

REACTOR

A program to provide organized citizens two-way radio communications in local emergencies
Sponsored by
General Motors Research Laboratories
as a
Safety and Community Service Program

March-April 1972

n W. Va. Flood

**Local Groups Provide Communications;
Distant Groups Send Relief Supplies**



Houses, trees and bridges in Mt. Gay, West Virginia were left under several feet of water from rain and the broken dam.

Logan County Citizens Band Radio Club, Inc. **Flood Report—February 24-28.** **By David Stillwell**

Logan, W. Va. . . . Constant rain for a number of days had caused the Guyandotte River to quickly rise and by nightfall to reach and pass the local flood stage on Thursday, February 24, 1972. The Logan County CB Radio Club's active members automatically began their common flood practice of traffic and water watches and emergency communication for civil defense.

Billy Fisher, Logan County Communications Coordinator, operated as Unit 1 of the Club's call number KBW-8879 and as central control. He relayed data fed to the two radio stations and public service agencies. Unit 100, located in the jail atop the Logan County Courthouse, was activated and took over control. Unit 1 operated on Channel 10, our call

channel, for secondary information. Unit 100 used Channel 11, common to all three local CB organizations.

Quite a few of the members were quickly blocked off or were actually within the flooding areas and so only a few units were able to maintain contact. Unit 4, Vice President Arnold Farris, Unit 8, Bill Wells, and Unit 14, Harold Stillwell or son, all mobiles, provided road condition data and relay. Their bases also maintained operation. CB communications enabled rescuers to obtain boats and trucks to bring out stranded families surrounded by rising water. Between 5:00 and 6:00 am Friday the 25th, the waters began to recede and finally went back below flood stage.

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FLOOD (con't. from page 1, column 4)

Late afternoon Friday the water began to rise again and a flash flood watch was called. Rain continued, especially farther up river. The same procedures of Thursday were used throughout the night.

By Saturday morning practically all major highways were blocked. At approximately 8:30 am at Three Forks of Buffalo Creek a slag dam broke loose creating a torrential flash flood down the 17 mile valley inhabited by over 4,000 people. Virtually no communications came out of that area other than the flash that a dam had broken.

Logan County Civil Defense Director Jim Singleton had already called a state of emergency and had dispatched two of our members to Unit 100's location, the command post for CB Sheriff's Department and the National Guard. At this time, the complex job of organizing actions for the flooded lowlands and for the Buffalo Creek area was extremely difficult for transportation through the county was all but nil.

Throughout the day communications became better except that no CBers responded from the Man area. Reports told of survivors in Man and Madison and that supplies were needed badly. Unit 100 was fed road

data from mobile units to find routes for the National Guard and other units to get into the Man and Logan areas. Our inability to travel any distance limited our effectiveness and made CB secondary to the Sheriff Department's four car communications. Our main purpose at this time was local flood conditions and relief to stranded inhabitants.

Sunday morning was quite different. The waters had dropped allowing most traffic. CB now became a major communications link for the National Guard. Clothing, blankets, food and especially water were called for by the local AM radio stations since they were sorely needed in the disaster areas. We based one mobile unit on Middleburg Island in Logan to act as communicator between the National Guard coordinating supply delivery and Lt. Ashworth at the jail.

The island, located at Logan Sr. High School, served as loading station for convoys and copters. Almost constant communication was held with Unit 100 and CB convoys as needed supplies, schedules for arrivals or departures and orders for other actions were constantly required.

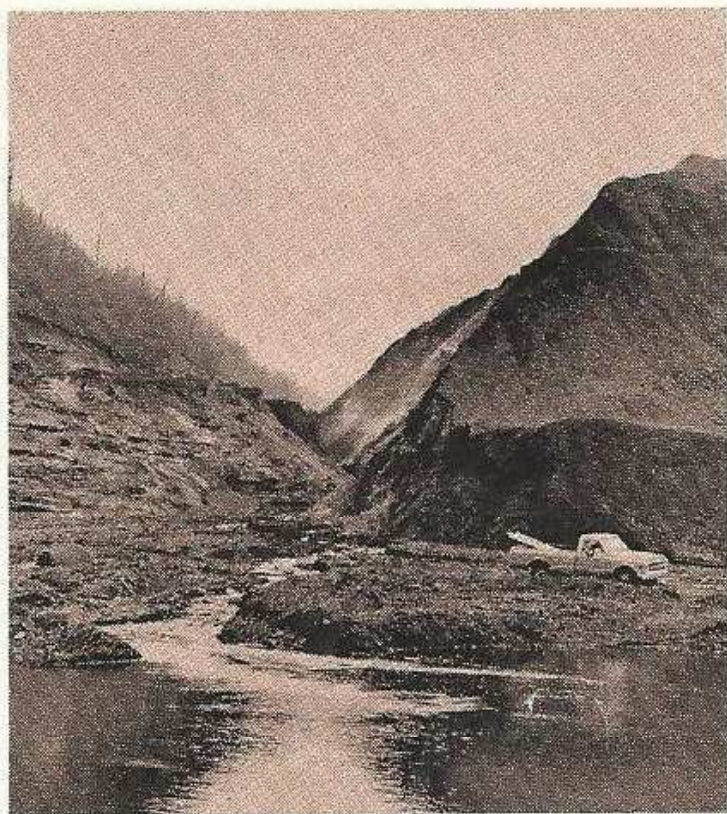
We loaded and unloaded trucks and copters, directed traffic and coordinated out-of-town units to the needy locations. Club mobiles went about the country picking up supplies donated from out-of-the-way places. We must admit that the people of West Virginia and all the nation responded quickly and freely with tremendous aid.

As National Guard units took over, our organization slowed down and began helping in the relief programs. The West Virginia State CB Association sent loads of supplies and we have just recently effected the transfer of some five or six semi-tractor trailer loads into our area to be stored until needed. These were sponsored by the Southeast Conference CB organization sent from North Carolina. Everything has seemed to fall back to normal except for cleaning up.

During the actions between February 24th and 28th our CB club operated short-handedly. This can partly be explained, as one of our member's family lost everything they owned in the flash flood at Buffalo Creek and nearly lost their lives, a large number of members lived in areas flooded and were forced to move out of their homes, and individuals were so sorely needed for personal labor that few were left to operate their stations. Units on the air most of the time during this period were:

Unit 100—Logan Jail operated in shifts as central control on Channel 11; Unit 1 — Bill Fisher operating Channel 10 as CB coordinator; Units 7 and 8—Bill Wells and family operating as relays and watches; Units 3 and 4—Arnold Farris and family also relay and watch; Units 13 and 14—President Stillwell and son as relay and watch; Unit 16 — Capt. White of the Salvation Army in his capacity. Other units reported in when able. Gaps were filled at times with the help of some non-club members and other local CB organizations.

The Logan County Citizens Band Radio Club, Inc. sponsored application for National REACT membership has been accepted as notified by Henry B. Kreer, National Director, in his letter of March 14, 1972. Official REACT Team #2263 should soon become the Logan REACT and Rescue Team, Inc. Further communication between everyone considered with National REACT and our organization will be appreciated.



The area just below the flooding dam—where the water lies, the community of Saunders once stood.



The town of Man, West Virginia, 17 miles from the dam which burst causing the flood, lies under a blanket of mud after the waters receded.