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that's heavier than air. The gas that usually forms when the oxygen content drops is carbon dioxide. That'll be near the floor. If he had to travel through an oxygen-deficient atmosphere, rather than one with carbon monoxide in it, it'd be better for him to stay erect, and stay away from that gas. So that's just a practical application of the knowledge of gases. Every miner should know that. Every miner doesn't know it. So we use the rescue corps in a teaching capacity, too, in the pit. They talk about those things, and they tell the other fellows, you know. We had a fire in 12, and we got every man. They had to come through a bad atmosphere in 12--that was in '73--Number 12 Colliery. Now we got about a hundred and some men out of that mine. We had to take them through a bad atmosphere, and take them right alongside of a fire, actually. But there were about 4 or 5 mine rescue trained guys there that got those men out. They told them, "Get on your hands and knees and stay there, and crawl through the smoke." And they all got out. Had they walked normally, they would have all died. And another thing. The shortest way out of that mine would have been the returns, rather than the intake airway. Well, that's where they all wanted to head for. And those fellows told them, "You'll die if you go that way. You've got to stay here in the intake airway, to get out," And they followed them, and they all got out--oh no, one--we lost one fellow out of a hundred and some. And he had been located--he wandered off. They were traveling through smoke, remember, and crawling. And he was near the end. And a mine rescue fellow stayed at the end. They must have come through a particularly heavy cloud of smoke, and this fellow wandered off. They never knew that the other fellow was missing till they got to the surface. So this is the type of thing they're taught. We don't teach them formulas, but we teach them all there is to know about mine gases-- to understand the danger of them. And we teach them a lot of mine ventilation. We probably take 3 or 4 periods of mine gas and ventilation, and then we start teaching. With Number 26 Colliery behind him, Gordon Whalen stands in a mine rescue training area, posts and boards set up like a room-and-pillar situation. "The army can't start wars to practise. Well, we use competitions • training schemes and exercises. But no matter how many problems you create for them, it'll never be exactly what happens when they get down there. No, never exactly. A lot of preparation gives them good knowledge. But as far as what it's really like when the pit is burning • you can't create that on the surface. them about the apparatus. And the different types of apparatus we use. There's the self-rescuer--miners carry that on their belt. It's good for up to 170 carbon monoxide. But you must have enough oxygen in the air to live on. So, the instrument we use is the locked safety lamp. And that goes out at 16% oxygen in the air, So men retreating out of a fire area with self-rescuers, somebody has to be with them with a safety lamp, to test to make sure there's enough oxygen in the air. They've got to get their air from the outside. The self-rescuer just filters it.



Just changes the carbon monoxide to carbon dioxide, which is in your body all the time, anyhow. Those mine rescue trained guys are sort of like apostles for safety, or escape, or what to do when there's a disaster in the mine. For instance, many people think that you have to be in smoke to breathe carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide will kill you long before you ever see smoke. A guy two miles from a fire died of carbon monoxide poisoning--an engine operator, never even knew there was a fire in the mine, In Springhill, 1956: a certain number of men sealed themselves off, and we got them out three days after, the rescue teams did. Every man that tried to make his way out died in that mine. And the guys that stayed put and sealed themselves off, lived--all of them. This is where my guys are more or less a- postles. They're always talking this stuff any chance they get, and explaining to any group of new men in the pit. They say, "How the hell do I get out of here if they get a fire?" They'll explain to them exactly what they should do. Put on your self-rescuer as soon as you hear of a fire, don't wait for smoke and flame. If there's an accident in the mine, somebody hurt-- "Oh, he's a dragerman"--immediately they send for those guys. Out of 36 men, there might be two or three in each section, "Oh, he's mine rescue--get him down here," And they're immediately handed over complete charge, and they take complete charge. They're there, you know. 'j :ML-:" (67)