Deep Mine Roof Control

Early Fletcher Timbering Machine

Fletcher Roof Ranger I Single Head Bolter

Bob and Jim Fletcher during the seconds necessary for set-up — all without requiring the operator to venture under unsupported roof. But it hasn’t always been so. Let’s look at today’s workday on a fully-equipped Fletcher dual-head roof bolter.

Today’s operator slips into a compartment protected above by a heavy steel canopy. Within inches of his hands are easy-to-operate joystick controls especially designed and located to reduce fatigue over long hours in the mine. Emergency de-energizing controls are within quick reach if needed. Drill steel, bolts and resins for today’s shift have been loaded into trays and placed atop the machine, so there’s little need for repetitive bending and lifting. After getting word that the continuous miner has moved out of the way, the operator checks the machine one more time and gently pushes the trim controls. The hiss of the hydraulic system reassures him as the bolter moves into position to install the first bolt rows of the day.

Assisted by front and rear lift systems used to prevent hang-ups on rough bottom, the bolter is soon in position. Without leaving the protection of the cab, the operator extends the machine’s massive temporary roof support forward, and sets it solidly in the row to be bolted. He exits the protective compartment, and moves forward — not walking between the rib and the machine, but on a special walkway provided up the center of the machine’s chassis. Positioned between the drill boom on the outside, and the temporary roof support (TRS) on the inside, two operators now load drill steel into the heads, drill to the proper depth, and install the resins and bolts. The drill heads swing to the full width of the entry, allowing the entire row to be secured without a machine move, and where necessary, the drill heads tilt for angle drilling in truss installations or horizontally into ribs.

Microprocessor “feedback” sensors automatically read “top” conditions, and adjust the drill speed, feed rate and torque to penetrate the stone efficiently, with minimal wear on bits. Drill cuttings and rock dust are captured internally by an MSHA-approved system as the drill steel spins. When the row is complete, the drill booms and TRS fold away, and the machine moves to its next position, or allows the miner to resume progress at the face.

For more information about Fletcher and its equipment, call 304.525.7811 or visit www.jhfletcher.com.

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Fletcher HDDR Dual Head Bolter

CHDDR with Mesh and Material Handling