

2-A The Register: Danville, Va., Friday, June 3, 1966

Five Soft Coal Miners Asphyxiated When Drill Hits 'Black Damp' Pocket

PUNXSUTAWNEY, Pa. (AP) — Five soft coal miners were asphyxiated Wednesday night when their drilling machine struck a pocket of dreaded "black damp."

Three of the victims apparently gave their lives in a vain attempt to save their companions from the deadly carbon dioxide — an odorless, tasteless gas.

Two men escaped.

The deaths at the Doverspike

Bros. Coal Co. mine, about 15 miles west of this western Pennsylvania town, were the first in the mine's 14-year history.

"The crew was operating a continuous mining machine and inadvertently cut through into an old, abandoned working," said Earl Lamont, a state mine inspector, adding: "A sudden liberation of 'black damp' engulfed and overcame them."

Dr. Robert L. Shaffer, Jefferson County coroner, said five members of the seven-man crew managed to get out of the area but two apparently were overcome where they stood.

Three of the five turned back to help the stricken pair. It cost them their lives.

The dead were identified as: John S. Kramer, 35; Samuel F. Gaul, 41; and Robert M.

White, 49, all of Punxsutawney; C. Hilton Neiswonger, 28, Mayport, and Ronald James Moore, 45, Dubois.

The survivors were James Ishman of Brookville and Orien Anthony Jr., 39, of New Bethlehem. They were unhurt.

The men were working 8,000 feet from the entrance of the Dora No. 2 mine — a tunnel cut horizontally into a hill near the small community of Dora.

Lamont said an investigation would begin Friday.

Anthony, who said he was one of five men working on the face of the mine, said he thought at first the crew had merely cut a cable.

Then, he said, one of the men opposite him appeared dizzy.

"The operator (another miner, who was not identified) says to me, 'Come on, Anthony, let's go! Get out of here! Get out of here!'" Anthony said.

He said he started running out of the mine with the operator, but when he was partially out noticed the operator had turned and gone back.

"I went a little ways back but I became dizzy," Anthony said. "It was terrible to know my friends were in there."

Scranton

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ment.

Lt. Gov. Raymond P. Shafer, who won the gubernatorial nomination with Scranton's all-out backing, said: "His advice and counsel will be sought by all Republicans. He, of course, is still governor and leader of our state, and I am certain that he will continue to be a leader of the Republican party in Pennsylvania and the nation."

State GOP Chairman Craig Truax said he was confident Scranton "is a factor in Republican politics and will continue to be."

Election

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president of Communist North Viet Nam.

Thant told reporters May 5 on returning from Europe that the question of supervising the South Vietnamese election was unrealistic because the "Soviet Union and many other powers

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