

## Death Toll In West Virginia Now Over 100

MAN, W.Va. (AP) — The death toll in flood-devastated Buffalo Creek Hollow rose to 103 Sunday as National Guardsmen unearthed eight more bodies from the wreckage of coal camps all but destroyed more than a week ago.

About 70 persons were still missing and there was little hope many of those survived the flood of some 175 million gallons of water loosed when a Buffalo Mining Co. dam gave way at the head of the 17-mile valley.

A government geologist, William Davies, said Sunday he did not think regular checking of the coal mine waste structure would have prevented the disaster. He said such dams "should be engineered completely differently."

Davies, interviewed on WSAZ-TV in Charleston, said a weak foundation may have lowered the top of the dam and allowed the water to crest it. He stated that geologists had seen no evidence of an explosion and said reports of a blast before the flood possibly were prompted by steam generated from the spontaneous combustion in the slag heap.

In 1966, Davies headed a survey of 38 coal waste banks in southern West Virginia. Four of the banks "showed signs of instability," according to the survey, but Davies said the one in Buffalo Creek was not among them.

Still missing are entire families, including a woman and her five children.

"We can still hope some of them are alive," a military official said. "But hope is all it is, and it can't be much hope at this point."

To aid in probing the tons of wreckage guardsmen have begun using a 50-ton crane to hoist the debris and drop it back to the ground. If no bodies fall out, the debris is burned.

At the high school in Man, and at another refugee center at Wharton, more than 300 persons whose homes were destroyed continued to sleep on cots. They were among the estimated 4,000 left homeless by the flood.