

Search For 3 Lost Scouts Called Off

2 Tiny Clues Uncovered On Icy Mt. Baldy

Sheriff, Army Pull Workers Off Mountain Until 5-Foot Snow Drifts On Peak Melt

By DON CARSON

More than 600 men left the Santa Rita Mountains empty-handed last night as a giant search for three lost Boy Scouts was all but abandoned.

Remaining behind was a force of eight official searchers and two possible clues as to the boys'—Mike Early, 16; Michael LaNoue, 13 and David Greenberg, 12—last location.

Early yesterday morning—just 400 yards from the safety of the ranger cabin near the summit of treacherous Mt. Baldy—an unidentified searcher discovered the beginnings of a small fire.

Several sticks, some branches and a piece of Kleenex marked the spot. The Kleenex was brown only around the edges and two lonely matches on the ground testified that the boys might have been unsuccessful in their quest for warmth during a howling snow-storm Nov. 15.

The fire makings were found just two switch-backs above the last of four trail markings also believed left by the three youngsters.

Today Range Deputy GUY HILL, who assisted Sheriff James Clark during the eight-day search, will lead seven other men back to the switchbacks for a concentrated inspection of the area.

Riding with Hill to the 9,432 foot peak will be Sgts. Frank Wootan and B. C. Richey. They will be joined by Game Wardens Arnold Koster and Levi Packard and Ranger Jack Anderson. Two other rangers are also expected to meet the group at the top.

Other known search groups going into the area will include the fathers of two of the boys—Bruce LaNoue and John Early. David Greenberg said he would return to his job.

Patagonia Rancher Mike Knagge will not return today because of a cattle shipment. But he will climb the rugged slopes again tomorrow.

A group of Madera Canyon residents also plans to continue the hunt next weekend if the boys have not been found. This contingent includes Mat Schuck, owner of the Santa Rita Lodge, Art Williams, Jack Anderson and Les Jackson.

"There are a lot of dangerous and almost inaccessible points in that mountain," Schuck said. "We know the area and we'll be able to lower a man by rope into some of the unchecked spots."

Yesterday's warm sun continued to melt the heavy snow from the wilds of the mountain, but still many canyons and gorges are covered by drifts five feet.

"If the weather stays good," said Sheriff Clark, "we'll come back with 100 men when the snow melts.

"Right now, though," he explained, "there's no reason in continuing such a gigantic hunt."

A special mass for the welfare of the three boys was said late

Search Area Still Closed To Hunters

The Santa Rita Mountains area is still closed to hunters, Sheriff James Clark said last night.

"We still have searchers in there," Clark stated, "and the mountains are off limits until further notice."

In the week by the students of All Saints School. The entire enrollment, with the exception of the first graders, received holy communion. LaNoue was a student at the school and both he and Early was members of the All Saints parish.

A possibility that the search might go on under the direction of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Department was broached late in the afternoon.

Santa Cruz Deputy Jack Sullivan, who said that county had been working on the eastern and southern slopes of the mountain throughout the entire week, said he would ask Ft. Huachuca to keep its troops on duty.

But at that time the 320 man 16th Signal Battalion had already departed. The 72nd was staying overnight to collect a few stragglers. However, Major William Cavanaugh, the post's public information officer, said the decision was pending until a new plan of attack was presented to the post chief of staff, Col. Thomas A. Pitcher.

Thus ended at least the first phase of the largest rescue effort Southern Arizona has ever seen.

From 1:30 p.m. Nov. 16 until late last evening the search had gone on. Two battalions from Ft. Huachuca plus a picked group of Davis-Monthan AFB had composed the bulk of the search party.

And a nationally known search expert, Russ Cone along with partner Tom Cox and two bloodhounds, had even joined the hunt.

Day after day the men combed the snowcovered canyons and gulley-pocked slopes a r o u n d Mt. Baldy. Mine shafts and caves were checked.

Early each morning the tired, but dedicated, men returned to snow drifts and dangerous cliffs.

But each afternoon they returned to their base camps with only cold and weary bones. Hopes rose and fell with exasperating regularity.

Now most of the men have left. Behind them, somewhere amid snow-filled canyons and silent hills, lies the secret a mountain refused to reveal.