

Three Of Four Men Survive Cave-In At Wilkes-Barre Mine

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. (AP) — Three of four men survived a cave-in at a coal mine. The fourth, buried under some 60 to 70 tons of coal more than 300 feet underground, was declared dead.

State mines officials said today workers would continue digging on a snow-swept mountainside near this eastern Pennsylvania community for the body of Lawrence Malachefski, 37, of nearby Plymouth. They estimated the task would take several days.



UPI-Daily NEWS Facsimile.
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ne roof cave-in at a coal

Malachefski was caught directly beneath Monday's rock fall, mines officials explained. The three others were some feet away.

Two of the men had been dragged to safety an hour after the cave-in and were reported in good condition at Wilkes-Barre General Hospital, with lacerations over most of their bodies.

They were Albert Kotch, 42, of Larksville, and Anthony Saital, 59, of West Pittston.

The third man, Peter Byczkowski, 54, of Plymouth, was pulled to safety around midnight, after being trapped for some 10 hours in the underground chamber.

Ed Schrode, a reporter for the Wilkes-Barre Record, said the injured mine worker was in good spirits and talked freely to his rescuers before being taken to the hospital. His condition was reported as fair, with an injured right leg and a fractured rib.

In describing the rescue operation, Leonard Statkewicz, a board member of District 1, United Mine Workers of America,

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1964 Peter Byczkowski rescued from a mine cave-in

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said "it was tough and go all night long."

Statkewicz, who had been at the mine scene since 4 p.m., some three hours after the initial cave-in, said:

"When I first arrived in the mine we were about 20 to 45 feet from Pete. He was in good spirits. He didn't complain. As a matter of fact, he helped his own rescue.

"While we prepared to take Pete from the mine, there was evidence of another movement. We quickly made Pete as safe as we could by placing some timber and braddish work to protect him from another fall."

There were other falls, however, and state and local mine officials ordered the rescuers out several times before it was decided to go in over the top of the cave-in, a hazardous, but successful undertaking, Statkewicz said.

Byczkowski was carried to an underground first aid station, put on a stretcher, and then placed in a mining car and was brought to the surface.

The mine, the Franklin Colliery, is operated by Pagnotti Enterprises, a firm which provided much of the equipment used in the dramatic rescue of two of three trapped miners at Shepton, in August 1963.

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