in the Oliphant-Johnson No. 1 Mine at Bruceville, Indiana. There were 25 miners in one group and 17 in another. Two miners were killed in this incident. See more at

<https://bit.ly/3tvcbKr> 🔍 👁

December 20

Fidelity Coal and Mining Company

Fidelity No. 1 Mine Explosives Detonation

Stone City, Cherokee County, Kansas

December 20, 1906

No. Killed - 7

See more at <http://bit.ly/2DK9s4Y> 🔍 👁

The men at this mine were just going to work at the time of the accident. The train of trip cars was ready and as the motor started, there came an explosion, followed immediately by another and severe one, and later by a third and lighter one.

December 20

Successful Rescue on Dec. 20, 1909 🍺

Negaunee Iron Mine Cave-in, Negaunee, Michigan — Frank Cobdello, entombed for — **7 days** — in the depths of the Negaunee mine, was rescued alive. He was found in a pocket behind the cave-in which had trapped him and Peter Mundi. The latter's dead body was beside Cobdello's barely conscious form. Two others were trapped in the same incident, Victor Mattila and Peter Makki. The body of Victor Mattila was recovered on the 23rd, terribly crushed. No further word was found on the location of Peter Makki. See more at <https://bit.ly/39KfR0K> 🔍👁

In 1902, ten miners were killed in a cave-in at this mine. See more at <http://bit.ly/2YIIF3e> 🔍👁

December 21

Commemorating the anniversary of the 18th deadliest coal mine disaster in the nation. 🏠

**Chicago, Wilmington and Franklin Coal Company
Orient No. 2 Mine Explosion
West Frankfort, Franklin County, Illinois**

December 21, 1951

No. Killed - 119

See more at <http://bit.ly/2L3DVMN> 🔍👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

One miner, Cecil Sanders, was rescued after — **60 hours** — from the Orient No. 2 coal mine in West Frankfort, Illinois following an explosion which killed 119. At that time, this disaster was the nation's deadliest in the preceding 23 years.

December 21

Successful Rescue on Dec. 21, 1964 🍺

Buttercup Mine Avalanche, Fairfield, Idaho — 10 persons were rescued after an **undisclosed period** from the Buttercup mine, off Willow Creek road northeast of Fairfield, by Sawtooth rangers Smithy and Darrell Smith. A series of snow slides and avalanches buried four pickups, a 1½ ton truck, other mine equipment, and part of an ore trestle was destroyed. The president of the Russco Silver Company, that operates the mine, called the rangers to investigate the conditions at the mine. Two small slides had already occurred and partly destroyed the ore tie and buried the truck. The rangers came out and reported that the conditions were extremely hazardous and suggested getting people out of the mine. The rangers went back in a four-wheel drive vehicle, following Osborn on the cat. A series of slides separated the cat and truck with snow about 17 feet deep before they reached the mine. They rescued the personnel at the mine a short time before eight slides buried the pickups under the snow and brought them out in a Forest Service vehicle. See more at <https://bit.ly/3wVzkFK> 🔍👁

December 21

Successful Rescue on Dec. 21, 1967 🍺

Carley V. Porter Tunnel Cave-in, Gorman, California — Rescue workers broke through tons of rubble and rescued 17 sandhogs entrapped in the collapse of a construction tunnel deep beneath the snowy Tehachapi Mountains. The 17 trapped men, uninjured and seemingly untroubled by their ordeal, were caught by a rock and mudslide — **17 hours** — earlier in the Carley V. Porter tunnel as they prepared to end their shift. They had been isolated 125 feet underground inside a milelong, 20-foot-wide horizontal shaft but had been in no immediate danger. They had electricity, and food and fresh air were supplied through an eight-inch pipe. See more at <https://bit.ly/3JBSlln> 🔍👁

December 22

Successful Rescue on Dec. 22, 1933 🍺

Idaho Maryland Mine Cave-in, Grass Valley, California — Nineteen men of the night shift of the Idaho Maryland mine, headed by Foreman Charles Mills, were freed after being trapped for **7½ hours** by a cave-in of the 1,000-foot level. See more at <https://bit.ly/3KHgh8z> 🔍👁

December 23

Commemorating the 125th Anniversary of the Braznell Mine Explosion in Pennsylvania †

Stockdale Coal Company Braznell Mine Explosion Brownsville, Fayette County, Pennsylvania

December 23, 1899

No. Killed - 19

See more at <http://bit.ly/34Cp3zd> 🔍 👁

At the time, this explosion was the worst since the Hill Mine disaster at Dunbar. It was terrific, and was heard plainly at Brownsville, three miles distant. The main shaft was totally wrecked. About four cages filled with men had gone down to work. Mr. Thomas, the cage man, on his fourth trip went to the bottom with fourteen men and gave the signal for the cage to rise, when the explosion occurred.

