



As a nurse looks on, Mrs. Glen Jacobs talks to her son, mine blast survivor Paul McKinney, in Moab's L. W. Allen Hospital.

2 Families Full Of Joy; Others Wait—And Hope

By M. DeMAR TEUSCHER
Deseret News Staff Writer

MOAB—From as far away as Uvalde, Tex., and Northbay, Ontario, Canada, and from as close as a Moab trailer court they came.

Most of them sat quietly, hoping for news that would bring them joy or heartache. Some were at the Moab hospital. Some gathered at the Texas Gulf Sulphur Company's potash mine shaft.

They were the wives, parents, brothers, sisters, children of the men trapped deep in the red-earth Colorado plateau.

Tuesday when an explosion ripped through a drift some 2,500 feet below the earth's surface.

3 Joyful Families

For two families there was joy. Two men were pulled alive from the deep pit.

For the rest there was only the agonizing wait—the knowledge that at least eight men are known to be dead. Which eight? Maybe some of the families know. The company officials and the rescue crews are not saying whose bodies were found.

Attractive, blonde Myrna Hanna and her four children

are among the happy ones. Hungry, laughing, Don Blake Hanna was one of the two men to get out of the mine alive.

Happy Wife

Dark-eyed expectant mother Myrna McKinney is also happy. Her husband, Paul, is also safe in the Moab hospital. Mrs. McKinney and Mrs. Glen Jacobs, Norwood, Colo., mother of Mr. McKinney, came happily as they came out of the hospital.

From their hospital beds, Blake Hanna and Paul McKinney can talk a little about their experiences.

Smiling Eyes

Both have eyes that smart constantly, a reminder that deathly gases were present in the mine depths. Both are grateful for the coolness of the hospital bed after the 130-degree heat of the mine.

Mr. Hanna, the more volatile of the two, told how he and two other men were working on an air vent in one of two parallel drifts being bored into the mountain.

"The concussion knocked us to the ground," he said. "I knew there had been an explosion somewhere but I did not know where."

They started, with some others, toward the main shaft but were driven back by heavy smoke. Then they went to work building a barricade in the end of the drift—a barricade against smoke and gas.

"Finally, I figured we could try to get out. I asked who wanted to go with me. Paul said he would and we headed out," Mr. Hanna recalled.

Passed 3 Bodies

En route out, they tried to repair the air line enough to get pure air back behind the barricade where their fellow miners (some say five, some say seven) waited. On the way, they passed the bodies of three dead companions.

After 14 hours underground, both McKinney and Hanna expressed joy—and some other almost routinely normal reactions—when they arrived at the hospital and the realization that they were really safe.

"No Hunger"

"Man, I am hungry," said Hanna—after he had embraced his happily-wedding wife. "I want a drink of water and something for my eyes," was McKinney's comment. "And I want to talk to my wife."

"She'll be right away," promised his mother, Mrs. Glen Jacobs of Norwood, Colo. The nurse brought the water and the eye compresses.

Thank God!

"Thank God! Thank God!" softly repeated Mrs. Jacob as she watched her husky, 22-year-old son in the bed. "I prayed all the time."

Quiet Myrna McKinney prayed too. She is expecting her first child soon. Wednesday turned out to be a good day for her after a night of anxiety.

23 Identified But Fate Still Unclear

Two men have been rescued from the Texas Gulf Sulphur potash mine at Cave Creek. The body of one miner has been removed, but identification has not been announced.

Seven more bodies have been spotted in the bottom of the mine, near the mine shaft entrance.

Five more are believed alive deep in the east "drift" tunnel. That leaves 10 men unaccounted for in the disaster which occurred Tuesday afternoon.

The rescuers are Don Blake Hanna, 27, of Price, and Paul McKinney, 22, of Moab.

The other miners in the 2,500-foot mine have been identified as:

- 1—M. H. Christensen Jr., Helper.
- 2—M. H. Christensen Jr., Moab.
- 3—Lawrence Davidson, Moab.
- 4—Joe Fox, Orangeville.
- 5—C. Johnson, Dragerton.
- 6—Fred Kewley, Helper.
- 7—John Thack, Moab.
- 8—Charles Byrge, Helper.
- 9—Bud Jones, Moab.
- 10—T. Truesman, Toronto, Canada.
- 11—Joe Kessler, Moab.
- 12—L. Hudson, Moab.
- 13—E. LeBlanc, Elliott Lake, Ontario, Canada.
- 14—W. Barber, Moab.
- 15—P. Ryland, Grants, N.M.
- 16—Robert Bohn, Moab.
- 17—Charles Clark, Moab.
- 18—Kenneth Milnes, Moab.
- 19—W. Head, Treston, Saskatchewan.
- 20—J. N. Hollings, Moab.
- 21—Keith Schwarz, Dove Creek, Colo.
- 22—Rene Roy, Ontario, Canada.
- 23—Grant H. Kellik, Moab.

Trips Down, Up Leave Little Air For Rescue

By ROBERT MULLINS and PAUL SWENSON
Deseret News Staff Writers

CANE CREEK MINE, Grand County—The journey to the center of the earth takes half an hour—round trip, 40 minutes.

