Cabin Atop Mt. Baldy Found Empty; Searchers Fear Scouts May Be Dead

BY ROB THOMAS

A massive land and air search for three Boy Scouts lost since Saturday night in the Santa Rita Mountains proved fruitless yesterday.

Hope for the Tucson youths was dimming fast. If alive they would have survived three days and nights of cold, wet weather, brought on by the worst recorded snowstorm in Southern Arizona history.

They are believed to be lost somewhere in the 8,470-foot high range of Mt. Baldy above Madre Canyon, 35 miles south of Tucson.

The scouts, Mike Early, 16, Michael J. La Noue, 15, and David Greenberg, 13, carried no food or water with them and were dressed lightly.

One of the four separate search parties managed to reach the top of Baldy and found a ranger cabin, but the boys were not there. The cabin is the only shelter on the peak and is equipped with food, water and emergency supplies.

The search for the lost youngsters is one of the most widespread in recent years. It has attracted attention from the national level as far as Washington, D.C.

Clinging weather brought approximately 300 men to the mountain to look for the boys. Another 500 were at the landing sites in the search by mapping and radio.

A David-Donahoe AFB helicopter and a Cessna airplane searched the rugged Santa Ritas without sighting any trace of the youths.

The search, led by a Pima County ranger deputy, will resume at daybreak today.

All search operations were suspended at dusk last night. All search teams and volunteers were ordered to the areas of the narrow canyon except for deputies, parents and three university of Arizona students who left the Santa Rita Lodge, rescue headquarters, to canvas the ridgeline on the mountain.

They hope to start the search today by gathering at one of the most probable sites as possible.

Finding the Baldy cabin empty lowered the hopes that the boys would be found alive and well. Experienced guides and rangers who live in the area say that without shelter the youth will perish in the deep snows.

For the third night in a row temperatures are expected to dip near the zero mark. Yesterday, in the daylight hours, the mercury never rose above 30 degrees.

Our hope remained.

The boys might be alive if they missed a fork in the trail at Josephine Boulder and chose the path that leads to the general direction of Patagonia.

Deputies said there are several shortcuts in that area the boys might have sought shelter in. A search party is scheduled to look up the mountains from Patagonia the morning of Tuesday.

Searchers were told they would apparently be struck suddenly in the higher elevations of Mt. Baldy as the three attempted to climb the cabin. Three other scouts reported starting at eight in the morning and changing to move at midnight.

Mike Early, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Early, 137 E. 16th St., was

MIKE EARLY

MICHAEL J. LA NOUE

DAVID GREENBERG

described as the leader of the group. A junior at Tucson High School, he is a Life Scout and has desert and Civil Air Patrol survival training.

Michael La Noue, 13, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bruce J. La Noue, of 705 S. Railroad Ave., is an eighth grade at All Saints School. He is a First Class Scout, and has accompanied Early on previous hikes in the Santa Ritas.

David Greenberg, 13, is a Tenth Street Scout and a seventh grade at St. Mary's High School. He lives with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Greenberg, of 311 S. Russell St. He received his marksmanship badge only a few days ago, his father said.

The boys decided to camp overnight in Madre Canyon and climb to the ranger cabin on an 8,472-foot Mt. Baldy. They crouched three of 651 N. Longfellow Ave., scoutmaster of Troop No. 78, and asked him about the trip.

Zone said he advised the boys.

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