

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 2013 —

- Nov Revenue-Virginus Mine Asphyxiation, Ouray, Colorado
A miner, Nicholas Cappanno, did not return from an area of the mine where an explosive had been previously detonated. The shift foreman, **Rick Williams**, went in to search for him. Eventually they were both found by other miners working in the area, and those miners immediately evacuated the mine. Mine rescue teams entered the mine and found the two others. During the recovery operation, they detected fatal levels of carbon monoxide. The teams brought the victims to the surface. Twenty miners were taken to the hospital, and three were kept overnight. All 20 were subsequently released.

— 2007 —

- Aug Crandall Canyon Mine Collapse, Huntington, Utah
On August 16, 2007, three rescue workers were killed and six others were injured when a seismic jolt caused a mine accident during an effort to reach six men who have been trapped at the Crandall Canyon Mine since August 6. The six men initially killed were Kerry Allred, Luis Hernandez, Carlos Payan, Don Erikson, Manuel Sanchez, and Brandon Phillips. The three killed during the attempted rescue were Federal Mine Inspector, **Gary Jensen**, **Brandon Kimber** and **Dale Black**.

— 2002 —

- Oct 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.

— 2001 —

- Sep JWR No. 5 Mine Explosions, Brookwood, Alabama
After communicating with the section foreman about the events of the initial blast in 4 Section, 3 other miners entered the 4 Section to rescue the remaining injured miner. Additional miners from other sections were notified and traveled toward 4 Section to lend assistance. Five of these miners entered the Section and another 4 reached the mouth of the 4 Section. The second explosion resulted in 12 fatalities and widespread destruction.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1985 —

- Aug R & R Mine No. 3 Asphyxiation, Woodbine, Kentucky
Loading and hauling coal after a shot throughout the afternoon, a miner was overcome by CO when his scoop became stuck in the face area. Two others attempting to save the fallen miner were also overcome.
- Dec No. 2 Slope Afterdamp Asphyxiation, Carlstown, Pennsylvania
Rick Wolfgang helped his injured brother from the No. 2 Slope of the MS&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.

— 1982 —

- May Magma Mine Cave-in, Superior, Arizona
Three miners died between 5:30 and 6 p.m., on May 10, 1982 in three separate incidents that involved a cave-in and fall-of-ground in the Magma Copper Mine in Superior, Arizona. During a daring rescue and recovery which lasted through May 12th, one of the victims was recovered from the dangerous area, however, he died shortly thereafter from his injuries. Joseph Granillo was also entrapped in the same manner, and while his rescue was being attempted, both he and his would-be rescuer, Joseph Cassaro, were killed when additional material fell. For their brave efforts, the Carnegie Hero Award was bestowed upon Frank Aldecoa, Andy J. Arroyos, Jr., Billy Ray Evans, Henry Lopez Rodriguez, George Anthony Gomez, G. Michael Martinez (posthumously) and Joseph Cassaro (posthumously). Source document.

— 1981 —

- Jun Grays Knob No. 5 Inundation, Grays Knob, Kentucky
The entire section crew, except for two roof bolters, who remained unaccounted for, boarded a scoop to ride to the surface via the man trip route. Soon after, however, the section foreman left the fleeing scoop to search for the two missing roof bolters. Later that afternoon, the bodies of the foreman and the two roof bolters - all victims of asphyxiation - were recovered.
- Sep Warrier Gold Mine Explosion, Burgdorf, Idaho
After the explosion, Rocke Wilson and **Ardy Johnson** descended to search for two workman. Shortly thereafter, both men were suddenly overcome by carbon monoxide. Two hours later, the general partner and mine manager resumed the search. During this effort, Johnson was found 75 feet from the portal and Wilson was

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

found 100 feet from the portal. Subsequent CPR attempts revived Wilson, but Johnson never regained consciousness.

— 1979 —

- Sep Mathies Emergency Capsule Fatality, Washington County, PA
In the process of testing a newly installed rescue capsule in the 335 foot shaft of Consolidation Coal Company's Mathies Mine in Peters Township, Washington County, PA, company safety inspector, **John Marn**, plunged 180 feet to his death after the capsule's coupling device broke. The Washington County Coroner, Farrell Jackson, ruled that Edward Nogal, federal mine inspector, was partially responsible for Marn's death.
- Sep Unnamed Bituminous Mine Sink Hole, Pleasant Hills, Pennsylvania
Bradford Scott Reed died attempting to save Kenneth D. Long and Albert J. Breisinger died as the result of attempting to save Bradford Reed and Kenneth Long from suffocation, Pleasant Hills, Pennsylvania, September 9, 1979. Bradford, 16, and Kenneth, 14, were overcome by carbon dioxide in a mine sink-hole 20 feet deep and collapsed on a ledge near the bottom. Breisinger, 23, police patrolman, entered the hole and descended to the boys. Breisinger also was overcome. He and both boys died. Messer's Breisinger and Reed were posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. Source document.

— 1978 —

- Apr Moss No. 3 Portal A Inundation, Duty, Virginia
William Joe Arden, Willis Ison, and Richard L. Shelby died attempting to save fellow workmen from suffocation, April 4, 1978. Strickler Mullins, helped to save Charles L. Breeding in the same incident.
- Arden, 25, Shelby, 56, Service Manager from National Mine Service, and Ison, 45, Mine Safety and Health Administration subdistrict manager, entered the tunnel to give aid but, before reaching any of the men, were overcome.
- One of the three men was removed from the tunnel and revived; but Arden and the others died. Messer's Arden, Shelby, Ison and Mullins were posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1976 —

- Mar Scotia Mine Explosions, Ovenfork, Kentucky
On March 11, 1976, at the time of the second explosion, 13 men were underground near the entrance of 2 Southeast Main; 11 died as the result of the explosion and 2 repairmen working a short distance outby escaped without injury. Among the 11 killed on March 11 were 3 Federal Mine Inspectors: **Kenneth Kiser**, age 45; **Richard Sammons**, age 55; and **Grover Tussey**, age 45. This disaster gave birth to the Health and Safety Act of 1977, including new rules for mine rescue teams, stations, and training.

