

January 27, 1942; Wadge Mine, Mount Harris, Colo.; 34 Killed

(From Bureau of Mines report, by E. A. Morgan and E. L. Christensen)

The night shift of 38 men was in the mine when the explosion in No. 3 room off the top entry above 17 north entry occurred at 9:40 p.m. All of the 34 men in by 14 north entry were killed. Four men in the 13 north entry escaped unhurt by way of the intake slope airway.

They tried to telephone from the mine but could get no answer and so gave the alarm on reaching the surface. A party went down the intake air slope to erect stoppings at 15 north entry. Officials and men from other mines with rescue equipment arrived during the night.

Ventilation was reestablished and 33 bodies were removed by the evening of January 28; the remaining body was found and removed the next evening. Gas masks were used in exploration. The explosion traveled out the 17 and 18 north entries and up through rooms to 16 north entry, also down the main and back slopes to the faces and into 19 and 20 north entries, where gas was again ignited. Forces up the slopes died out at 13 north entry and in the intake aircourse near 16 north.

Coal dust helped to spread the explosion, and partial rock dusting may have helped to limit it. A fireman and a shot firer were attempting to move an accumulation of gas in 17 top entry with a blower fan and tubing, when it was ignited by an arc from a loading machine or by wiring from the blower (fig. 123).

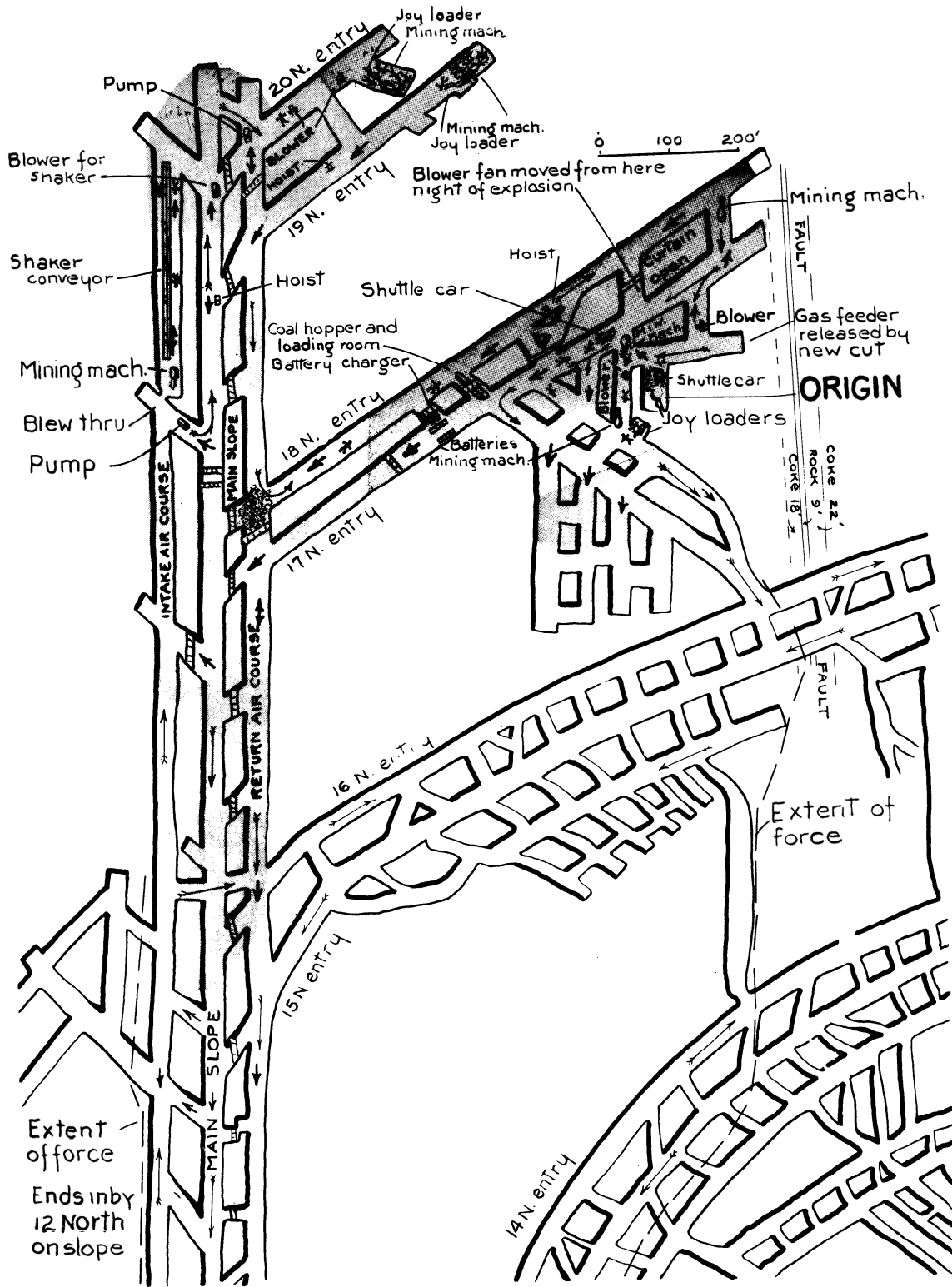


FIGURE 123.—Map of explosion area, Wadge mine, Mount Harris, Colo., January 27, 1942.