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started trying to fight it, using stone dust and using water, whatever they could get ahold of. The mine rescue people and all the management people were notified. And they thought they had it under control, and then you'd hear like a thunderstorm. I was working in there. You could hear like a roar of thunder, and then all of a sudden the flame would come out onto the level and would run like a blowtorch till it burnt itself out. They even tried with the large CO extinguishers, trying to put the thing out. There was no way to get the fire out-- so management people decided to retreat and seal off the levels. That happens at a lot of places, the men will stay--not all of them, I guess, all the time--but the majority will, if you ask them--and they will do everything they can to help put that fire out. Because I guess the miners look at it, if you let it burn, you have no job to go back to. And a guy will say. Why do people do that? Why are people in mine rescue? My only answer to that is, if you were trapped underground, it would be a great feeling to know that some of the other miners were going to come down and help you out. And I think this is why people volunteer to do that, they try and do whatever they can to help their fellow worker, I guess. I guess I asked myself a thousand times. What the hell am I doing here! I suppose you could say that. Yes I did, I often asked myself that. You ask a guy, why does he go to war with a gun? He doesn't know why he's doing it. It's a duty and a responsibility, I suppose. I think it's the same with the mine rescue. No different from the fireman that gets up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning on a wintry night, and we lay in our beds, and goes down there and risks his life on that building. You ask the guy, it's not for the money. Every time a person will put on a piece of that equipment, in my opinion, he's putting his life right on the line. That's what he's doing. Because at any time, if somebody makes a mistake or something happens to that piece of equipment, and you're surrounded by deadly gas, there's a possibility you're going to lose your life. So you ask yourself. Why should I do that? I don't know, I've never come up with the answer to that. And I've been at it a long time. Gordon Whalen: I'm pretty good at sizing up men. The age limit for service in the rescue corps is 45. What I do, I go to the pit bosses, the underground manager, I tell him I'm short 5, 6 men, whatever I need. Probably I've got 5 guys here going to retire this year. I won't wait till those men are retirement age, I'll take them in before that, so I have replacements. He might give me 8 or 10 names of guys that he knows are reliable and so on. I tell them. Come see me. I don't make any judgments till I talk to him and size him up. Anyhow, I'll have them in here one at a time and chat with them. And maybe out of 7 or 8, I might take 3, or 2, You're looking for a guy that seems composed, not jumpy or neurotic. I'll have a pretty good picture of what they're like when they leave. Now the training is more important, I mean, I don't think the selection system is important. The training--they're taught a lot of technical mining. They're taught all about the different mine gases, their weights, their flammability, their toxicity. Some gases are heavier than others, some are lighter than others. Carbon monoxide is lighter than air. Carbon dioxide is heavier. Sulfur dioxide is heavier than air. So,



knowing the weight of a gas might save his life. If he's travelling, he might get out through an area that has a small amount of carbon monoxide in it, but enough to kill him. Well, that'll be near the roof. If he bent low and crawled, he'd probably get through it in safety. If it's an oxygen deficiency that caused the change in the air.

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