— 1975 —

- Jun Boron Mine and Mill Asphyxiation, Boron, California
About 3:30 p.m., June 25, 1975, **W. E. (Willie) Dodderer**, millwright, age 27, was asphyxiated when he and Eric R. Willis, millwright, entered a caisson in an attempt to rescue Brent Black, millwright, age 35, who had succumbed earlier in an oxygen deficient atmosphere.
- May Deer Creek Mine Roof Fall, Huntington, Utah
A roof fall occurred in the Deep Creek mine that resulted in the death of two men. During recovery operations later the same day, another man was killed and two more injured. In an effort to help their friends, **Alfred Willis** of Huntington was killed and two other men were injured and hospitalized.

— 1971 —

- Mar Nemacolin Mine Fire, Nemacolin, Pennsylvania
On April 16, 1971, at about 1:30 p.m., **William L. Groves**, State Deep Mine Inspector, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources, was accidentally drowned during the firefighting operations.
- Apr Barnett Complex H₂S Poisoning, Rosiclare, Illinois
Two brothers, William and Philip Long, entered an area of the mine and were subsequently overcome by Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) gas. An additional 5 employees made several attempts to reach the Long brothers and bring them to fresh air. After finally reaching the downed brothers and loading them onto a locomotive to bring them out, they too were overcome and killed by the toxic gas.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1970 —

- Jun Hazard Gold Mine Asphyxiation, Foresthill, California
Lester E. Benbow, age 41, schoolteacher, Foresthill Elementary School, was asphyxiated in the Hazard Gold Mine in the early morning of June 20, 1970, when he attempted to rescue Clifford J. Cox, who was overcome in an oxygen deficient atmosphere. He had no mining experience. Cox was later transported to the hospital, and reportedly made a complete recovery.
- Oct Tenneco Open-Pit Uranium Mine Electrocuting, Texas
A miner was electrocuted when he drove a portable drill rig with the mast up into a high voltage powerline. In an attempt to rescue the truck driver, another miner was also electrocuted.

— 1966 —

- Jun Dora No. 2 Mine Asphyxiations, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania
After cutting into a void, resulting in an inundation of "blackdamp" in the Doverspike Bros. Dora No. 2 mine, two miners were instantly overcome. The other 5 crew members managed to escape, however, three of them returned to help their fallen co-workers and were also overcome. Those immediately affected were Sam Gaul and Ronald Moore. Those attempting rescue included **John Kramer**, **Robert White**, and **Hilton Neiswonger**.
- Sep Morgan Mine Fire, St. Clairsville, Ohio
William Adams, 33, of Barnesville, Ohio, was outside when a fire broke out deep inside the Morgan Mine near St., Clairsville, Ohio. He ran into the mine and sounded the alarm. Counting only 12 men running out, he then went inside again in search of Keith Spicer, 22, of Dillonvale, Ohio, a miner for only two months, and Tony Territti, 43, of Wheeling. None of the three men surfaced from the mine.

— 1965 —

- Aug Unnamed Mine Cave-in, Chillicothe, Ohio
Ernest L. Bradley, 36, heavy equipment operator, sustained fatal injuries helping to rescue Jack W. Berryman, 45, heavy equipment operator, from a cave-in, Chillicothe, Ohio, August 6, 1965. Bradley immediately entered the ditch and, kneeling in front of Berryman, began digging the earth away with his hands. As Bradley continued digging, another man entered the ditch. A man outside the ditch shouted a warning. A section of earth weighing about six tons caved in from the side nearest Bradley. The other man jumped back, and only one of his legs was trapped. Bradley managed to place his

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

arms about his head before the falling earth knocked him face down and covered him completely. Workmen extricated Bradley and Berryman, both of whom had suffered fractures. Berryman recovered, but Bradley, who also had suffered internal injuries, died. Mr. Bradley was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery (posthumously). [Source document](#).

— 1957 —

Nov Unnamed Coal Mine Entrapment, Coupon, Pennsylvania
Robert P. Thompson, 14, schoolboy, died after rescuing John T. Vingless, 13, schoolboy, from a cave-in. November 2, 1957. While John and Robert were digging for coal in a small pit four and a half feet deep at an abandoned strip mine, one side of the pit collapsed and clay, slate, and coal in a high ridge above it slid onto them. Both boys, who were kneeling in the pit with their heads two feet below the top, were covered chest-deep. John's hands were pinned, and a lump of slate 18 inches square and four inches thick rested on his head, pressing his face into the clay so that he barely was able to breathe. Although he had sustained serious injuries to his back, chest, and legs, Robert freed his hands and dug himself out. Unable to stand, he began crawling toward a nearby road to summon help, but at John's pleas he dragged himself back to the pit. Although in considerable pain, he moved the lump of slate from John's head. John then dug himself out with some assistance from Robert, who removed several small pieces of slate. John walked and Robert crawled 200 feet to the road, calling for help. John's mother was attracted, and the boys then were removed to a hospital. John sustained a wrenched back and hip injuries but recovered. Robert's injuries were extensive, including damage to his spinal cord, which caused his death later in the day. Robert P. Thompson was posthumously bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. [Source document](#).

— 1956 —

Oct Kimberly Auger Mine Asphyxiations, Ohio
Two men died from asphyxiation and a third man was overcome in a rescue attempt at 7:15 a.m., Friday, October 12, 1956.

— 1955 —

Mar Little Oak Mine Asphyxiation, Belleville, Illinois
Arthur Kaemmerer, 40, became asphyxiated while he and Andrew Yuengel were exploring the abandoned Little Oak mine preparatory to salvaging rails, wire, and other related materials. The pair were equipped with non-permissible Bendix back-type oxygen demand masks, however, the oxygen supply provided was quickly exhausted.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

Attempting to get help from those on the surface, Kaemmerer was found dead about 600 feet from the shaft. Yuengel managed to reach the shaft bottom where he was hoisted to safety.

— 1953 —

- Mar O'Brien Mine Explosion, Lovilia, Iowa
Three of the victims of the O'Brien mine disaster were men in an inspection party which entered the mine several hours after the original explosion. They were **Gerald Lane**, 59; **James Love**, 54, and **Thomas Little**, 48. They were in a party of five which entered the mine to look it over. Love earlier had been a member of the squad which brought out the bodies of Harold Barnes and Ben Nichols.

— 1951 —

- Apr Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Shaft, Pennsylvania
Henry W. Eckley, Sr., 61, coal miner, died as the result of attempting to rescue Anthony Woznicki, 46, coal miner, from a cave-in. During the course of the rescue, a large quantity of debris fell from near the ceiling and partially buried Eckley, who sustained severe internal injuries and a broken leg. Eckley and Woznicki were removed from the entry by other miners and were taken to the surface. Woznicki was disabled six months. Eckley succumbed to injuries three days later. Posthumously, Mr. Eckley was awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. Source document.

