

Mine rescue crew finds no sign of life

MANNING, W. Va. (UPI)—Rescuers, who nudged 4,500 feet inside Manning's No. 9 coal shaft in an unsuccessful search Sunday for 78 miners trapped five days by fire and explosion, turned today to a sensitive listening device to help locate any sound of life.

But all they heard were falling pebbles and dripping water deep underground. Hopes faded for the entombed miners.

Work crews drilled the first two of eight holes and dropped the listening device 700 feet down the mine in the area

where the men were believed working when the first of eight gas blasts rocked the mine in northern West Virginia last Wednesday.

Six-man rescue teams entered the mine Sunday for the first time since the first explosion. They found no trace of the men. One team said it found evidence of explosion but no fire.

Louis Tate, whose brother, Frank, is trapped in the mine, said he was encouraged by the new evidence.

"This mine will not be sealed with the men still in there," he

said. "I feel we're going to get them out whether they're dead or alive. I hope they keep moving farther into the mine and bringing back good reports."

Officials said early today there would be no further underground exploration by the rescue teams pending information gained from the listening device.

"This decision is a joint decision with the public represented by federal and state mine officials and the United Mine Workers union and Consol-

idation Coal Co.," a statement said. "It is felt it would be endangering lives of the mine rescue teams unduly to have them proceed further in to the mine than they have already gone."

James McCartney, public information director for Consolidation Coal Co. which owns the mine, said the rescue teams were sent into the mine after air samples taken from the bore holes showed there was no danger.

He said the teams were instructed to return to the

surface when they reached an old bore hole, 4,500 feet inside.

William Poundstone, executive vice president of Consolidation, told relatives of the entombed miners Sunday, "You must have confidence in the people who are doing this (rescue effort)." He said among the more than 20 union, company and government officials involved in making decisions there has been no "disagreement on any moves we made."

Families of the trapped miners attended church services

Sunday at the James Fork United Methodist Church in nearby Farmington, where many of the miners lived.

During the service at Farmington, conducted by the Rev. John Barnes, a blind circuit preacher, sobbing could be heard. Barnes said the day traditionally had been Thanksgiving Sunday.

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