

*Analysis:* (Harrah) It is possible that this accident could have been prevented if the party had been roped. On the other hand, the route lay along relatively gentle terrain, with optimal conditions for crampon walking; the conditions were such that a slip and fall did not seem at all likely. Hara had had some instruction in the use of the ice axe, and he had done well on the ascent. Exactly why he slipped, and why he could not regain control, will probably never be known. The most plausible explanation seems to be that he was more deeply affected by fatigue than he or his companions realized.

*California, Death Valley National Monument, Telescope Peak.* On 20 December, Grant Trigg (19) and a companion, Schultz, were descending from the summit of Telescope Peak. The two men attempted ice axe glissades over the steep fall-off of the Eastern slope of the mountain, on icy snow with out-croppings of rock and bush. Trigg was separated from his ice axe, slid 1,000 feet down a steep snow chute and fell to his death over a 200-foot ice fall at the mouth of the chute. Schultz spent some time trying to locate Trigg, was unsuccessful, and worked his way off the slope to the trail with great difficulty, and went on for help.

*Source:* Carl A. Heller and Gilbert Blinn

*Analysis:* Both Trigg and Schultz evidently had such limited experience in climbing on ice and snow, and in the uses of the equipment and techniques thereof, that they did not realize the hazards of an ice axe glissade on such a treacherous slope. More experienced climbers would not have attempted it.

*California, Death Valley National Monument, Telescope Peak.* On 21 December, Richard Slates (34), a member of a search party for the body of Grant Trigg arrived by one-passenger helicopter on a ridge of Telescope Peak and elected to deviate from the established search pattern by proceeding alone up the ridge toward the summit. He did not wait for a second man, who arrived about one-and-a-half hours later in the same helicopter. Analyses of tracks showed a slip and a fall on steep, crusted snow. There was no evidence of attempted ice axe arrest. A slide of fifty feet carried Slates over a 200-foot icy waterfall to his death.

*Source:* Dr. Carl A. Heller

*Analysis:* It is possible that a sudden helicopter lift to 9,500 feet may have affected Slates' judgment, since solo climbing is against the group rules. He was not in good shape and was probably tired.

*Oregon, Mt. Hood.* Late in the night of 16 July, Terry Tindall (19), Sue Davis (17), and John MacDaniels (18) arrived at Cloud Cap Inn. It was thought they had intended to climb Mt. Hood that night, but stormy conditions forced them to abandon that plan. Another party was at Cloud Cap. Both parties awoke at 5:00 a.m. The other party left at 7:00 a.m. and the MacDaniels party at about 8:00 a.m. The weather during the climb was mostly warm and sunny. The day before had been stormy. The MacDaniels party roped up when they reached Eliot Glacier and put on their crampons. They climbed through the lower ice fall on Eliot Glacier (for interest's sake) to the moat-crevasse which separates the curving Eliot Glacier from the Northeast face below Cooper Spur. They picked up and followed the route made by the earlier party. The earlier party reported that they met soft snow two feet thick on a wet base on their route. By this time (about

11:00 a.m.), the sun had softened the snow and the previous party's route over the moat was for practical purposes a one-way route; once across it the MacDaniels' party believed it was committed to the North face. (Information from the other party indicates that this route could have been retraced.) The earlier party was now about three hours ahead and some distance above. Sue followed the tracks toward a couloir separated from the party by a large rock out-cropping. Just before she entered the couloir an avalanche swept down it. This was the first avalanche of the day. None had occurred on this face earlier.

They climbed up between two outcrops of rock and ate lunch on one of them. While they were eating, another avalanche came down the couloir. They could see the earlier party high above on the far side of the couloir almost to the summit. Some time later, having reached the summit and eaten lunch, the earlier party started their descent via Cooper Spur directly above the route selected by the MacDaniels party. Another party had also ascended the mountain and was descending by the same route. The slope climbed by the MacDaniels party was 50°–40° of hard ice with no snow on it. They were some 600 feet above Eliot Glacier cutting steps and belaying to protect against falls which they considered the primary danger, since they had seen no avalanches since the earlier party had reached the summit or slightly before that time.

The earlier party continued down and the MacDaniels party up. Suddenly, another avalanche swept down the face in the couloir—the third of the day. Their attempt to move faster was thwarted by steeper and harder ice. The higher and earlier party descended further and a huge avalanche swept down the face just 100 feet to their right at about 1:30 p.m. They were about 800 feet above Eliot Glacier when the party above yelled, "Avalanche!" MacDaniels was in the lead and told Terry and Sue to get into self-arrest—the avalanche struck them and they were swept away in an instant; down between two out-croppings and over the moat, 25 feet onto Eliot Glacier. They assessed their injuries which, in general, were minor. Sue and MacDaniels helped Terry who was most seriously injured into his down jacket. MacDaniels carried Terry's pack, and they started down Eliot Glacier on the two mile hike to Cloud Cap. They were met by members of the other parties and were assisted to Cloud Cap. All members of the MacDaniels party were wearing Bell Toptex "Malibu" protective headgear. Only Tindall's was severely scratched and had compression of the liner. No head injuries were experienced by the party.

*Source:* Ross Petrie and John MacDaniels

*Analysis:* There are a number of lessons to be learned from this incident:

1. If one is planning to climb steep snow and/or ice slopes, an early start is essential. Certainly an attempt to start up such slopes at 11:00 a.m. is much too late.
2. It is not good judgment to continue climbing on slopes that have given evidence of avalanching.
3. It is not good judgment to commit one's party to a "one-way" route.
4. If there are parties climbing above whether on rock or snow, parties below should take every precaution to protect themselves; a lower party is decidedly placing itself in jeopardy by electing to climb a route that could be exposed to falling debris from groups above, whether on rock or snow.
5. Protective headgear proved to be of great value and at least for one person definitely prevented serious head injury.