— 1950 —

- Jul Lark Section - U. S. and Lark Mine Fire, Lark, Utah
The fire was first detected by a pumpman who encountered smoke while being hoisted in the Lark Shaft from the 2500 level to the 1200 level. He returned by cage to the 2500 level to notify the hoistman by telephone and died some time later after closing the water doors when a power outage occurred. The other four men died while attempting to rescue him.

— 1949 —

- May Gilberton No. 5 Colliery Fire, Girardville, Pennsylvania
Raymond J. Ey, 38, mine laborer, Joseph P. Wowak, and William J. Kelly, Sr., 48, died attempting to save William T. O'Brien, 52, mine fireboss, from suffocation, Girardville, Pennsylvania, May 4, 1949. All three men were awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1948 —

- Nov Nethken Mine Asphyxiations, Kitzmiller, Maryland
One of those suffocated in the Nethken Mine was a miner, **Robert Jackson** from Kitzmiller, Maryland, age 25, who had gone down the shaft to warn the other 4 miners of the danger and lead them out. He had been married less than 6 months.

— 1946 —

- Mar Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Girardville, Pennsylvania
Edward Eugene Carey, 42, coal inspector, died attempting to rescue John Haluska, 33, truck driver, from a cave-in at a culm bank, Girardville, Pennsylvania, March 12, 1946. When rocks, coal, and clay for eight feet from the top of a culm bank 60 feet high began to roll and slide down, Haluska was caught and buried upright to his waist. Carey and three other men ran to Haluska and with their hands removed the culm from around him, freeing him except for one foot. As Carey sat on his haunches continuing his efforts, he shouted a warning to the other men that a second slide had started, and they ran clear of the slide area. Carey worked to free Haluska for a second or two longer and then started to follow the others. After taking a step or two, the slide reached him; and he fell. Carey and Haluska were buried under culm five feet deep. Both were dead when removed three hours later. Posthumously, Mr. Carey was bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. Source document.

— 1944 —

- Mar Katherine No. 4 Mine Explosion, Shinnston, West Virginia
Firefighting crews were formed after all miners were withdrawn from the Katherine No. 4 mine to fight a fire discovered there at 11:00 p.m. A subsequent explosion of methane and coal dust occurred, killing everyone in the mine fighting the fire at the time. Windows were shattered in homes 2 miles away and buildings were rocked.
- Jul Powhatan Mine Fire, Belmont, Ohio
Immediately upon receiving the news of the fire, **George Emery**, a 45-year-old foreman and father of four children, went into the pit to help the trapped men. Hours later he had not returned.

— 1943 —

- Jan Pursglove No. 15 Mine Fire, Pursglove, West Virginia
During the fire at the No. 15 mine of the Pursglove Mining Company, an act of heroism

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

cost the life of **Guy Quinn**, 38-year-old night-foreman, who escaped after the fire but returned to open two ventilating doors in an effort to save his trapped comrades. He had managed to open one door but was overcome while working on the other.

Feb C. F. H. (Mulcahy) Mine Cave-in, Shullsburg, Wisconsin

Two of the victims 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.

Feb Smith No. 3 Mine Explosion, Bearcreek Mountain, Montana

One rescuer later succumbed from the toxic gas, after spending days looking for the miners.

Aug General Chemical Defense Corp., Point Pleasant, West Virginia

Three employees of the disposal plant were killed by the inhalation of toxic fumes believed to be hydrogen sulfide or an oxygen deficiency. Charles R. Miller, Water Treating Operator, was the initial victim. **Delmar W. Oldaker** and **Gerard Colwell** were overcome during rescue attempts.

Aug Sayreton No. 2 Mine, Sayreton, Jefferson County, Alabama

About 12:40 a.m., August 29th, or 2½ hours after the first explosion, a second explosion occurred in the same area, at which time there were 18 members of a rescue party in the affected section. Two men of the rescue party were killed and 16 were injured. Eight of the sixteen injured died after being removed to the hospital. Total number of deaths from the second explosion was 10.

— 1940 —

Mar Willow Grove No. 10 Mine Explosion, Neffs, Ohio

On this Saturday morning 176 men were in the mine, when an explosion killed 66 by burns and violence and 3 by burns and afterdamp. Two others attempting rescue were asphyxiated, and 1 rescued man died 6 days later from the effects of afterdamp.

May 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.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

- Oct 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.

— 1938 —

- Aug Abandoned Mine Asphyxiation, Minersville, Pennsylvania
In an attempt to rescue Joseph Foran, who took refuge in an abandoned mine during a storm, Edward Woll donned a smoke mask and entered the mine. After locating Foran, Woll was only able to travel 6 feet with him before collapsing. The smoke mask of Woll was useless in providing protection in the oxygen deficient atmosphere. Rescuers better equipped found both men 6 feet from fresh air. Source document.

— 1937 —

- Mar Kramer Mine Explosions, DuBois, Pennsylvania
A spark from a locomotive ignited a body of methane in the first explosion, a fire ignited the 2nd. Two were killed in the first explosion and 7 were killed in the second explosion. The others died in an effort to rescue their fellow man, when a second explosion of gas took place.

— 1936 —

- Aug Kathleen Mine Fire, Dowell, Illinois
During the time the State mine rescue team was erecting seals outby the fire, several motor trips of material were sent into the 7th north haulage road which is on the return for this section. With these trips, there were between 15 and 20 men, who had been sent to assist with the sealing. All of these men were more or less affected with carbon monoxide; nine of them lost their lives.

- Aug Mountain City Mine Asphyxiation, Mountain City, Nevada
Two men persuaded a third to lower them to an area of dangerous atmospheric conditions. The third man realized the seriousness of the situation but gave little or no thought to the atmospheric conditions. He proceeded down the manway until he was overcome and fell to the bottom. A fourth man, in a solitary attempt to rescue the third, was overcome and also fell to within 5 feet of the bottom. When the shift boss and four others arrived, they attempted to recover the bodies. Two men were lowered in the bucket, and both were overcome.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

Sep Metz Coal Mine Asphyxiation, Fulton, Missouri

Columbia firemen were called to remove the four bodies and helped save a fifth worker who was in serious condition. Mine owner Louis Metz and his father-in-law were overcome by gas as they went into the mine to pump water. The miner's three younger brothers came to help and they too fell victim to the deadly gas.

