

Rescued Miner Dies, 6 Missing

CLARKSBURG, W.Va. (UPI)—A coal miner found alive Sunday night died en route to the hospital.

The victim, Charles Lantz, 26, of Buckhannon, W.Va., was the youngest of seven men trapped in the Mars No. 2 mine of the Clinchfield Coal Co. near here.

When Lantz was found hope rose that the other 6 would be found alive but his death plunged the miners' families, keeping a vigil at the mine entrance, into despair.

"There's not much hope now," said one woman.

The miners were trapped at midnight Saturday night when fires broke out in four separate passages as they were moving a continuous mining machine into the tunnel to prepare for the start of work Monday.

Six rescue teams, working in relays, fought to reach the trapped men.

"All we can do is pray," said 30-year-old Mrs. Jean Kuruscz whose husband, Andy, 44, was one of the victims.

Rescue workers said there were four separate fires in the mine. Three were brought under control earlier Sunday and the fourth, which blocked a T-shaped passage where the men were believed to be, was subdued Sunday night a short time before Lantz was found.

He was brought from the mine on a stretcher and rushed to Union-Protestant Hospital here.

Still missing in addition to Kuruscz were Clell Leedy, 53, of Bluefield; Robert Savage, 57, of Rosemont; Isaac Moats, 39, of Moatsville; Kenneth Kerr, 53, of Belington; and Carl Danish, 45, of Lost Creek.

Clinchfield President George L. Rudy said the fires started when the continuous mining machine snapped a cable as it was being moved into the mine.

All seven trapped men were part of the 10-man crew working with the miners. Three others, who were nearer the entrance, escaped before the flames cut off their path.

Rescuers found Lantz on a mine "sled" a short distance to the right of the intersection of the T-shaped passage.

The mine, about 100 miles south of Pittsburgh, is eight miles from the entrance to Clinchfield's Dola Mine where methane gas explosion claimed 22 lives April 25, 1964. The Dola disaster was blamed on a spark from a continuous miner.

State and federal mine inspectors, including West Virginia Mine Director W. F. Eigenbrod, arrived at the Mars mine early Sunday.



—(AP Wirephoto)
team emerges from Mars
die W Va Sunday