

He fell free about 50 feet and then slid about 120 feet in a landslide of rocks. Karl and Don at once started around the ridge to descend to Bays while Gary went back across to King's River for help. When Karl and Don reached Bays he was dead. He had been badly battered about the head. Two days later the body was evacuated by pack train.

Source: Members of the party.

Analysis: The assessment of the security of handholds and the stability of large boulders is extremely difficult. Note the previous and following accidents which occurred to persons of considerable experience.

California—Mt. Shasta: About August 1, 1952 unroped but in the company of a friend, Carl Miller, Dan O'Neill (34) attempted to ascend Mt. Shasta. At about 12,000 feet O'Neill slipped on a steep snow slope and slid head first nearly a mile in distance. He suffered only minor lacerations and snow burns of his arms. He apparently was able to maintain steering way and so to avoid two outcroppings of rocks. He and his companion negotiated the rest of the descent uneventfully.

Source: Newspaper clippings.

Analysis: Unroped climbing over steep snow slopes.

California—Yosemite: (1) On October 25, 1952 a party composed of Bill Long, Dick Long, Al Steck and William Dunmire (22) set out to attempt an ascent of the El Capitan Buttress (east of the main face). Steck and Dunmire were the first rope of two, and on the third pitch it was Dunmire's turn to lead. Steck, belaying from a four foot wide ledge, was anchored to a piton and had placed another piton through which he belayed Dunmire. The route led up alongside a vertical crack into which Dunmire placed two pitons, about 6 feet apart. Along this crack was a large block which apparently was not a part of the cliff but wedged in on one side and the pitons tested soundly, and he felt he had no real reason to doubt their security. Another higher crack failed to be satisfactory for piton use. A spade piton, however, was placed under a somewhat rotten flake. This also was tested. Dunmire warned Steck that the top piton was not too sound. He used it for direct aid to gain a small foothold three feet above. At this point, three feet above the highest piton, twelve feet above the next and and about twenty feet above the belayer, he attempted to place a fourth piton at arms length above him in a horizontal crack under an overhang.

While he was hammering his feet slipped and he fell. He fell nearly free, striking the cliff only once and landed on his shoulder and head on a ledge about 15 feet below Steck. All three of his pitons had pulled out, but the rope passing through the belaying piton, which held, was taut and had arrested his fall. The total fall was about 35 feet. Dunmire was temporarily stunned and had a bad laceration on his head. A rappel which reached the talus was set up, and Dunmire was second man down being

doubly belayed from above. He was taken to a local hospital where his lacerations were sutured and where he spent the night under observation.

Source: William Dunmire.

Analysis: Dunmire has had several years of intensive experience in Yosemite climbing, and is greatly respected for his thoughtfulness and care in climbing. In addition he had the interesting assignment of instructing mountain troops in piton belaying. In the course of this they found that one of the most educational phases was actually driving in and then pulling out many pitons. As a result of this they realized how unpredictable the strength of pitons can be. Richard Leonard has stressed this strongly in his article on belaying (see recommended bibliography). Dunmire stated in his report that he felt no basic rules of safety were broken, except that the leader must not fall, and certainly this committee concurs. The fact, however, that the above accident occurred to a person with so much experience points out the necessity of carefully testing all pitons and being certain they are in optimum position to withstand the shock of a fall.

California—Yosemite (2): On September 4, 1952, Arthur Baldonade (20) and his brother Robert (15) were rescued by rangers from the cliff ledges about 1000 feet above the valley floor near Columbia Point where they had become stranded on the ledge off the trail. They could not get up or down and called for help. Rangers roped down to them from the trail and brought them out unhurt. They were both inexperienced and had not registered for the climb.

Source: Report from the Yosemite National Park.

California-Yosemite (3): On November 9, 1952, L. C. Ames, Jr., and Mrs. P. Kool from Victorville, California Air Force Base, were rescued from the cliff ledges about 120 feet above the valley floor near Yosemite Falls. They had registered for the rock climb and were on their way down when their rope became stuck in a crack in the rock and they could not free it. They called for help. Rangers assisted them down the cliff using another rope.

Source: Report from the Yosemite National Park.

REGIONAL SAFETY ACTIVITIES

Appalachian Mountain Club—New York Chapter: Norton Smithe, chairman of the Rock Climbing Safety Committee, has forwarded a summary of their climbing code. A code of this sort would be useful to adopt generally and it is appended below.