— 1935 —

Mar Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Starford, Pennsylvania

John S. Korfonta sustained fatal injuries attempting to help rescue Francis R. Yaros from a mine cave-in, Starford, Pennsylvania, March 11, 1935. While Yaros, 21, was close to the face of the coal at the end of a heading of a mine, a rock six feet and a half in diameter and from two to 15 inches thick fell from the roof onto him. The rock lay two feet from the face of the coal between two parallel rows of posts eight feet apart. Only Yaros's feet and ankles extended from under the rock. Frank L. Russell, Jr., heard the crash and went to another heading, where he notified Korfonta, 46, miner; J. Clair Irvin; Joseph C. Resovsky; and another man. Irvin, closely followed by Russell, Resovsky, and the other man, hurried through a crosscut and the heading to the rock and then crawled over it to positions between the rock and the face of the coal. Russell placed a crowbar beneath the edge of the rock, and his companions placed their hands beneath the rock to lift it. Korfonta then reached the rock and began to crawl over it. Another rock, five feet wide and eight inches thick, fell and knocked him aside onto loose slate. Slate dribbled from the roof, and the men feared another fall. After standing aside a moment, Irvin and Resovsky lifted a part of the rock, which had been split by the second rock, from Yaros's legs. Russell and Resovsky then lifted the rock from Yaros's back. Irvin grasped Yaros's ankles and pulled him to the face of the coal. Russell and Irvin then carried Yaros toward the other side of the heading, the roof of which was amply supported by crossbeams, then for 25 feet over a pile of slate to a safe part of the heading. Resovsky remained with Korfonta. Russell ran to the entrance of the mine for help. Irvin returned to the rock and crawled over the loose slate to Korfonta and Resovsky. He and Resovsky then carried Korfonta over the same course to the crosscut and the other heading. In the meantime, Yaros died. Korfonta was placed in a minercar and hauled out of the mine. He died of his injuries that evening. J. Clair Irvin, Frank L. Russell, Jr., Joseph C. Resovsky and John S. Korfonta (posthumously) were bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery. [Source document](#).

— 1930 —

Feb Standard Mine Explosion, Standardville, Utah

The three men in the connected No. 3 mine were killed by the forces, and 17 of those

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

in No. 1 mine died in the afterdamp. Five of the men in No. 1 mine successfully barricaded themselves and were rescued. Three men of a fresh air crew were killed by a falling roof slab on February 7.

Oct 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.

— 1927 —

Apr Connellsville By-Product 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.

— 1926 —

Feb Nelson Mine Explosion, Nelson Creek, Kentucky

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 black damp. Fulkerson and Leonard Huter were overcome by the gas and their condition was serious.

— 1925 —

Dec Fairview Gold Mine Fire and Cave-in, Nederland, Colorado

Charles Hjurguist died while he and three others were searching for two miners trapped in the Fairview Gold Mine fire and cave-in on December 4 near Nederland, Colorado. One of the trapped men died in the fire and the other was removed in serious condition and hospitalized. Three other smoke-affected rescuers were also hospitalized in serious condition.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1924 —

- Mar Castle Gate No. 2 Mine Explosions, Castle Gate, Utah
Two helmetmen were overcome, and late Saturday, **George Wilson**, head of a crew from Standardville, died from asphyxiation when the nose piece of his helmet became detached several hundred feet inside the main portal.
- Oct Unnamed Mine Cave-in, Hyder, Alaska
Sherburn Atkins was killed while engaged in rescue work following a mine disaster at Hyder, Alaska. Mr. Atkins was crushed by a portion of a mine falling in while helping some of his comrades to safety. Source document.

— 1923 —

- Dec Unnamed Clay Mine Cave-in, Brazil, Indiana
Reuben A. Brown, 50, mine driver, attempted to save Andrew J. Hamilton, 35, clay miner, from a mine cave-in, Brazil, Indiana, December 3, 1923. Hamilton was caught under a fall of shale in a cross cut in a clay mine. Brown, who was 14 feet from Hamilton, hurried to him but was unable to lift a large slab of shale that rested on his back. Three other miners were attracted, and as Brown and two of them attempted to lift the slab off Hamilton, a second fall occurred. Brown was struck and held fast against the wall, and one of the miners, J. Franklin Elson, was instantly killed. Four other miners then arrived, and although bits of shale continued to drop, they freed Brown and Hamilton. Hamilton sustained a broken arm and cuts and bruises. Brown was severely lacerated and bruised and was disabled five weeks. The following men were bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for their bravery: Reuben A. Brown; J. Herbert Batchelor; Amos J. Stamper; R. Delane Tabor; Walter Penman; Robert F. Buchholz; John E. Martin; and J. Franklin Elson (posthumously). Source document.

— 1922 —

- Apr Almena Mine Roof Fall, Morgantown, West Virginia
Gabrielle Pascuzzi, 20, and H. L. Wallace, 23 were killed and two others were injured when they were crushed under a fall of slate while searching for the bodies of 2 miners who met death in a cave-in several days earlier in the Strum Coal Company's Almena Mine. Source document.
- Dec Havaco Mine Explosion, Havaco, West Virginia
Two rescuers lost their lives following an explosion in the Havaco mine in McDowell County, West Virginia. They were asphyxiated by blackdamp caused by the leaky

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

masks they were wearing. Two other miners were killed in the blast. [Source document](#).

— 1921 —

- Feb [Sahara No. 8 Mine Explosion](#), Eldorado, 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.
- Dec [Satanic Mine Fire](#), Morrison, Colorado
Six men were killed by firedamp in the Satanic coal mine of the Colorado Collieries Company, when they attempted to place a bulkhead on the 100-foot level of an abandoned shaft, used as an air course, to stop a fire. The only man brought to the surface, apparently still alive, was Eugene F. Bovie, Sr., of Morrison, father of a young miner, who was overcome when he attempted to rescue his son.
- Dec [Ellsworth 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.

— 1920 —

- May [Mullan Tailing Plant Electrocuting](#), Mullan, Idaho
A miner was electrocuted and instantly killed at a sub-station of the Washington Water Power Plant, when he was endeavoring to rescue a patrol man of the company, whom he found burned and unconscious upon going to the sub-station to investigate the cause of the power being shut off at the plant in which he was working.
- May [Submarine Mine Explosion](#), Clinton, Indiana
Following an explosion in the Submarine mine at Clinton, Indiana, **James Smith**, **Art Thompson** and **Frank Hughes** were victims of afterdamp while attempting to recover the body of John Howe. Jimmie Needham, also a member of the rescue party, was injured.
- Jul [Black Diamond No. 2 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.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1919 —

- Aug Sinclair Oil 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.

