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Published by Ronald Caplan on 1996/6/1

In 1965 I was appointed the Provincial Inspector of Mines. That entailed going to the various collieries and examining the collieries for ventilation, and all the things pertaining to the Coal Mines Regulation Act, which was not followed very good. But when you compare it to the mess that they done out in Westray Mine, they were angels here! But that Number 12 was always on my mind (the New Waterford Explosion of 1917). That telegram. So when I used to go into Number 12 mine and that area where the explosion occurred in 1917--I did get up (there) and take a look at it sometimes just for curiosity to have a look at where those men were congregated on that day. A lot of them that I knew, a lot of them that I worked with after. You see, it happened in 1917 and thirteen-and-a-half years later I was working in the pit myself. So some of the men who were actually into this explosion, the younger ones, that is, I knew them. I even worked with some of the older fellows, some of the officials that were in charge of Number 12. But anyway, I used to go down into the Nim-

CAPE BRETON /: GLASS / / 19 MITCHELL PL. / SYDNEY, NS BIP 1T8 / PHONE 562-2817 • FAX 564-9889 Serving All of Cape Breton 24- HOUR COMMERCIAL EMERGENCY SERVICE (Eapp irrnti M You're always welcome to come and enjoy die wami hospitality of Cape Breton Bed and Breakfasts - an island experience that goes hand in hand with our unique and splendid scener'. If you appreciate the personal touch and all the comforts of a home, then check into a Cape Breton B&B on your island vacaticni. Cape Breton Island 1-800-565-9464 for information her 12 pit and I always had that in my mind --the terrible day that happened. And so I would get up and just take a peek...then I'd go down to the real area where the ac? tion was. So Nimber 12 between 1970 and '73 was being programmed to continue While they shut down one mine in Glace Bay. They were going to shut down one mine. But she was programmed to go. Should have never been going at all, gas was too heavy and the reach for coal was too far from the sur? face. They had three mines within one, they were just transferring from one slope to another and then finally to the surface.... On the third of March in 1973, about twen? ty-minutes-after-three in the morning, I got a call from a fellow by the name of Barry Matheson, he was the lamp timekeeper in Number 12. So he called up. He was on the phone and the person who was supposed to call me was the manager. The manager was busy, he was trying to get the men out of the mine because there was a fire. I asked him where the fire was, he said he didn't know for sure but he thought it was down on Number 3 slope and it was out of control. So there were 119 men in the mine. I went down, I looked at the tote board, 119 men there. So I talked to the manager, the man? ager was on the telephone and what he was do? ing was putting evacuation orders through. So I said to him, "Okay, you do what you got? ta do. That's okay, I'll go myself." So I got ready and I went down in the mine. So I went down the mine and I got down to the Number 3 deep and they were taking up their men. The rake was coming up. The rake is a car--they call it a rake--it's for hauling men. They're little low cars that the men ride in. And so they were hauling like hell to get out, they wanted to get out of the pit, you see, the



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