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down the story from them. Then you can put me in the clink." So he got the Victoria Cross, but he only got to be a corporal, because he had no education. He could just barely scratch out his own name. He came back from Siberia in the boat ahead of us. And the morning we landed in Vancouver, we got a newspaper. And there it was: "Returned Soldier Shot Bartender in Hull, Quebec." That was him. The only thing he said: "That makes 52." Kristopher Mayich, Whitney Pier: I came home. (To Croatia. Mr. Mayich had served in the Austro-Hungarian Army.) And I was a couple of years up there. Then I got married. No place for me up there. Somehow the agent was in Dubrovnik in Dalmatia, picking out men to come to Canada. And I went up there, to Dubrovnik, and I made application. By golly, two weeks after, my application was passed. I got a ticket--I went to travel, get out of the country. 1926. I left a wife and four kids home. I boarded the ship in Antwerpen in Belgium. I was seasick when I came across. Took me 11 days from Antwerpen to Saint John, New Brunswick. I couldn't talk English at that time. I talk Italian, I talk Russian, and Hungarian. Anywhere I went, I found somebody in this country that I could talk to. A Russian picked me up. He said, "You come with me?" I said, "Yes. How much are you going to pay me?" "Five dollars a month." "Well, my friend," I said, "I didn't come down here to slave, I came down here to work. Get away from my sight." He left. (You finally got miners' papers in Cape Breton.) In New Waterford, we got a job in 16 mine. Next day we went to work, 3 o'clock. I'm not a superstitious man. I don't believe in those things that they talk about--witches and all that. But when I went to 16 mine up there, when I looked in the shaft there--a mountain in Italy came in front of my eyes. A hill where I was buried in, in a cell, with the gas. We were in underground, all the battalion. We had a hole alongside the road. In times they were shelling the road; people ran in to those holes. We were buried there. A gas shell exploded on the door. That blocked the door. Some gas went in; we got our gas masks on. And we were working on that, one after the other, with little shovels, trying to get some fresh air in. We were trapped in 11 o'clock in the evening; 9 o'clock in morning, we got fresh air in it. All the time, gas masks on. (You were digging all that time?) All the time, one after the other. You couldn't stay too long up there. Little while, see, and you turn around, and the other fellow came behind you. That door was plugged. (Did you have light?) No, no light, no. (How many people?) Thousand. A full battalion. Well, that came in front of my eyes. I went back outside--New Waterford, all right. I looked back in there, that mine again--I see the place in northern Tyrol, where we were buried underneath a hill. And I said to myself, "I'm not going to work, in the mine. I was buried alive one time, I don't want to be buried again." The other fellows jumped on me. "Why are you doing that for? Why don't you go to work?" "No, no good." "Are you scared to go in the mines?" "I'm not scared of anything. But I don't want to work up there." But I didn't tell them what I saw. I went to the lamphouse, I blew the lamp out. "What's the matter, boy? No work?" "No, no work." I went home. (Tell me, what was the war for?) For nothing. I told you yesterday: I was fighting some Italian fellow; he was wounded



that night. Second of August, 1915. In the Italian line. He was my enemy. He was in the Italian army, I was in the Austro-Hungarian army. We were about, probably, 100 feet one from the other. If I had seen him, I'd shoot him. If he saw me, he'd shoot me. And we met in 1946 here in Sydney, in the coal wash plant. Our foreman said, "They were fighting together in the night in war time, and they came to Canada, make the peace between brothers." Joking, you know. (The army you were in, when the war was over, I guess they felt that that side lost the war. Did you feel you lost the war?) No, I was glad to see it was over. I didn't gain anything. If we win, I wouldn't gain anything. Lots of soldiers were like myself, in the trenches, around the trenches for 4 years, something like that. They thought that war was never going to be over. (Do you ever think about the war any more?) What do you mean? (Well, do you dream about the war?) Oh well, when I first came home, every night, I was getting up, even after I was married--get up, go open doors, and get the broom, shooting. After I got married, I used to get out. My wife came after me in the yard--I woke up. So I woke up like this, and I saw her, and I was in the yard. I had the broom in my hands. That was the last time. (19