— 1918 —

- Feb Carthage Fuel Company 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.

— 1917 —

- Apr 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.
- Apr Mountain King Mine Asphyxiation, Mariposa County, California
Two men obtained permission from the mine foreman to investigate the results of blasting on the 1,400-foot level. When they did not return, the foreman went to investigate, returned, and with two others climbed down to the 1,400-foot level, where all three were overcome. Before proper supervision could be obtained and rescue work begun, three others had attempted to help by going to the 1,400 foot level (all at different times). Only one was able to return to safety. Seven men lost their lives from asphyxiation.
- Oct Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
David A. Cadwalader died attempting to save LeRoy D. Winters from suffocation, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, October 17, 1917. An explosion of fire-damp occurred in a mine in which the men were working, and they and others hurried from the face of a tunnel to seek safety. Upon reaching a gangway at the mouth of the tunnel, Winters, 35, laborer, turned in a direction leading to greater danger, while the other men turned in the opposite direction and reached good air in an entry, after having run

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

about 140 feet. All were in darkness. When Winters was missed, Cadwalader, 32, laborer, said he would return for him. He and another man returned to the gangway and entered it. After going about 10 feet, Cadwalader said he could go no farther. His companion proceeded, thinking that Cadwalader had returned to safety. Cadwalader fell and was suffocated. Mr. Cadwalader was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. John Harry was also given the award for his bravery.

Source document.

- Nov 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.

— 1916 —

- Feb 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.
- Oct Jamison No. 7 Mine Explosion and Fire, Barrackville, West Virginia
Lewis M. Jones, a mining engineer from the U. S. Bureau of Mines in Pittsburgh became asphyxiated in the Jamison No. 7 Mine fire at Barrackville, West Virginia. When Jones and seven others failed to return to the surface, additional rescuers were dispatched to bring them out. All of the initial party recovered except Jones. 9 other miners lost their lives in the disaster.
Related incident: On November 13, 1917, **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.
- Oct Marvel No. 2 Mine Explosion, Marvel, Alabama
Eighteen men entered the mine and all were killed in the explosion, except one pumper who was burned but escaped. A rescue worker without rescue apparatus was overcome and was killed by a fall from a ladder.
- Nov Jamison Coal & Coke Company Asphyxiation, Greensburg, Pennsylvania
William Kirkley was overcome by gas while searching for a miner who was sent into the mine to make some repairs. Kirkley's body was found in an abandoned working which had become gaseous. It was later learned that the workman he thought was lost had

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

exited the mine before Kirkley went in. Source document.

- Dec Unnamed Anthracite Coal Mine, Scranton, Pennsylvania
Daniel Thomas, 29, mine plane runner, died attempting to save Joseph Stepanich, 17, driver, and Joseph Rogne, driver, from suffocation, Scranton, Pennsylvania, December 16, 1916. An explosion occurred in a gangway a third of a mile from the shaft of a coal mine. Stepanich and Rogne were within about 400 feet of the scene of the explosion. Thomas and others, who were nearer to the shaft, started for the shaft. Thomas, who had shortly before been with Stepanich and Rogne, proposed returning for them. The miners with Thomas refused to accompany him and urged him to go on to the shaft, but Thomas turned back alone. His body was later found near the scene of the explosion. Stepanich and Rogne escaped by a course less direct than that taken by Thomas. Mr. Thomas was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. Source document.

— 1915 —

- Mar Black Hawk Mine Fire, Black Hawk, Utah
At Black Hawk, Utah, **Grant S. Miller**, a member of the Black Hawk Coal Company's rescue crew, was overcome while fighting a mine fire, and died in spite of courageous efforts of his comrades to save his life.
- May Smokeless Valley No. 1 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.
- Sep 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.

— 1914 —

- Jan Boston Mine Fire, Bingham, Utah
Three of the deceased in the Boston mine fire were Austrians, who on hearing that two of their countrymen were in the smoke-filled workings rushed in at 9 o'clock a.m. to attempt a rescue. Their bodies were brought out at 10 o'clock that night by three

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

rescuers wearing oxygen helmets. The three attempting the rescue were **Mike Osich**, **Josep Stemich**, and **Robert Duich**.

Jan Vulcan Mine Explosion, Newcastle, Colorado
E. E. Shumway, 51, president and general manager of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, died on January 12, 1914 as the result of inhaling poisonous gases while working with rescuers after the explosion at the Vulcan Mine on December 17, 1913 at Newcastle, Colorado. Source document.

— 1913 —

Apr Cincinnati Mine Explosion, Finleyville, Pennsylvania
An explosion occurred in which 97 men were killed and subsequently one of the rescue party wearing breathing apparatus lost his life. About 167 men were in the mine at the time of the explosion. About 67 escaped uninjured through old workings, and three were rescued alive - one by the first rescue parties and 2 some sixty-hours later by exploring parties.

May Taylor Mine Asphyxiations, Hartford, Kentucky
Five men were killed by black damp in a deserted shaft of a coal mine belonging to the Taylor Mining Company. The men were working near the shaft when C. F. Frazier went to explore the abandoned digging. He fell into the water and with the four others who went to his rescue succumbed to black damp. The miners attempting to rescue Frazier included **John Killers**, **J. P. Ramer**, **F. Tourk**, and **Jim Porter**.

May Imperial Mine Explosion, Belle Valley, Ohio
Henry Fairhurst, a member of the first rescue party to enter the Imperial mine following the explosion, was overcome by gas and died soon after being brought to the surface.

Aug East Brookside Mine Explosions, Tower City, Pennsylvania
Five miners met their death when they entered the East Brookside Anthracite Mine following an explosion there. While attempting to rescue victims of the first blast, a second methane explosion occurred, sealing their fate. The first explosion, believed to be caused by dynamite, killed 15 miners. One of the rescuers managed to escape, but died a few hours later.

Sep Mine Rescue Training Fatality, Rock Springs, Wyoming
On September 30, 1913, **Edward Evans**, an employee of the Bureau of Mines, lost his life during mine rescue maneuvers at a mine of the Union Pacific Coal Company, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

- Oct 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.

