

Death Toll Rises to 7 In Mine Explosion; 5 Hurt, 68 Escape

New Agitation Develops For Federal Inspection Of All Coal Workings

By the Associated Press.

BECKLEY, W. Va., Dec. 18.—The death toll of the nation's sixth major coal mine blast of 1940 stood today at seven.

Five other miners were injured in the explosion yesterday two miles back in the No. 4 operation of the Raleigh Coal and Coke Corporation. Doctors said one of those may not recover.

All bodies were brought out about four hours after the explosion shook a portion of the workings, which are directly beneath the streets of this Southern West Virginia soft coal "capital." Sixty-eight workers in unaffected areas of the mine escaped uninjured.

The dead: W. M. Kirk, 41; Ernest Anderson, 28; John P. Yost, jr., 20; Charles Patrick, 52; Ernest Hill, 36; Charles Hairston, 59, and Luther Pack, 41. The latter three were colored.

267 Is 1940 Toll.

In five previous disasters this year, 267 workers have been killed.

As is customary in the coal fields, all mines in the area were closed today, out of respect for the victims, and investigators delayed the start of their probe until tomorrow.

Superintendent Ellsworth Shriver said the mine was not gaseous. Preliminary reports did not indicate whether coal dust or gas had caused the blast.

Man Saves Three.

Hero of the rescue was 44-year-old John Ware, who, with only a driller's nose guard as protection against deadly fumes, crawled 600 feet to locate three injured men.

"I went down the entry until I came to three men who were hurt and I saw one man who was dead," he said.

"I went on down the passage and found Elmer Warden, the foreman, who had been thrown against a wall and had his head cut.

Mr. Ware and the foreman located a mine motor and brought it to the blast scene and carried the three injured men to the drift mouth.