

Blast Traps 17 Miners, 12 Dead, Four Rescued

RICHWOOD, W.Va., Oct. 28 (UPI)—An underground gas explosion, the second in West Virginia within 24 hours, thundered through a coal mine at nearby Craigsville Tuesday, killing at least 12 miners.

Four men of the original 17 trapped in the mountain-side pit were rescued six hours after the blast.

Teams of rescuers heaving through the smoke-filled Burton mine of the Ogleby-Norton Coal Co. found the 12 bodies. They expected to find the remaining trapped miner in the same area.

Thirty-seven other miners working near the site of the blast managed to scramble to safety.

Conveyor belts used to haul the four survivors to safety.

h 45 Averts A.F. Crash

er and a couple of jets. Coming right at us from a little to the right.

"I yelled 'Red, look!' I shoved the yoke forward and the plane started to dive.

He pushed with me and the dive became steeper. The tanker cleared us over our left wing."

Peteler said, "We were on our assigned altitude of 18,000 feet. We were on a recognized airway."

Jack Frost Gives U.S. Cool Wink

Cool, dry air chilled a broad stretch of the country from the northern Plains into the Southeast Tuesday, bringing frost warnings and extra blanket weather to parts of the Deep South.

Light showers, with snow flurries at higher elevations, diminished in the Northeast. But heavy rains soaked Texas and parts of the Southwest, and light snow fell from Las Vegas, N.M., to Rapid City, S.D.

The Intermountain Region enjoyed mostly fair weather Tuesday, except for considerable cloudiness and a few showers in a belt from New Mexico northward to Wyoming.

hours earlier were pressed into service again to bring the dead to the surface. The bodies were removed to funeral homes in Richwood, Summersville, Webster Springs and East Raintelle, W.Va.

Among the nine bodies identified by mine officials were those of mine superintendent Olin C. Gates and his assistant, Edward Stephenson, both of Craigsville.

Two of the four rescued men were listed in serious condition at Sacred Heart Hospital here.

They are William Tucker, 34, Persinger, and Paul Davis, 43, Craigville. Both were semi-conscious when admitted to the hospital with burns.

Artie Humphrey, 40, Craigville, and Okey Donaldson, 34, Summersville, were listed in satisfactory condition. Humphrey suffered superficial burns of the face and Donaldson received a back injury.

THIS DISCOVERY of the bodies realized the worst fears expressed earlier by Crawford Wilson, state mines superintendent, who was directing rescue operations. He said there was "no hope" for the 13 men.

The threat of roof falls prompted rescuers to proceed cautiously with their operations.

A miner who escaped minutes after the blast rocked the pit said workmen were clearing a slate fall about three miles from the mouth of the pit.

"When we turned on the current to use our equipment, we heard three rapid-fire explosions in another section of the mine," he said.

TONS OF EARTH "separated" the site where the first four men were found and the remaining miners. Rescue operations were made "difficult and dangerous" by falling rock.

Percy W. Bright, an official of the Ogleby-Norton Coal Co. where the blast occurred, said the explosion was due to an accumulation of gas.

The blast occurred in the "continuous miner" section of the highly mechanized mine.

The section is where a big coal digging machine is located. The machine bores coal right out of the face of the seam. No explosives are used.

The Burton mine is near Craigsville, 13 miles north of this central West Virginia community and 60 miles east of Charleston, the state capital.

1958 Four rescued from Burton Mine



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