Rescue workers who take the plunge and breathe from bottled oxygen cannot work more than 45 minutes at the bottom without becoming exhausted and surfacing for fresh air.

That is why at least five miners buried alive must wait the tedious repair of an "air base" in the bottom of the mine shaft before rescuers can get about the business of getting to them and getting them out.

Abandon Plan

When Don Blake Hanna and Paul C. McKinney rode bucket elevators back to life from the shaft's dark gulf Wednesday, rescue officials chucked the air-base repair plan and decided to go as fast as they could and as far as they could with oxygen tanks.

With two men already out, they wanted to rescue the others while hopes were still high.

But a trip that consumes two-thirds of your oxygen supply going and coming doesn't leave enough air for the "doing," it was soon sadly learned.

"We should have stuck with the original plan," a rescue official lamented, and at 5 a.m. Thursday authorities went back to it.

Work Furlously

Chances began working furiously to repair five sections of main vent tubing in the bottom of the concrete shaft that will restore the "air base"—air ducts it will work for ventilation of the shaft.

The job could take a day and a night—24 hours—and will take a minimum of 12 hours, officials predicted.

Meanwhile, one major monkey wrench had apparently been satisfactorily removed from the rescue machinery Thursday.

The simple expedient of a bell at the end of a rope and a series of reverberating, pre-arranged signals are serving as communication between the men in the shaft and those on the surface.

Cardinal Rule

Rescuers made it clear Wednesday that they would not break a cardinal rule of mine rescue work by moving away from their source of air without communication. The bell rope was devised to tie the pit to the surface.

The rope was plenty of other hazards—geological and psychological still lurking in the pit Thursday, however.

The sun is a memory when you are 2,500 feet underground. Deadly poisonous carbon monoxide gas contaminates what fresh air that finds its way to the depths, and as a crowning touch, crews are working in the mainstream of an underground "waterfall."



Strong hands lift mine disaster survivor Don Blake Hanna (on stretcher) into waiting ambulance for trip to Moab hospital.

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Texas Gulf President Voices Deep Concern

"Our only concern is for the men and their families," said the president of Texas Gulf Sulphur Co. Thursday, Claude O. Stephens, of New York.

He is heartened that contact has been established with one group and that the first men have been brought safely to the surface," he said.

"Twenty-four of the original crew are employees of the Harrison International Construction Co., a contractor for TGS, and one man is a TGS employee.

Mining operations have not yet started, but were expected to begin in the next few weeks, said Mr. Stephens.

"Everything that can be done by TGS and Harrison Co. is being done and will continue to be done," he said.

"Dr. Charles F. Fogarty, senior vice president of the mining company, is at the scene, and I will fly there Thursday," Mr. Stephens said, from his New York office. He expressed gratitude "to

our friends and neighbors in the mining industry in Utah and nearby states who have come forward so generously to assist in rescue operations."

Construction of the \$25 million potash mine and processing plant at Moab has been under way since early 1961. It is now in its final building phase.

Harrison holds the contract for sinking the main shaft 2,797 feet and for the underground construction work.

The firm is widely experienced in underground development and has sunk more than 500 mine shafts, of which more than 20 have been over 3,000 feet deep, Mr. Stephens said.

Surface facilities of the plant have been completed. When the underground installation is completed, the mine will have an annual production rate of 500,000 tons—expected to be reached by mid-1964.

The potash deposits in the area are believed to be the largest and richest in the nation, Mr. Stephens said.

Women Stand Hospital Vigil

It's Hardest To Wait

By STEVE HALE
Deseret News Staff Writer

MOAB—When the first ray of light came from the ambulance stretched the extra of Miss Mary, the Milton, an attractive blonde waiting in noble jabs at the Moab hospital, she began to wait.

Then she ran for the emergency entrance.

Already there were wives, mothers and daughters of other men trapped in the Cave Creek mine — Mrs. Robert June, Mrs. Lawrence Davidson, Mrs. Keith Schaefer.

Mrs. Schaefer's brother-in-law, John Schaefer, had been burned in the explosion of a gas pocket in the mine two weeks earlier. He was still in the hospital.

Now her husband was involved in the latest disaster.

Mrs. Davidson had spent the night at home by her telephone. "I only sang ones," she said.

The officers told me my husband was one of the men in the mine.

They knuckled in a tight, little knot, all up to the strain, for a peek at that first stretcher.

Older pulled from one of the large black ambulances. Aides wheeled it up the ramp into the emergency room.

Every eye fastened on a large man with a ruddy complexion, prone on the stretcher. There was a tense silence. No one seemed to recognize him. Then someone called, "That's McKinney!"

The second stretcher was fast on the wheels of the first. The burden suddenly raised up as it entered the emergency room, and victim Don Blake Hanna, about as tall as a man in the through.

"Your husband is all right!" The woman collapsed in a state of semi-shock. Hanna referred to the one of the men, here from, but still in the mine.

Meanwhile, the mother of Paul McKinney had arrived and wept her gratitude.

"Oh, thank God that he is here! They say he is not bad. We've prayed all night on the way from Colorado that he would be all right."

The others waited for the next scream of another ambulance siren.