

Gas Blast Blamed in Mine Disaster; 22 Bodies Found



Grim-faced rescue workers load the body of Kenneth Sexton, one of the 22 victims of an underground explosion at Bishop, Va., into an ambulance outside the entrance to #34 mine of the Pocahontas Fuel Co. The blast apparently killed all 22 immediately, but rescue teams were seven hours reaching the site and removing the bodies. (Wirephoto)

BISHOP, Va., Oct. 28 (AP)—Investigators descend 300 feet into an explosion-wracked tunnel at the Pocahontas Fuel company coal mine today, probing for the cause of the second disastrous blast at the site within 21 months.

Twenty-two miners were killed yesterday in the same section where 37 miners met death in a gas explosion February 4, 1957.

Crawford Wilson, chief of the West Virginia bureau of mines, called it a shocking disaster and said: "We will uncover the cause."

A formal public hearing will get under way tomorrow.

Some 5,000 persons milled near the mine shaft entrance in this Southwest Virginia mountain community while four rescue teams worked in relays to reach the missing men.

There were 188 miners in the underground chambers when the blast shook the area at 8:28 a.m.

Wilson was in a party of workers groping through the gaseous, dense tunnel towards the blast scene at midafternoon.

It was his call by special telephone hookup that brought the word to mine offices: "I want to report that 22 men are dead. It is definite there has been a gas explosion."

His report spread quickly across the hillside where the surviving miners, their families and friends of the victims were waiting in a drizzle.

Red Cross and Salvation Army workers passed out cups of coffee.

It was 5:43 p.m. when the shaft elevator reached ground level, bearing two bodies.

Howard Richardson, a veteran miner, said the bodies were scattered over an area of about 200 feet.

Wilson said it appeared the miners were in the act of running when they were felled.

By 6:15 p.m. all 22 victims had been brought out.

Most of the underground confines of the sprawling mine is located in West Virginia, although the entrance is in Virginia. Thus Wilson and the West Virginia mine office has jurisdiction over operations.

Bar Owner Outwits

'Robber' and Himself

KANSAS CITY, Oct. 28 (AP)

—Uneasy when a hard-looking character entered his downtown bar, Vincent Como stealthily wrapped \$550 in a towel and tossed it into the back room.

The customer left after a few minutes and Como, 41, breathing easier, went to get his money.

It was gone, along with the soiled towels that had just been picked up by a laundry truck driver.

Patrolman Theodore Porter found \$22 at the laundry, but \$528 is still missing.

2 Rookie Police

Dogs in St. Louis

Pass First Test

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 28 (AP)—Two of the city's four new police dogs have passed their first test of real action with honor.

The rookie dogs, trained in England as a start toward canine corps, were sent in to end a tavern fight last night.

Patrolmen Vernon Ellis and Allen Duncan were dispatched with their dogs, Jock and Prince, to the tavern where the operator was fighting with a man who