



How Americans Engineered the Rescue of the Chilean Miners

In all the excitement created by the rescue of the Chilean miners, which has been called a miracle, very little recognition has been given to the American companies and individuals who were involved in the entire undertaking from the very beginning, and without which there would have been no rescue. Who were they? According to an e-mail sent to me by my good friend Edward Wagner, a Republican activist in Massachusetts, here are the facts.



It was Schramm Inc. of West Chester, Pennsylvania, that built the drills and equipment used to reach the trapped miners. The borough of West Chester has honored Schramm for the role the company played in rescuing the 33 trapped miners in Chile.?? It was the company's own T-130XD drill rig that drilled the rescue shaft that was used to bring the trapped miners to the surface after 69 days. And another Schramm rig drilled the initial hole that was used to communicate and provide food to the miners while the rescue was under way. In addition, it was the Center Rock Company of Berlin, Pennsylvania, that built the drill bits used to reach the miners.

UPS, the American shipping company, delivered the 13-ton drilling equipment? from Pennsylvania to Chile in less than 48 hours. The Atlanta-based shipper was responsible for seven shipments of drill bits and heavy equipment that were mandatory for the rescue mission.

UPS Humanitarian Supply Chain Logistics Director Chip Chappelle confirmed that UPS made shipments for what is called "Plan B," the operation that reached the miners first. The roughly 50,000 pounds in equipment was sent from New York and Miami to Santiago, Chile, with UPS acting as a freight forwarder.

Crews from Layne Christensen Company of Wichita, Kansas, and its subsidiary Geotec Boyles Bros. worked the drills and machinery to locate and reach the miners and then enlarge the holes to ultimately rescue them.

Working as a team, Layne and Geotec drilled a 5-inch hole nearly 2,300 feet, reamed it to 12 inches and finally to 26 inches in diameter, large enough to accommodate the "Phoenix" rescue capsule.



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Jeff Hart of Denver, Colorado, was called off his job drilling water wells for the U.S. Army's forward operating bases in Afghanistan to lead the drilling crew that reached the miners. On reaching Chile he spent the next 33 days on his feet, operating the drill that finally provided a way out for 33 trapped miners.

"You have to feel through your feet what the drill is doing; it's a vibration you get so that you know what's happening," explained Hart. A muscular, taciturn man with callused hands and a sunburned face, Hart normally pounds rock for oil or water.

A cheer went up as families and rescue workers joined in a celebration when the drill broke through. "I'm on top of the world," Hart told a TV reporter.

"This success required the extra special knowledge and skills only our team could provide," said Dave Singleton, water resource division president for Layne Christensen. "It took the drillers 33 days to reach the 33 miners. "Had Layne and Geotec not been there, it probably would have taken until Christmas for 'Plan A' or 'Plan C' to break through," Singleton noted. "We cut more than two months from the original estimate."

Atlas Copco Construction Mining Company of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, provided consulting on how to make drilling equipment from different sources work together under differing pressure specifications. Aries Central California Video of Fresno, California, designed the special cameras that were lowered nearly a mile into the ground, sending back videos of the miners. Company spokesperson Jim Lozano said rescuers were so satisfied with the product they paid for a second camera as a back up in the rescue operation. The cameras are designed to inspect water wells and boreholes and reach a depth of more than 5,000 feet.

Zephyr Technologies of Annapolis, Maryland, made the remote monitors of vital signs that the miners wore during their ascent. The 33 miners being rescued wore chest straps made by the Annapolis company to monitor their vital signs.

NASA engineers designed the "Phoenix" capsule that brought the miners to the surface, and provided medical consulting, special diets and spandex suits to maintain the miners' blood pressure as they were brought back to the surface. Even the sunglasses the miners wore to protect their eyes from sunlight were donated by high-end sunglasses manufacturer Oakley of California. The company let the miners pick between either the Path or Range models from its Radar line — the glasses start at \$180. The donation came after a Chilean journalist approached the company, explaining that the miners would need eye protection after having been trapped in the dark mine for so long.

Canadians and South Africans were also involved in the rescue mission. Precision Drilling Corp. of Canada, and Murray & Roberts of South Africa drilled backup rescue shafts in case the American rig failed. It didn't.

But credit must be given to Chile's remarkable American-educated President, Sebastian Piñera, for his hands-on leadership during the rescue. As a result, Chile's prestige has been greatly enhanced. As Chile's first conservative President in two decades, Piñera, a businessman, represents the spirit of free enterprise and its potential for Chile's economic future.

From the beginning of the mine accident, the government of Chile, under the impressive leadership of President Sebastián Piñera, took charge of the rescue operation. Contrasts cannot be more striking between Piñera's and Obama's belated and ineffectual handling of the BP Gulf oil disaster. Unlike Obama, who finally accepted other governments' offers of help only late into the Gulf disaster, Piñera



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turned to the world for help at the very beginning.

"Chile is not the same country that it was 69 days ago," Piñera said, beaming, after greeting and hugging each of the miners as they were lifted to safety in the American-made metal capsule through a long shaft. "We are more respected."

Piñera ran companies, met payrolls, and knew what the world of business was like. Obama was a radical community organizer, a socialist with a bias against free enterprise, a political manipulator. The difference between the two men is enormous. What America needs is a President like Piñera.

Dr. Samuel L. Blumenfeld is the author of nine books on education including *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*, *The Whole Language/OBE Fraud*, and *The Victims of Dick & Jane and Other Essays*. Of *NEA: Trojan Horse in American Education*, former U.S. Senator Steve Symms of Idaho said: "Every so often a book is written that can change the thinking of a nation. This book is one of them." Mr. Blumenfeld's columns have appeared in such diverse publications as *Reason*, *The New American*, *The Chalcedon Report*, *Insight*, *Education Digest*, *Vital Speeches*, *WorldNetDaily*, and others.



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