

Four Are Killed In Mine Explosion At Wilkes-Barre

Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Dec. 11 (U.P.)—Four men were killed and a fifth was missing today in an explosion which ripped through a vein of the Franklin mine of the Lehigh Valley Coal Co.

Three other miners were taken to Wilkes-Barre General hospital in "bad condition" from burns.

The explosion occurred shortly before noon at the foot of No. 9 slope of the Ross vein, where the eight men were working. The blast was believed to have been in a gas pocket.

Four bodies were taken from the mine by rescue squads. Company officials said another man was unaccounted for.

State and Federal mine inspectors rushed to the mine and went underground to the chamber.

While the search for the other body was still underway, the state and Federal agencies began investigations, together with K. F. Arbogast, company general manager.

The Franklin mine, employing approximately 250 men, is in Wilkes-Barre Township, east of the Wilkes-Barre city limits, in northeastern Pennsylvania. It suspended all operations at the colliery immediately after the blast.

Attendants at the General Hospital said they were unable to obtain identification of the injured men because of their condition. They suffered severe burns of the entire body and physicians said their condition was "bad."

The hospital later announced that two of the injured had been identified tentatively as John Gasper, 25, and Edmund Oljeski, 44, both of Mountain Top, a suburb of Wilkes-Barre.

In addition to the burns, the hospital said the men also suffered from shock.

Reports from the scene described the explosion as "terrific," although it was not determined how far underground it occurred.

When the alarm was sounded especially trained rescue squads from various collieries in the area were rushed to the mine. Rescue equipment was also sent by the Federal Bureau of Mines, which has anthracite headquarters in Wilkes-Barre.