

## 78 Men in Shaft

# New Explosion, Fires Dim Hopes for Rescue

By NILES JACKSON

MANNINGTON, W. Va. (AP) — A new explosion, sending flames shooting upward like a flash of lightning, hit the coal mine today where 78 men have been trapped in burning passageways for two days.

The blast at 2:50 a.m. shook the company store more than four miles away. It was the latest in a chain of explo-

sions that started Wednesday morning and trapped 78 of the 99 men working the for Consolidated Coal Co., Mountaineer's No. 9 mine. The other 21 either escaped or were pulled from the mine.

"I felt the impact on my face," said 19-year-old Rich Opyoke who was standing on a bridge near the store.

Leonard Gross, publications director for Consolidation Coal Co., Mountaineer's parent firm, pinpointed the explosion at the intake shaft on Mod's Run, one of the many passageways of the sprawling mine complex spread over a seven-mile area.

"There has been no assessment of the intensity of the explosion," Gross said immediately after the blast. "However, it was reported that flames erupted from the portal."

He said this was the spot where experiments have been under way in trying to control the fire in the mine shafts by cutting off the oxygen.

The explosion came nine hours after another blast—small but forceful sent fire and smoke churning from another mine entrance.

Officials termed that blast—just before 6 p.m. Thursday night—"a setback" in rescue planning.

The predawn explosion today caused lights to flicker for several seconds at the company store where a handful of people maintained an all-night vigil.

Mrs. Emma Opyoke, whose brother-in-law was killed in a 1954 explosion in No. 9, rushed to the porch after she felt the shock waves.

"I got chills," Mrs. Opyoke said. "I saw a big bright light. It lit the sky up."

She said she was reading when she felt the tremors shake her house.

"I've been through this before and I should be used to it by now," she said.

The 6 p.m. explosion Thursday night spewed flames and smoke from the Llewellyn entrance—about three miles from the scene of the explosion today.

Vice President William Poundstone of Consolidation Coal Co., Mountaineer's parent firm, told a news conference before the latest blast that there was still hope that the trapped men were alive. "But there is no reason to be optimistic."

At daybreak today, the 78 had been in the mine for 48 hours, not counting their

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## The Mines: Grim Work

By DAVID B. CARLISLE  
Herald-News Staff Writer

FARMINGTON, W. Va. — If the Consol 9 mine here, still burning out of control after a series of explosions early Wednesday, does produce a death toll of 78, it will be the worst mine disaster in the United States in 17 years.

An explosion at Orient Mine 2 in West Frankfort, Ill., on Dec. 21, 1951, killed 119 men. The worst explosion in American mining history occurred not far from here at Monongah, W. Va., on Dec. 6, 1907, with a death toll of 362.

Consol 9, variously described yesterday as "only moderately gassy, as mines in this area go," and as "extremely gassy," lies over an oil and natural gas field, and

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## U.S. Probers to Hear Paterson Police

By LESLIE DAVIS  
Herald-News Staff Writer

NEWARK — About six Paterson policemen were expected to testify today before a federal grand jury investigating alleged police brutality during disturbances in Paterson last July.

Two who showed up outside the jury room this morning were Paterson Police Chief John T. O'Brien and Police Captain Joseph Dworak. A third man was

and Sam Webb, of the same address, who were helping Kaplan clean up the broken windows at his liquor store. Clay and Webb both said they saw the actual beating. Clay said that at least 10 police cars had pulled up at the corner and that most of the cars contained more than one officer.

Mrs. Faith Adams, 236 Summer St., Mrs. Annie Littlejohn, 238 Summer St., and a 16-year-old boy, all of Paterson, said they had witnessed the beating of Simon.

"I saw one tall one hitting him, but I couldn't see his face because it was

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## Augie Lio Wins Institute Award

1968 Consol No 9 Mine Explosion NEWS4

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## The Mines: Grim Work

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The map of the mine is dotted with dozens of operating natural gas wells. A recent Bureau of Mines report indicated eight million cubic feet of potentially explosive methane gas released from the coal seam into the mine every 24 hours.

John O'Leary, director of the bureau, added, however, that the mine was so large that the volume of gas did not necessarily indicate the presence of an explosive mixture at any one point. William Park of the Bureau of Mines said that, despite the presence of a ventilation network powered by huge electric fans which was supposed to dilute the escaping methane, the explosion was undoubtedly caused by gas.

In any case, the explosion was one more in the series of fatal accidents which make coal mining by far the most hazardous of American industrial occupations. In the six decades since 1907, when reliable record keeping began, 87,550 men have been asphyxiated, crushed, electrocuted or otherwise killed in coal mine accidents. In 1967 alone there were 226 jobs-related deaths and more than 4,300 disabling injuries. The injury rate is the highest of the 40 major

industries rated by the National Safety Council.

Two explosions involving fatalities have occurred in the last 14 years at Consol 9. On Nov. 13, 1954, 18 miners were killed by a gas explosion and fire that took four months to extinguish by sealing the mine. The bodies were not recovered until March, 1955. A month later, on April 30, 1955, four other men were killed when a falling tool broke a light bulb, igniting accumulated methane gas.

In part, the hazards of coal mining result from lack of adequate teeth in federal mine safety legislation and from the fact that the improvements which a stricter law would require would be expensive and would damage the competitive position of an already handicapped industry.

Federal inspection records show that only 18 mines last year were free of code violations — one-third of 1 per cent of the total inspected. The United Mine Workers have not made a significant fight for stricter mine safety regulations in some years, apparently concurring instead in the position of the operators that improvements that cost money would hurt the industry and cause unemployment.

W. A. Boyle, the union president, praised the safety record of the Consolidated Coal Co. yesterday.

"This happens to be one of the better companies as far as cooperation with our union and safety is concerned," he said.

