

3rd body removed from mine

BERGOO, W.Va. (AP) — The body of a third man was pulled yesterday from beneath a 35-foot block of slate, ending a 33-hour rescue mission. Residents of this tiny mining town prepared to bury their dead.

The wife and five children of Donald Arbogast, 31, were notified yesterday morning that the miner's body had been found at the end of the Stillhouse Run mine, a third of a mile inside Leatherwood Mountain.

Arbogast was one of three men killed when the block of slate fell without warning from the mine roof Thursday night. The collapse triggered an around-the-clock rescue effort, and three other trapped men were freed after lying for hours in the darkness.

Even before the last rescuer was out, residents of the central West Virginia community were banding together in support of the victims' families.

At Carol Hamrick's village store, a group of women who had stayed up for two nights making food for rescuers began preparing to aide the wives and children of the dead miners.

Friends stopped by to offer condolences to the Arbogast family, but Walter Arbogast, brother of the victim, said the miner's wife, Louise, and their five children found it difficult to talk about the accident.

"They're just too upset right now," he said.

Arbogast died instantly along with Bob Bennett, 34, and Doyle Gillis, 36. They were crushed under a slate block 35 feet long, 20 feet wide and 8 feet thick, according to Elk River Sewell Coal Co., which owns the mine.

The accident occurred in the furthest reaches of the small, non-union mine, where the coal seam is 40 inches thick and miners work on their hands and knees. Nine people were inside at the time, and three escaped immediately.

Rescuers found Donzil Cutlip, 27, pinned under the block about seven hours after the fall, but it took six more hours to free him. He was in serious condition yesterday after surgery to repair deep gashes in both arms.

Larry Clevenger, 18, and Carl Hull, 24, were rescued earlier and were unhurt. Clevenger said the seven hours before rescuers found him was "the worst thing that ever happened to me."

Company and state officials said they didn't know why the roof collapsed.

Stillhouse Run Mine Roof Fall Accident

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