

BY FRED EDGE

You are standing within shouting distance of the East Kildonan dike.

All around you, water is running through back alleys and visibly sinking roads to two, three, four—now it's five inches deep.

On the sidewalks the remnants of the Kildonan dike crew — some 500 men, women and children — are streaming back to high ground, just ahead of the rising water.

Their spirit is good. Most are laughing and talking as they hurry along. Some look a little scared.

Fifty feet away, volunteer workers are kicking in basement windows to ease water pressure on foundations.

Now the water is pouring into the street like overflow from a rain barrel.

Face Down

A few hundred yards away — at the main dike itself — a handful of men are lying face down, hands clasped, passing sandbags to the 50-foot breach.

As each sandbag is flung into the gap it's thrown some 40 feet by the churning waters.

The men give up just as a naval rescue squad motorcade roars down Leighton avenue to the water's edge. In front is a police cruiser, its public address system booming a 'keep clear' warning for the four amphibious 'ducks' behind.

It has taken them just 15 minutes since word reached central flood headquarters' of the dike's collapse.

The first 'duck' lumbers into the water and 'walks' into the newly-submerged area—now lying under three feet of water.

Is Anyone Left?

Hundreds of people — most of them dike worker refugees — line the water's edge and watch the 'duck' make its trip into the area.

Is anyone left behind?

Rumor has it a man is asleep in his home. A dike worker says three men were last seen rushing to cut boats loose and haven't been seen since.

A woman pushes her way to the radio contact group on 'duck' number two. "Are you getting out furniture?" she asks.

Hot Coffee

From somewhere appears a squad of four Salvation Army relief workers carrying thermos buckets of steaming hot coffee and sandwiches. Peggy and Blake Austin, Marg Purkess and Mary Ripley are a more-than-welcome sight to the work-weary, water-weary East Kildonan dike workers.

The water is still rising. It has pushed the watching crowd back 15 feet from the road where they first stood at water's edge.

It's dark. Through it all — above the hum and humor of the bunched dike workers — is the monotonous drone of "Peter One to Peter Two—are you receiving? Over."

A shout goes up. 'Peter One' is sighted sloshing back to the 'base.' It 'walked' in on rubber wheels, but it's not walking out. In half an hour or so the water has risen from three to better than six feet. 'Peter One' is coming out — swimming.

The 'duck' lumbers up onto dry land, and two young men are helped down from its foredeck. They are Jack Waterworth, 22, and George Morrow, 24, stranded in the flooded area when they stayed to help someone else evacuate.

The 'sleeping man' is also reported safely out.

Says the navy: No casualties.

The water is still rising hours later, as one by one, group by group, East Kildonan's beaten army of dike workers go home.

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These Leighton avenue, East Kildonan, 9.30 p.m. water from the breach has reached the lawns. Early Thursday, the homes are about to remove E. A. Wilson from the house with his wife and salvage some blankets and clothes.