The cage was blown with terrific force to the top of the shaft and fell back to the bottom, completely blocking access to the mine. Timbers were hurled hundreds of feet. The lower ring of brick work in the air shaft was completely wrecked and had to be tunneled to get into the mine at all. One hand and a foot and one shoe were blown from the mine and found on top of the shaft.

December 24

Moweaqua Coal Corporation Moweaqua Mine Explosion Moweaqua, Shelby County, Illinois

December 24, 1932

No. Killed - 54

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

On December 24, 1932, at 8:15 a.m., the whistle from the mine blew. People from the town began to gather outside the mine because they knew that the whistle meant that something went wrong at the work site. There was a methane gas explosion in the mine shaft a few minutes before they got there. It was later discovered in a state investigation published February 1, 1933, by the Moweaqua

News that the disaster was caused by the open flame of a miner's carbide lamp which ignited the methane gas and prompted the explosion.

December 24

Successful Rescue on Dec. 24, 1915 🍺

Richards Colliery Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania — After being entombed by a rush of coal at the Richards colliery for a period of — **96 hours** — Joseph Renock, a miner, was taken out alive. A force of 120 men had been working for four days at the risk of their lives to rescue the imprisoned man. The rescue work was exceedingly dangerous owing to the many hundreds of tons of loose rock and coal which separated the workers from the miner. The men encountered a large steel car in the gangway, and it was necessary to chisel the car away before the rescue work could be continued. When released, Renock was able to talk, but was in such a weakened condition from exhaustion and lack of food that he was immediately rushed to a hospital. He would recover. See more at <https://bit.ly/3oKqFQA> 🔍👁

December 25

Successful Rescue on Dec. 25, 1918 🍺

Cleveland-Cliffs Mine Cave-in, Ishpeming, Michigan — Confined — **63 hours** — in an area four feet square from a cave-in, three miners in the Cleveland-Cliffs mine were rescued alive. A fourth miner in their group died. Although the other three had existed without food or water, they were able to climb 400 feet to the shaft. They were in the best of health, apparently. As a last resort they had planned to feed themselves on cedar bark from a timber protruding into their tiny prison. See more at <https://bit.ly/41cbLI5> 🔍👁

December 26

Ted Robertson Company Trail Mountain No. 2 Mine Explosion

Orangeville, Emery County, Utah

December 26, 1956

No. Killed — 3

See more at <https://bit.ly/4crUizp> 🔍👁

A coal dust explosion occurred in this mine, **fatally injuring the operator and two 12-year-old boys** who were visiting the mine.

The victims were Tod Robertson, 34, operator of the mine; his nephew, Earl Cox, 12, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ward, Cox, and Ben Ihler, 12, son of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Ihler, all of Orangeville.

Emery County Sheriff Don Kofford said the three were killed instantly when a small coal mine, owned and worked solely by Mr. Robertson, was wracked with an explosion.

It was reported Mr. Robertson was blasting rock with dynamite to make an entrance inside the mine, about 250 feet underground. Fine coal dust, highly inflammable, apparently ignited and exploded, the sheriff said. The victims were the only ones in the mine at the time of the blast.

December 26

Kentucky Straight Creek Coal Company Belva No. 1 Mine Explosion Fourmile, Bell County, Kentucky

December 26, 1945

No. Killed - 24

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

Successful Rescue 🍺

Approximately 3 hours after the explosion in the Belva No. 1 mine, nine miners barricaded themselves noting, "***nine miners in here, 11 a.m. Thursday***" on a pile of slate. **More than 50 hours later**, they were discovered and brought to the surface.

December 27

Successful Rescue on Dec. 27, 1939 🍺

Leggett's Creek Colliery Fall of Person, North Scranton, Pennsylvania —

Albert Owens, 17, was recovering from injuries and exposure after a fall down a deep shaft at the Leggett's Creek Colliery of the Penn Anthracite Company near his North Scranton home. He finally was rescued and brought to the surface after he had clung to bracing timbers that had broken his fall. If he had lost his hold, police said, he would have plunged 700 feet to certain death. Young Owens and his brother, Frank, 15, were playing near the mine entrance, when Albert dropped down the chasm. The brother ran to a house a half-mile away and State Motor Police were notified. Patrolman John Owens first attempted to rescue the youth,

but the rope was too short. A ladder then was placed across the shaft and with a longer rope Nicholas Williams descended and was pulled up with young Owens. Officials were Informed there were no guard rails at the shaft. The victim was removed to Scranton State Hospital with a broken right leg, possible internal injuries. He suffered from exposure in the bitter cold in the mine shaft before his rescue. See more at <https://bit.ly/3ewSlqL> 🔍👁

