

Rescuers Say No Life Sign In Salt Mine

MORGAN CITY, La. (UPI)— Two members of a Kentucky rescue team today descended to the bottom of the quarter-mile-deep shaft of a salt mine in which 21 men have been trapped since Tuesday, but found no sign of life.

The rescuers, using self-contained breathing apparatus, reached the bottom of the shaft at 7:10 a.m. EST. They reported hearing a motor running and seeing a small fire, but no signs of life.

It took more than 30 minutes for the two men to reach the bottom of the shaft of the Cargill, Inc., mine. Going down slowly, the two men in a makeshift cage called out conditions as they were lowered into the dull-white cavern.

They said the concrete-lined walls of the shaft were in good shape but that elevator guide beams were burned out. The miners were trapped when fire roared up the shaft.

Hope that the miners would be found alive had been steadily fading since calls down the shaft brought no answer.

Then, before the two rescue workers went down, a walkietalkie with a light on it was lowered into the shaft. Nobody touched the walkietalkie in the bottom of the shaft and it was pulled back up again.

Earlier tests had shown evidence of deadly carbon monoxide at the bottom of the shaft, 16 feet in diameter.

The men, employed at the Belle Isle salt mine on the isolated Louisiana coast, were trapped when fire roared up the shaft Tuesday night, burning telephone lines and incinerating elevator cables.

The only way out of the mine is by elevator.

The blaze sent clouds of smoke billowing through the mouth of the shaft through Wednesday morning. The domed rock salt mine, accessible only by plane or boat, is surrounded by swampy Louisiana bays, and separated from the Gulf of Mexico only by a narrow strip of land. Morgan City, in south central Louisiana, is about 60 miles west of New Orleans.



JOSEPH W. MARTIN JR.
... dies at 84

Joe Martin, GOP Leader, Dies at 83

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (UPI) — Joseph W. Martin, a homespun Yankee with a rumpled cowlick who used his four years as House Speaker to mold unity into a disparate Republican Party, died Wednesday night. He was 83.

Martin who rose from a newsboy to publisher of his own newspaper to the highest position in the House of Representatives, was dead on arrival at a hospital here after collapsing at the home of relatives. Cause of death was not immediately known.

Martin served 42 years in the House as representative from Massachusetts, starting in 1925. His political career ended dramatically, when, in a Republican primary in 1966, he lost his party's nomination to Mrs. Margaret Heckler, a petite mother of three, who campaigned on the slogan "Put a Heckler in Congress."

Martin's unwillingness to heckle his colleagues in the House probably cost him his party leadership.