Hope Virtually Abandoned For 3 Boys

Search Enters 4th Day

Crews Will Continue To Comb Mountains

BY BOB THOMAS

Canyon-pointed Mt. Babby was a white-topped summit of silence yesterday as it kept secret the fate of three Tucson Boy Scouts.

Rescue teams, bent after their third day of searching, virtually abandoned hope that the youngsters would be found alive.

However, the search will be resumed at daylight today with the hope that by some miracle the boys have survived the zero weather that has whipped over the mountain top since the scouts disappeared Saturday night.

More than 100 men working in clear, bright sunshine, searched over the 3,400-foot mountain, made a sweep across nearby Mt. Hopkins and searched the snow-covered foothills.

Copter In Search

A helicopter from Davis Monthan Air Force Base, being used in the search for those three Tucson boys lost in the Santa Rita Mountains, is shown in the snow-covered desert near the Marana Canyons in the foothill country, while a group of searchers, left, discuss plans. (Arizona Republic photo)

Crews were able to keep their hopes alive partly because of inexperience of the boys, 15, 16 and 17, who have never before been out of town.

The trio—Mike Earl, 15, Michael De Nona, 15 and David Greenberg—have been missing since Saturday night when a sudden, severe snowstorm swooped down on them.

They were attempting to climb to a ranger cabin near the summit of the peak, 40 miles south of Tucson. Three companions said they last saw them hiking toward the cloud-shrouded top last Saturday afternoon.

The others, Louis Burgeman, 15, Louise Novak, 13, and Ralph Estlin Jr., 15, returned to their camp at the end of the Madona Canyon Rd. The two 13-year-olds became tired and were taken back down the mountains by Burgeman.

The missing three decided to try to reach the cabin despite threatening weather. They failed to make their objective because searchers Monday found the small cabin empty.

The six scouts—all members of Troop No. 76—planned to camp overnight in the mountains despite the advice of their scoutmaster.

Yesterday eight separate search parties climbed the rugged mountain and, except for a few miles and ravines without luck.

Two search parties from Santa Cruz County led by Deputy Jack Sullivan and composed of Patagonia and Sonoita men climbed through Gardner and Josephine canyons on the east side of the Santa Ritas.

For the second straight day two helicopters—one from Davis Monthan AFB and the other from Ft. Huachuca—eased near the end of the womandeed canyon. Several light planes from Ft. Huachuca also searched over the area.

A burst of gun store—reoused to signify that the boys had been found—caused a brief flurry of excitement and hope yesterday afternoon.

However, the shots were fired by two men who had become separated from their search party and wanted help. The men, identified by Range Deputy Guy Hill as Bill Hartmann and Dru Smith, managed to walk out after nightfall.

Sheriff James Clark said the search was expected to continue.