

Student Saved After Terrible Time In Cave

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah (AP) — A University of California graduate student has been rescued in critical condition after 36 hours in a 1,175-foot-deep cave high in Utah's Wasatch Mountains.

James Dowling, 24, of Convent, Utah, slipped on a rope in the freezing cave for more than two hours. Part of his weight rested against a cold, slippery ladder.

Mountain climbers and spelunkers rushed into the cave Monday, wrapped him in a down-filled sleeping bag and hauled him out — feet by foot.

EXTREMELY COLD

He was taken to St. Marks Hospital, where attendants said his body temperature was more than 20 degrees below normal. He was unconscious and in shock.

Dowling and two companions, John Wood, 23, and Paul Gerhard, 22, of Hildensberg, Md., began exploring the cave about 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

They told three Utah mountaineers to wait for them at its mouth and bring help if they never returned.

The climber's route was narrow, ending 45-degree passages into the massive belly of Mt. Neff's Canyon, about four miles northeast of Salt Lake City.

Neff's Canyon natural cave is about as deep as the never explored part of New Mexico's Carlsbad Caverns. It is 1,000 feet high near Utah's snow-covered Mt. Olympus.

After a tuna fish-bread cocktail lunch on their way out about 10 hours later, Wood and Gerhard entered. Dowling lagged behind as a vertical ladder.

Gerhard left his companions and climbed out for help. Wood descended the ladder and discovered an entanglement in Dowling's safety rope.

NEAR SUFFOCATION

"He (Dowling) seemed to be weak," Wood said. "He wouldn't answer my questions right away."

I tried to unjam the rope. But then I heard other coming. He was in mild shock at the time."

The Utah mountaineers, Don and Ed Sims, Edward Anderson and LaVoy Barkman, pulled Wood to the top of the ladder and then helped Dowling free.

Other rescuers, including Dr. Gary Carlson of Salt Lake City, pulled and lifted Dowling with ropes, pulleys and aluminum, steel and nylon ladders over makeshift ridges in the bow of the cave.

They reached — almost 36 hours later — about 36 hours after the explorers entered the cave.

Dowling, Wood and Gerhard are visiting for degrees in mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley. Their exploration trip was part of a 10-month trip weekend ending.

1965 James Dowling rescued from cave after 36 hours trapped



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