— 1912 —

- Jan Cherry Valley Mine Fire, Cherry Valley, Pennsylvania
John Ferrell of the U.S. Bureau of Mines was killed while exploring a mine in which a fire was raging. Ferrell had been in charge of the Bureau of Mines Rescue Car No. 5 since October 1911. At a mine rescue a few weeks earlier at Briceville, Tennessee, Ferrell rescued five men. It is unknown if any others were killed or injured in the Cherry Valley Mine Fire.

— 1911 —

- Jan Unnamed Mine, Butte, Montana
Michael L. Belangie, 33, miner, died attempting to help save Dennis Lynch, 53, repairman, and Stephen Hogan, 57, pumpman, from suffocation, Butte, Montana, January 14, 1911. Belangie, who had already made two trips into a copper mine, was one of a party of four men who made two trips to the pump station on the 1,000-foot level in search of Lynch and Hogan, who had been overcome by smoke from a fire in the mine. On the second trip through the station, Belangie was overcome. The others went on and rescued Lynch and Hogan, but when Belangie was gotten out, about 10 minutes later, he was dead. Lynch and Hogan were revived. Mr. Belangie was posthumously awarded the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. Source document.
- Feb 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. It is believed that this was the first instance in the United States, wherein a person died while wearing oxygen breathing apparatus. 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.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

- Feb Belmont Mine Fire, Tonopah, Nevada
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.
- Apr Price-Pancoast Mine Fire, Throop, Pennsylvania
Two pipeline men noticed smoke coming from the direction of the shaft and discovered that the North Slope engine room was on fire. When the fire in the engine room was under control, the crew noticed that the timbers and a large number of mine cars on the passing branch were also burning.
Victims included 69 miners and four rescue worker who fell victim to poisonous gas, including **Joe E. Evans**, who was the Foreman of Federal Rescue Car No. 1. Also killed while attempting to help others was: **Walter Knight**, mine foreman; **Isaac Dawe**, fire boss; and **John R. Perry**. These men rushed beyond the flames to warn others farther in the workings.
- May Hartford Mine Fire, Negaunee, Michigan
Within 1 hour after the discovery of the fire, an attempt was made to begin rescue operations without the aid of breathing apparatus. Three bodies were discovered. However, because of the reversal of the air current while erecting a stopping, the smoke became so dense that the shift boss ordered the men to return to the surface. One man attempted to remain and finish the stopping but was overcome. It was several hours before rescuers reached him, but he was dead. Three of the others attempted to go out to the Cambria shaft but were overcome and were revived with great difficulty.
- Nov Adrian Mine Explosion, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania
It is believed that the six dead miners, realizing that there had been an explosion, dropped their dinner buckets and ran further into the mine to rescue their fellow workmen. The dinner buckets were found about a mile and a half from the innermost workings of the mine, which is five miles from the entrance.

— 1910 —

- Nov Victor American No. 3 Mine Fire, Delagua, Colorado
A member of the rescue crew who gave his breathing apparatus to one of the four men found behind a barricade stayed behind to wait for the party's return. He was later found overcome in another part of the mine and died the next morning.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1909 —

- Jan Northwestern Mine Asphyxiation, Ashford County, Washington
After a miner fired shots in the Northwestern coal mine, an explosion occurred. Another victim (Dinkler), with others, went to rescue the shotfirer, but was overcome by after damp before he could.
- Jan Zeigler Mine Explosion and Fire, Zeigler, Illinois
During recovery efforts following a fire at this mine, marsh gas from the west "C" south entries was carried over an area where the fire had raged and an explosion occurred which killed 26 men and again wrecked the mine.
- Feb Zeigler Mine Explosion, Zeigler, Illinois
During recovery operations following a fire at this mine, an explosion occurred and three men were killed instantly.
- Nov St. Paul No. 2 Mine Fire, Cherry, Illinois
Six times, Mine Manager **John Bundy** went down in an iron cage to rescue trapped miners. He emerged six times, black and sweating, lifting survivors into the sun. But on the seventh trip, Bundy and eleven volunteers were burned alive. When the cage was hoisted, it held a charred and flaming pile of bodies. Source document.

— 1908 —

- Mar Hanna No. 1 Mine Explosions, Hanna, Wyoming
Mine Superintendent, Alexander Briggs, along with 19 volunteers were killed by an explosion in the Union Pacific Coal Company's Hanna No. 1 mine. This group had gone into the mine to fight a fire that had been raging there since the previous Saturday. A short time later, a second explosion occurred in the mine, killing 39 others, including State Mine Inspector, D. M. Elie, who had gone into the mine with hopes of rescuing the first group. In all, 59 were killed in this disaster.
- May Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Salineville, Ohio
Francis C. Skinner, 32, stationary engineer, died attempting to rescue Wesley J. Wright, 48, and John W. Rowe, 36, in a mine, Salineville, Ohio, May 27, 1908. Wright and Rowe were disabled by an explosion, and Skinner, with others, was lowered 180 feet down a shaft, where the carriage stuck, ropes being used to get to the bottom 20 feet farther. Having been released from debris, Wright was being carried to the shaft when a piece of timber fell, striking Skinner on the head and killing him instantly. Francis C. Skinner was posthumously bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award. Source document.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

- Jun Gold King Mine Fire, Gladstone, Colorado
After extinguishing the blaze, five rescuers searching for 3 missing miners fell victim to toxic mine air. In all, 6 were killed in the incident, including Victor Erickson, along with rescuers **Peter McNini**, **Roy Coburn**, **Alf Johnson**, **A. W. Burns**, and **Gus Olson**. John Sunston and Otto Johnson were returned to the surface barely alive.
- Nov Zeigler Mine Fire, Zeigler, Illinois
A fire broke out in this mine after the day shift had left the mine. The fire was caused by crossed electric wires and although it was originally very small, it was expanded and originated several explosions and eventually brought about the death of 31 men who attempted to put it out. Once Draeger helmets were purchased, a single man wearing one of the helmets was sent into the mine to reconnoiter. It is reported that the cartridges were caked and the man panicked, pulled off the helmet and perished.
- Nov Utah Copper Company Mine Asphyxiations, Bingham, Utah
Details of the death of four men in the workings of the Utah copper company's mine at Bingham emphasized the reckless heroism with which the last three victims fought their losing fight with an invisible, intangible foe, deadly powder gas. Three rescuers went into the mine in search of Italian miner, Dominick Shatto, and another miner thought to be missing. Foreman **F. Kent Smith** started down an incline tunnel, followed by **Hugh Burns** and **George Wilson**. They did not return. Other mine employees waited a reasonable time and then ventured into the tunnel after taking the precaution to tie ropes to their waists. The ropes saved their lives, for the first inhalations of the foul air robbed them of their strength and when dragged back to the surface they were unconscious. Source document.
- Dec Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Brockwayville, Pennsylvania
William P. Harris, 30, boss mine driver, assisted in an attempt to rescue Michele Rubino, 28, miner, and helped to rescue Francis P. De Santis, 28, miner, from a mine cave-in, Brockwayville, Pennsylvania, December 12, 1908. De Santis and two others were trying to rescue Rubino, who had been caught by a fall of rock, when a second fall occurred, catching DeSantis's trouser leg and pinning him to the floor. While other falls impended, Harris crawled close enough to hand De Santis a knife, with which he freed himself. Rubino, along with his two companions, Guiseppe Petruccelli, and Vincenzo Stefanelli, when released, were found to be dead. Mr. De Santis survived. For their demonstrated bravery in the rescue operation, Messrs. Harris, Petruccelli (posthumously), and Stefanelli (posthumously) were bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award. Source document.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1907 —

