

8 Trapped Deep in Coal Mine

GREENVILLE, Ky. (UPI)—At least eight miners were trapped a mile and a half underground Wednesday when a slate fall touched off an explosion in one of the country's largest soft coal mines.

A safety inspector said three rescue teams had drilled close to the trapped men and were attempting to make contact with them. Recovery operations were underway from the mine mouth.

The explosion occurred at mid-afternoon at the sprawling River Queen Mine, a Peabody Coal Co. operation about three miles west of this western Kentucky community.

About 30 men were working in the mine at the time.

One miner who escaped, Layvern C. Drake, 34, Beaver Dam, Ky., was injured and required hospitalization. He was reported in satisfactory condition.

Cecil Ledford, mine superintendent, was one of those who escaped the explosion.

He declined to offer any reason for the blast.

Ledford warned newsmen not to question miners.

"If any of you news people attempt to talk to miners I will throw all of you out of here," he said.

Ledford recently was discharged from a hospital for a previous mine accident injury.

Relatives of trapped miners were ushered into the company's main building at the mine and newsmen were not permitted to enter and question them.