

33 dead in Virginia Tech shootings

by UPI

BLACKSBURG, Va. - Virginia Tech officials confirmed 33 deaths in two shooting incidents Monday on the Blacksburg, Va., campus in the worst mass shooting in U.S. history.

A gunman opened fire about 7:15 a.m. in Ambler Johnson Hall, killing two people. Two hours later, a gunman invaded Norris Hall where engineering classes were under way, killing 31 others, including himself. Fifteen people were reported injured.

Wendell Flinchum, head of the campus police force, said it still is unclear whether the two incidents were related but no search is under way for a second gunman and no arrests have been made. Flinchum said the campus was not shut down immediately after the first shooting because investigators were convinced the gunman had left the area. He has yet to be identified.

Flinchum said the Norris Hall victims were found in different locations. Doors in the building had been chained shut to prevent people from escaping.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine cut a foreign trade trip to Japan short to rush back to Virginia. He declared a state of emergency to free up resources for the investigation.

"It is difficult to comprehend senseless violence on this scale," Kaine said in a statement.

President Bush pledged the full resources of the federal government for the investigation.

The campus was placed on lockdown and students were told to stay indoors and away from all windows. By mid-afternoon, police were evacuating the campus and letting staff leave the secured area.

Classes were canceled through Tuesday.

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