Safety ‘Hero’ Remembered by Co-Workers

A worker hailed as a hero in a 2001 steel plant explosion in Wales died from severe burns after falling into molten waste at the same plant five years later.

Kevin Downey, a married 49-year-old father of two, died in the burn unit of a Swansea hospital. He fell into a piece of equipment called a “slag runner” while working in a blast furnace. A spokesman for Corus steelworks said a preliminary investigation had found no evidence of an explosion or catastrophic failure that could have contributed to Downey’s fall.

He had worked at the plant since leaving school. A coworker said everyone was devastated at the loss of the long-term employee.

Downey was called a hero for his actions during a 2001 explosion at the same plant, in which three workers were killed and several others were critically injured. He shut down a furnace and ensured the area was safe. Downey also searched for survivors and helped carry injured workers.