

Eric Korpi

Thirteen

TRUCK DRIVERS

"Every day you are in a dangerous situation. You just have to make sure you are using your head and thinking about the different aspects of your job" stated my father, Paul Korpi. The equipment on his job has not changed but the size has. He went on talking about some dangerous situations.

He has been involved in two accidents. The first one involved a fuel truck which came to give the tractor fuel. My father got out of his dozer and motioned to the truck driver where to dump the load. Since the truck driver would not be able to dump the load by himself, he would need someone to show where to dump it. As the truck was backing up a tire exploded. My father stated, "The tires on these equipment are so big that the force of the blow blew all the rock that was underneath the tire up in my direction knocking my hard hat off, breaking my safety glasses and throwing rock up at me." Paul wasn't seriously hurt but it could have been bad. He was taken to the hospital for x-rays to check for broken bones. Fortunately, there were no fractures, but rocks were imbedded in the fronts of his legs.

Paul was involved in another accident quite a few years ago. He was on an electrical shovel which loads the two-ton production trucks. As Paul was digging into the bank, which was 90-100 feet high, a chunk came right down into the cab of the shovel. The rock hit and broke the glass. Paul had glass shards up and down

his arms and into his lap. The only injury he had were cuts from the glass. It was not as bad as it looked, and once they got the glass out it was not bad at all.

Paul's current job at the Empire Mine is a loader operator in the pit production. The main duties are cleaning up the roads so that the production trucks, loaders and doazer can use the roads. Most of it is moving chunks and debris so the vehicles can use the roads.

Paul said, "Safety standards I don't think have changed, but the safety policy have changed" Paul told me after I asked him what safety standards have changed, He went on later explaining good safety policies. For instance, workers have received schooling in the past ten years, and the company is constintley making improvements.

Paul has been a member of the steelworkers union for twenty-one years. Paul and his wife, Peggy have three boys, Shay, Cory and Eric Korpi. In his spare time Paul coaches baseball in the summer, and has also been coaching hockey which is what he really loves doing.