- Feb Thomas No. 25 Mine Explosion, Thomas, West Virginia
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 re-enforcements and revived under the treatment of physicians.
- Mar Seattle Electric Company, Renton County, Washington
Victim's little son was waiting for his father to finish work so that he might ride the horse to the barn. As the father was dumping his last car, the boy fell into the hot ashes. The father jumped to rescue him and both were so badly burned that they died a few days later.
- May Unnamed Coal Mine Cave-in, Rossiter, Pennsylvania
David Pittsley, 27, mine wireman, died attempting to save Michael Maloney, 42, from a mine cave-in, Rossiter, Pennsylvania, May 6, 1907. Maloney was knocked to the ground by a fall of rock, and, without taking time to ascertain whether there was further danger, Pittsley ran to the spot. While he endeavored to release Maloney, both were killed by a second fall. Mr. Pittsley was posthumously bestowed the Carnegie Hero Award for his bravery. Source document.
- Dec Monongah Nos. 6 & 8 Mine Explosion, Monongah, West Virginia
John Narey died in the mine rescue effort during the mine disaster at Monongah Mine, West Virginia Dec. 6, 1907. (from an article in the "Latrobe Bulletin," Latrobe, PA, Dec. 18, 1907.) In all, three men are said to have lost their lives in the rescue work at Monongah, apparently overcome with smoke or poisonous gases lingering in the mines because they had no proper equipment for entering exploding mines, or proper equipment to revive rescuers or miners who had succumbed to their smoke and poisonous gases.

— 1906 —

- Jan Haverstraw Clay Pit Collapse, Haverstraw, New York
After a house was toppled into a pit cut by clay diggers in Haverstraw, NY, five men went to the rescue to aid their neighbors. After the first house fell, twelve other houses went crashing over the precipice. The wreckage quickly caught fire, and those who were in the mass were either crushed or burned to death. Nineteen persons were killed.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

- May Abandoned Mine Asphyxiations, Greensburg, Pennsylvania
Wasall Kircera gave up his life while trying to save three boys from death in an abandoned mine, where blackdamp was known to escape from the old workings. The boys were playing and soon became senseless under the influence of the deadly gas. Kircera saw the boys' peril, plunged down into the hole and hurled two of them to the outside. Then Kircera fell, overcome by the gas fumes. A friend went down after him and, after throwing the remaining boy out, dragged Kircera up the bank. The gas was too much for Kircera and he died in a few minutes, while his friend was in a serious condition and not expected to live. [Source document](#).
- Jun [Rocky Fork Mine Fire](#), Red Lodge, Montana
To suppress a fire, the fan was reversed, which reversed the air current supplying fresh air to the fighters in room 6. This resulted in forcing the noxious gases onto the men fighting the fire in room 6. Six men lost their lives from the crew fighting the fire in room 6, while two of the rescuers, Roy Carey and Joe Bracey, lost their lives in a vain attempt to rescue the men fighting the fire in room 6.
- Oct [Pocahontas Mine Explosion](#), Pocahontas, Virginia
Edward Jones, the inside foreman, led the first rescue party, and when that party failed to return in a reasonable time a second rescue party under Supt. Leckie followed. Two of the Leckie party, **John Odham** and **Ed Brown**, were overcome by gas and died. Leckie barely escaped with his life. Then the third party was formed and continued the work. Meantime, the first party had reached another entrance to the mine in safety, and sent word over the mountain announcing that fact.

— 1905 —

- Mar [Rush Run and Red Ash Mine Explosions](#), Red Ash, West Virginia
Five hours after the mine ceased operations for the day, an explosion occurred in the Rush Run mine, in which 8 men lost their lives. The explosion extended into the Red Ash mine, where 5 more men lost their lives. To rescue these men, 11 men entered the Rush Run mine and were lost in a second explosion.
- Apr [Zeigler Mine Explosions](#), Zeigler, Illinois
49 miners died as a result of two explosions in the Zeigler Mine. In an effort to recover the entombed men, five rescuers were overcome by afterdamp. The rescuers were let down by hand. In two instances, the men above were nearly overcome by gas.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1904 —

