

Crews Rescue Second Man Coal Rush Kills Miner

By DAN SEMICK
Staff Writer

HEGINS — A 34-year-old Hegins RD miner, James Smith, was killed Tuesday when buried under a mass of coal some 11,000 feet below ground at a Good Spring area deep mine.

A second miner, Kermit E. Binkley, was rescued at 11:40 p.m. after a nine-hour digging operation. Smith's body was recovered about an hour later.

Binkley was listed in satisfactory condition at Pottsville's Good Samaritan Hospital this morning.

James Laird, inspector for the U.S. Bureau of Mines, said the two miners were found in the battery of the mine, which is a retaining wall used with a chute to control the flow of coal.

Mine inspectors believe the chute was empty Tuesday and the two miners had gone inside when the coal stopped flowing. Laird said coal flowed in on the pair while they were in the chute, covering them to their necks.

The mine on a mountain about a mile from Good Spring Route 125, was a three-man operation. The two miners had last been heard from about 11:30 a.m. Tuesday by the third miner, Howard Schade, hoisting engineer from Valley View, who was above surface, reports from the scene indicated.

Miners said last night that Schade tried to contact the men below about quitting time (2 p.m.), but received no answer.

Schade then called the neighboring Stahl Coal Company for assistance. A rescue crew of five men descended into the mine shaft about 3 p.m. and worked until 10 last night in the effort to dig out the entombed miners. A second crew relieved them at 10 and succeeded in digging out Binkley by 11:40. It was well past midnight when Smith's body was brought to the surface.

When the first crew returned to the surface, Mrs. Binkley walked over to short, rugged John Stahl. "Jack, did you see him?" she asked. Stahl answered "yes" in a quiet voice. His answers to other questions were almost whispers.

Stahl told George Gallagher, the state assistant mine safety chief, that the men were trapped near the seventh level, between 11,000 and 12,000 feet deep. "Are they alive?" someone asked. "The one is, Binkley. We gave him water," he replied.

Stahl said rescue workers were hampered because "stuff (coal) kept

coming down the chute."

Within a few minutes, the second crew of four men had joined mine inspectors below the surface to continue the digging operation.

Above ground, a few people stood at the mine opening while winds whipped and rain poured. Families of the trapped miners waited in cars nearby.

There were about 50 miners as well as state and federal inspectors standing by if

more manpower were needed. They huddled in the hoisting shanty and the red and white rescue trucks of the Independent Miners' Association. Throughout the ordeal most spoke softly if they talked at all.

When the rain subsided, several men gathered at the shaft, among them John B. Shutack, district manager of the U.S. Bureau of Mines from Wilkes-Barre, waiting for a report from Laird.

Binkley was pulled out of the mine about 11:40 p.m. and evacuated to the hospital by ambulance. Smith's body was carried out almost an hour later.

There was no official report on the extent of injuries to 35-year-old Binkley late this morning, though hospital spokesmen said he appeared to have no serious injuries.

The first rescue crew was made up of

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Rescue workers carry Kermit E. Binkley to an ambulance after he survived a mine mishap near Hegins.

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NEW YORK (AP) — Sen. James McGovern, Democrat, swept the state in the primary election Tuesday. McGovern ended up winning

1972 Kermit Binkley rescued from cavein after 9 hrs



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Sun, Dec 5, 2021