## 4 Copters Crash; U. S. Shells DMZ

SAIGON (AP) — The U.S. Command announced today that four American helicopters have been shot down in the past 48 hours and American artillery fired into the northern half of the demilitarized zone for the first time since the bombing halt three weeks ago.

The command said the Americans opened up on guns in the North Vietnamese half of the DMZ after they fired on U.S. reconnaissance planes. But it denied Communist charges that North Vietnamese villages were shelled.

Nine U.S. soldiers died in the helicopter crashes, which raised to 813 the total number of helicopters shot down in South Vietnam during the war.

## Probe Calls

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night," Mrs. Littlejohn said. "I could hear the licks on his head."

The two women said they had been on their front porches when they witnessed the beating.

Can Identify Cops  
John Tarpley, 79 Fourth Ave., Paterson, would not comment on his testimony. He was called in the midst of the Simon case witnesses.

Some of the witnesses yesterday said they could identify the police officers who were involved in specific incidents. In addition to the alleged Simon beating, the testimony appeared to center around the alleged breaking of windows by policemen at the Paterson office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, 217 Summer St., and along Graham Avenue.

Those who said they saw windows broken at the SCLC office included Gerald Perry, 16, of 223 Summer St.; Miss Barbara Perry, 18, his sister, of the same address, and Thomas McCellan, 194 Hamilton Ave., all of Paterson.

The Graham Avenue incidents were reported by Miss Rebecca Denkin, 283-A Graham Ave.; Mrs. Leona Bragg, 258 Graham Ave., wife of Carmie Bragg Jr., a Paterson mortician; Robert Lattimore, 218 Graham Ave., and John Buie, 114 Park Ave.

Also testifying yesterday was Fred Medley, 210 Van Houten St., the SCLC office manager.

Robert B. Cherry of Cedar Grove, a lawyer with offices in Paterson, was in the area of the disturbances July 3, and he testified before the grand jury, "I saw lots of things," he said, refusing to be more specific. He did say, however, that he did not see any window breaking or beating of persons by police officers.

## Family Visits

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flowers to lay on the stone at Kennedy's grave.

President Johnson sent a wreath as he has every Nov. 22 since 1963 when Kennedy was gunned down in Dallas, Tex.

Elsewhere in America and throughout the world memorial services were held to say to the 35th president of the United States, "We have not forgotten."

Mrs. Onassis planned to observe the anniversary quietly as she has each of the last four years. Her private secretary Nancy Tuckerman, said she attended Mass in New York and would spend most of the day in seclusion.

Five little sprigs of flowers — white roses, lavender chrysanthemums and red roses — were the family's offering at Kennedy's grave. At the back of the grave, wreaths were placed, brought by others who remembered the day.

Also among the early visitors was Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, personal secretary to President Kennedy.



Frederick B. Thompson  
No Mercy Recommendation

## Thompson

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Thompson, said she had a telephone conversation with him several days after the slaying, and that she asked him if he had killed Mrs. Palmer.

"No comment," replied Thompson, Mrs. Ferrell testified. She also said they discussed if Thompson had left any clues and whether the disabling chemical Mace had bothered him.

He said the chemical had no effect on him, she testified. During the struggle, Mrs. Palmer triggered a small can of Mace to ward off her assailant.

Mrs. Ferrell, who is white, denied disliking Thompson, 36, because he is a Negro.

Historians say the last man convicted to die for a capital crime in Morris County was hanged on the Morristown Green in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

## You'll Be Able To Have Turkey And Toast, Too

By LES FLOIA  
Herald-News Staff Writer

There will be no empty goblets with your Turkey Day giblets.

Distributors were rushing to and fro around New Jersey from 18 major liquor wholesale houses again today, after a three-week strike by delivery drivers came to a screeching halt. Deliveries resumed this morning and will continue tomorrow to fill a backlog of orders which have been stacking up since Nov. 1.

A fast vote followed a "surprise" meeting between Teamster representatives and spokesmen for the wholesale houses in Newark yesterday.

Within a few hours, 209 drivers who struck three weeks ago ratified a revised contract proposal. It cleared the way for resumption of deliveries today. The vote was 148-61. It was the second vote in 72 hours. Drivers accepted a package that grants a \$12-a-week raise now and an additional \$8 boost in 18 months as part of a new three-year contract.

Tuesday, they turned down a package proposed by the New Jersey Mediation Board which suggested an \$8-a-week raise, four dollars less than the settlement terms endorsed yesterday.

Explaining the sudden thaw, a liquor salesman said "everybody was getting desperate with the holidays coming up." Impact on negotiations of the current convention of the State Beverage Dealers Association in Atlantic City was not immediately known.

Besides a raise, the truck drivers won a pension increase and the pledge of dental benefits beginning 18 months from now. They are already covered by hospitalization.

It will be approximately a week before drivers can completely fill the backlog of liquor orders accumulated during the past three weeks, a liquor industry spokesman estimated.

## New Blast

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work shift before the first blast. They had to contend with heat and smoke and the ever-present possibility of a buildup of methane gas, always present in coal mines and deadly when it reaches sizeable proportions.

There was some activity at one of the mine's entrances during the night, one that set off a chain of optimism among those who stood vigil through the dark hours.

At the ventilation shaft, where eight men were "lured to safety" by a crane Wednesday morning, one rescue team was on the scene and a fire-fighting truck was on hand.

There were reports—none of them confirmed by either rescue or company officials—that one of the test borings down to the shaft had located fresh air in the passageway. A second boring reportedly reached smoke.

Company officers had promised a report on the findings of the borings in a scheduled midnight meeting with newsmen at the company store but none of the officials showed.