- Feb Phillips Mine Explosives Detonation, Foster, Iowa
A terrible explosion in the Phillips mine at Foster, Iowa, resulted in the death of John Stevens and **Axel Carlson**, shot firers. It was supposed the explosion was caused by a windy shot. The rescuers were unable to reach the victims for one hour. When found, Carlson had his arms around Stevens' neck. It was thought Carlson was uninjured by the explosion and attempted to rescue Stevens, who was suffocated by firedamp. [Source document](#).
- May Williamstown Colliery Asphyxiations, Williamstown, Pennsylvania
Nine of the ten men killed and all of the forty overcome by the sulphurous fumes in a tunnel of the Williamstown Colliery of the Summit Branch Mining Company at Williamstown, were members of a relief party. Enoch Morgan was the first man killed. The rest of the victims were members of the rescuing party, which at one time was made up of more than 100 men. Intimation of the presence of extraordinary amounts of sulphurous gas in the mine was first gotten by miners who were walking through the tunnel. Shortly afterward a train came through and picked up some of these men who were overcome and hurried them to the Williams Valley side. A relief train, loaded with reserves and members of the night shift, was hurriedly made up and sent into the mine to rescue the others. Before the train had gotten any great distance the rescuers started to explore the mine, and in a short while these men were tottering and fell to the ground either fatally stricken or seriously overcome. Investigators concluded that the victims were suffocated by coal gas from the locomotive, the accumulation of which at this particular time was due to high temperature on the surface, the effect of which caused the air to reverse, nullifying the action of the fan. [Source document](#).
- Jul [Unnamed Coal Mine](#), Sherodsville, Ohio
Daniel Davis died attempting to save William Monroe from suffocation, Sherodsville, Ohio, July 11, 1904. Davis, 23, coal miner, was overcome by black damp while walking into a mine to rescue Monroe, 38, who was helpless from the gas but was later rescued. [Source document](#).
- Jan [Harwick Mine Explosion](#), Cheswick, Pennsylvania
Of 175 mine workers underground at the time, the single survivor was the severely burned 16-year-old, Adolph Gunia. Other casualties included **Daniel A. Lyle** and the mine engineer, **Selwyn M. Taylor**, who both gave their lives in rescue attempts after responding to the scene. Greatly touched by Taylor's and Lyle's sacrifice, Andrew Carnegie had medals privately minted for their families, and within two months had established a \$5 million Carnegie Hero Fund as a result.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1903 —

- Nov Koarsarge Gold Mine Fire, Virginia City, Montana
At the first alarm the 170 employees hastened to extinguish the flames. The Mine Superintendent entered the tunnel through the fire and smoke to warn the entombed miners and to aid them to escape. He returned and tried to enter the mine by the air shaft but fell from the ladder and was killed.

— 1902 —

- Jul Rolling Mill Mine Explosion, Johnstown, Pennsylvania
Mine foreman, **Harry Rodgers**; assistant mine foreman, **William Blanchard**; and fire bosses, **John Whitney** and **John Thomas** were overcome by the afterdamp while attempting to rescue other miners.
- Jul Daly West and Ontario Silver Mines Explosion, Park City, Utah
34 miners were killed following a magazine explosion in the Daly West and Ontario Silver Mines in Park City, Utah. The magazine, located in the Daly West mine, exploded after miner, John Burgy, entered carrying a lit candle. Three of the deceased were rescuers: **John McLaughlin**; **James Smith**; and **Jack Ballon**, all of whom died of asphyxiation while rendering aid and searching for survivors. McLaughlin died after making his second trip into the mine. Several of the dead were in the adjacent Ontario mine. With the exception of Mr. Burgy, all the miners died from asphyxiation.
- Feb Liberty Bell Mine Avalanche, Telluride, Colorado
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.

— 1901 —

- Jun Port Royal No. 2 Explosion and Fire, Port Royal, Pennsylvania
The initial blast occurred at about 6 p.m. on June 10. About 1 hour after the initial blast, Superintendent **William McCune** (or McComb), **Dennis Wortley**, **Michael Roy**, several other bosses, along with about 20 other men went down Shaft No. 1 in search of 4 missing miners. About 3 hours after the rescue party had been in the mine, more explosions were heard.

Four hours later, four more men volunteered to enter the mine, but as of 3 a.m. on June 11, they too had not returned. Shortly after 3 a.m., **W. Sweeney**, **Harry Beveridge** and **Frank Stratton** worked their way out of the mine and were put under

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association

Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

the care of physicians. All three of these men later died. Lawrence Settler and John Stakes were the only ones rescued from the mine. While 19 is the official death toll, it is unclear exactly how many were rescuers.

Sep Packer No. 4 Mine Roof Fall, Shenandoah, Pennsylvania
Isaac James was killed while attempting to rescue 2 miners that were caught in a roof fall in the Packer No. 4 mine of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company, a second fall occurred killing him instantly. Jeremiah Mahoney and Charles Lewis were timbering the Buck Mountain Slope when the initial fall of top rock nearly covered them. [Source document](#).

Nov Baby Mine Fire, Pocahontas, Virginia
While the fires were being fought, a small explosion occurred, which injured no one, but blew out some of the brattices and allowed the smoke and gases to pass through into the adjoining West Mine. Nine men in the West Mine were overcome by smoke and suffocated. On November 22, 1901, a rescue party of eight men was also overcome by gases in the West Mine and suffocated.

— 1899 —

Feb Diamondville No. 1 Mine Asphyxiations, Diamondville, Wyoming
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 are **John L. Russell** and **Lee Wright**.

— 1896 —

Oct No. 3 Shaft Explosion, South Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
4 killed in gas explosion, 2 fire bosses suffocated by afterdamp in attempting rescue.

— 1890 —

Apr Spring Valley Shaft No. 2 Mine Fire, Spring Valley, Illinois
Following efforts to extinguish the fire, **John Eustice**, the foreman of the mine, along with two volunteers, entered the mine to examine the extent of the damage. When they did not return, others commenced the difficult task of finding the three men amid the smoke and gas given off by the fire. The three were found within 130 yards of the shaft where they became victims of asphyxiation. The two volunteers assisting Eustice were **N. P. Akeyson** and **Jacob Williamson**.

Mine Rescuer Deaths in the United States

Compiled by Rob McGee for the United States Mine Rescue Association
Visit <http://usminedisasters.miningquiz.com/> for additional information

— 1887 —

- Apr Old Savanna No. 2 Mine Explosion, Savanna, Oklahoma
Thirteen miners were overcome by toxic gas and suffocated while attempting to rescue the 6 victims of an explosion which occurred in the Old Savanna No. 2 mine near Savanna, Oklahoma.

— 1879 —

- Sep Grizzly Mine Asphyxiations, Alta, Utah
Six men were asphyxiated in the Grizzly mine from carbon monoxide. Three of them were killed in an effort to rescue others. The cause of the accident is ascribed to smoke from the engine furnace on the tunnel level, the exit of which had become choked, and thereby smoke was driven back through the mine.

— 1873 —

- Jun Henry Clay Colliery Explosion, Shamokin, Pennsylvania
Soon after the explosion in the Henry Clay Colliery, **John Hays**, outside boss, heard the alarm of those who managed to escape, and went into the mine to rescue others. After proceeding about five hundred yards he fell, face down, in a pool of water and drowned.

— 1869 —

- Sep Steuben Shaft Mine Fire, Plymouth, Pennsylvania
108 miners were asphyxiated, 2 rescuers killed. **Thomas W. Williams** of Plymouth and **David Jones** of Grand Tunnel, entered what subsequently proved to them the pit of death.