

Scotia mine

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with overtime pay added to their regular wages.

Relatives of the trapped miners were kept in the bathhouse while the rescue operation was under way. The bathhouse is near the mine portal, where the miners enter the mine. Newsmen were kept about half a mile from the mine entrance during most of the rescue work, which lasted throughout the night.

After learning all were dead, the relatives of the trapped miners left the portal area about 3 a.m. The last bodies were removed from the mine about 5 a.m. The mine was then sealed until late Wednesday afternoon, when federal and state mine officials re-entered the mine to begin investigation.

MESA records concerning the mine inspection the day before the disaster were not available to reporters until Wednesday afternoon. The Mountain Eagle presented a formal request to the Whitesburg MESA office for copies of the inspection reports at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday and was told that the reports would not be released, even though they are matters of public record. A MESA spokesman said Barrett had ordered local offices not to comment on the disaster and had indicated that any statements or releases of records must be cleared through him. About 1 p.m. MESA officials called The Eagle to report that the inspection documents were ready for release to the newspaper.

State Department of Mines and Minerals inspection records also were withheld until about noon. On Tuesday, The Eagle requested

copies of state records involving inspections of the Scotia mine over the past year. The Department of Mines and Minerals Hazard office said the records were in Lexington. The Lexington office said the entire file had been taken to the mine site. Commissioner Kirkpatrick declined comment. After repeated efforts by The Eagle, a Hazard spokesman agreed to make the records available at about noon Wednesday. The state inspection reports over the past few weeks showed only minor violations.

The last major coal mine disaster in Kentucky occurred in December, 1970, when 38 men were killed in an explosion at the Finley Coal Co. mine near Hyden.

Funeral arrangements for miners were incomplete at Mountain Eagle press time. Hearses took the bodies of the miners to the following area funeral homes:

David Gibbs, Virgil Coots, Gail Sparkman, Kenny Turner, Denver Widner, Tri-City Funeral Home, Cumberland; Roy McKnight, Larry McKnight, Everett Scotty Combs, Willie Turner, Parker Funeral Home, Cumberland; Jimmy Sturgill, Colonial Chapel, Harlan; Tom Scott, Earl Galloway, Blair Funeral Home, Whitesburg; Lawrence Peavy, Johnson, Benham; Robert Griffith, Banks Funeral Home, Neon; Dennis Boggs, Baker Funeral Home, Pound.

Details concerning widows and other survivors also were not available at press time.

Union officials said they will consider establishing a relief fund for survivors later.

A statement by MESA director Robert Barrett appears on Page 23 of this week's Eagle.