December 28

Successful Rescue on Dec. 28, 1910 🍺

Cameron Mine Cave-in, Shamokin, Pennsylvania — After — **17 hours** — of perilous work in the Cameron mine, rescuers, headed by General Superintendent Rinehardt and Mine Inspector McLaughlin, took out William Faust. When the barriers of coal which had fallen between his place of working and the next breast were removed, he made a noise which was heard by the rescuers. He was not seriously injured. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Lf5KII> 🔍👁

December 29

On December 29th we commemorate the anniversary of the Lick Branch mine explosion in West Virginia. ✚

Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Company
Lick Branch Mine Explosion
Switchback, McDowell County, West Virginia

December 29, 1908

No. Killed - 50

See more at <http://bit.ly/2LHtn78> 🔍👁

Successful Rescue 🍺

At 11 o'clock p.m., **8 hours after the explosion**, eighteen of the entombed men had been taken out of the colliery alive. They had been stifled by smoke and were not seriously injured, although enough to make their removal to a hospital necessary.

December 29

Successful Rescue on Dec. 29, 1905 🍺

Coxey Shaft Lost Miner, Pittston, Pennsylvania — Joseph Davies, a miner, was found in the Coxey Shaft of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company almost starved to death

having gone without food for **eight days**. When found, he was slightly demented and could not account for his wanderings. While lost he had nothing to eat and drank the sulfur water of the mine. See more at <https://bit.ly/3hT1qJ9> 🔍 👁

December 29

Successful Rescue on Dec. 29, 1950 🍺

Higgenbottom Cavern Rescue, McMinnville, Tennessee — National Guardsmen, passing along a stretcher on their hands and knees, rescued 17-year-old Don Ball, Nashville high school football star, after a tortuous five-mile underground trip from the fifty-foot pit into which he toppled. Ball was reported in critical condition with head and leg injuries and the possibility of a pneumonia complication due to his — **seventeen hour** — entrapment in Higgenbottom Cavern. William Greer, a 125-pound volunteer, was lowered into the chasm deep inside the cave to tie a rope around Ball so the Guardsmen could haul his limp body to the cavern floor. See more at <https://bit.ly/3Ea489p> 🔍 👁

December 30

Successful Rescue on Dec. 30, 1909 🍺

Bolen Darnell Mine Explosion, McAlester, Oklahoma — Superintendent John Brown was rescued alive after being — **trapped for twenty-eight hours** — in the Bolen Darnell Company mine. Brown risked his life attempting to save Angelo Ascinar, a shot firer who was entombed following an explosion in the mine. It was speculated that Brown would have died within another hour. See more at <https://bit.ly/2X7yoxu> 🔍 👁

December 30

Commemorating the anniversary of the 1970 Hurricane Creek mine explosion. ✚

**Finley Coal Company
Nos. 15 and 16 Mine Explosion
a.k.a. Hurricane Creek Mine
Hyden, Leslie County, Kentucky**

December 30, 1970

No. Killed - 38

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

A coal dust explosion occurred in the interconnected Nos. 15 and 16 mines of the Finley Coal Company, Hyden, Leslie County, Kentucky, about 12:20 p.m., Wednesday, December 30, 1970. Thirty-eight of the 39 men who were underground at the time were killed. Observations made during the investigation of the disaster indicate that 14 men who were employed in No. 16 mine were apparently killed instantly by the explosion, and 3 others who may have moved a short distance after the explosion possibly died from asphyxiation or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Nineteen men, who were employed in No. 15 mine, were apparently killed instantly by the explosion, and 2 others who may have moved a short distance after the explosion presumably died from asphyxiation or carbon monoxide poisoning. The lone survivor was near the portal in the belt entry of No. 15 mine when the explosion occurred. He was injured slightly by the explosion force and the debris coming out of the mine.

December 30

Successful Rescue on Dec. 30, 1894 🍺

Olyphant Mine Fire, Scranton, Pennsylvania — Fourteen miners were rescued after spending the entire night in the Olyphant mine of the Lackawanna Coal Company. The rescued miners included William Evans, foreman; Frank Benni, engineer; Patrick Brennan, Charles Williams, Frank McCable, and nine Hungarian laborers. See more at <http://bit.ly/31mAICG> 🔍 👁

December 31

Rescuer Death on Dec. 31, 1921 🧯 +

Ellsworth No. 1 Mine Explosion, Ellsworth, Pennsylvania — **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. See more at <https://bit.ly/3jMVSS2> 🔍 👁

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

December 31

Red Jacket Coal Company

Lick Fork Colliery Mine Cars Disaster

Thacker, Mingo County, West Virginia

December 31, 1910

No. Killed - 10

See more at <http://bit.ly/2rKIN6o> 🔍 👁

Ten men were all in an empty car ascending the slope from the bottom and were drawn to the surface counterbalanced by four cars going down. The operator lost control of the trip. On reaching the surface, one man realized what was happening, leaped from the car, and escaped with minor injury. The other 10 men stayed in the car and the men, and the car were dashed against the drum and headhouse, instantly killing the men.