



## "Anyone in There?"

Pushing their way through huge amounts of rubble



▲ The search for missing persons carried on even in incessant snow.

Photo courtesy of Ground Self-Defense Force Western Army

Seventy-two hours after a disaster is said to be the key timeframe for saving lives. There may still be survivors somewhere waiting for rescue teams.

"Hello? Anyone in there?"

In addition to Japan's Self-Defense Forces, firefighters, police, and emergency relief teams from various countries including Switzerland, Australia, and New Zealand began a desperate search for missing persons in the rubble left by the tsunami.

Heavy steel frames and piles of rubble from broken houses obstructed the way of the Self-Defense Forces in their search and rescue efforts. The soldiers were determined to find as many survivors as possible, but all they found were dead bodies, and a deep sorrow spread among them.

Trying to repress that sorrow, they continued the search day after day, making their way around the piles of rubble and pushing their way through the mud, in an effort to not miss a single person.

The evacuation centers were filled with people who believed that their missing family members had survived and who waited anxiously for their return.

Despite the unmerciful conditions, everyone continued the search and rescue efforts in the wholehearted desire to reunite missing people with their families as quickly as possible.