

Blast Gas Fatal To Miner in Hunt for Silver

Special to the Tribune

FILLMORE, UTAH - A Walnut Creek, Calif., man was found dead at the bottom of a 60-foot mine shaft Thursday about 1 a.m., about six hours after he and a companion had gone into the shaft to search for silver ore.

The victim of apparent carbon monoxide poisoning was DeVon Stansfield, 36, said Millard County Sheriff Calvin Stewart.

Awaited Clearance

A companion, Lawrence Oliphant, 42, Orem, told officers he and Mr. Stansfield had set off a dynamite charge in the mine Wednesday about 3 p.m. and had waited until 7 p.m. for gasses to clear.

Mr. Stanfield then entered the mine shaft and collapsed at the bottom. After entering the shaft in an unsuccessful attempt to rouse the victim and bring him to the surface, Mr. Oliphant set out to get help, reaching a Forest Service camp about 9 p.m.

The shaft is in Bear Canyon in an area called Blue Ledges, about nine miles east of Fillmore and two miles from the nearest jeep trail.

Sheriff Calls Posse

Sheriff Stewart organized a 20-man horseback posse and they got to within 3/4 mile of the site, then climbed up the canyon wall to the mine.

An unidentified doctor among the rescuers initially termed the death of apparent carbon monoxide poisoning. An autopsy at Utah Valley Hospital, Provo, substantiated the diagnosis.

Mr. Oliphant, treated at Fillmore LDS Hospital for exhaustion, was listed in good condition.

The partner said Mr. Stanfield was 36 Thursday.