

an initial assessment, a team was sent to the top of the climb, where the victim was reached and given emergency medical attention. Ranstrom was then secured in a litter, lowered to the base of the cliff and carried out to a waiting ambulance near the base of Lower Yosemite Falls. She was then transported to Yosemite Medical Clinic. Her partner, Cindy Worman (26) was slightly injured in holding the fall, but came down the walk-down route with rescue personnel. (Source: Tim Dallas, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

As Ranstrom was leading the last pitch of The Surprise, Worman was belaying below from a tree. Ranstrom placed a Friend with a sling for a foothold, but didn't clip the rope into it. About three meters above Worman, she placed another Friend for a handhold, but it pulled out, causing her to fall past Worman, a total of about 12 meters. Worman was able to hold the fall, but injured her arm and hand moderately in doing so. At some point during the fall, Ranstrom broke her leg. Ranstrom, with Worman's help, managed to traverse to a small ledge and Worman tied her off to the belay tree. (Source: Tim Dallas, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

(Editor's Note: Statistics, but no narratives, were received from the Angeles Chapter of the Sierra Club. This accounts for the increase in the number of accidents in California over previous years.

Fourteen of the twenty-four accidents from this group happened on snow. Eight of those involved skiing. Half of these accidents were attributed to climbers exceeding their level of abilities. Next year, narratives will provide examples of typical situations encountered by this group.)

ILLNESS, COLD AND WINDY WEATHER

Colorado, Longs Peak

On January 1, 1983, Jimmy Shotten (44) and Randall Speck (24) left the Longs Peak trailhead in good weather for a six-day winter camping and climbing trip on Longs Peak. They spent that Saturday night at Jims Grove and, on Sunday, continued on up to the boulder field in fair weather. The weather deteriorated during the night, and high winds blew their tent apart. On Monday, Shotten and Speck climbed to the base of the North Face and found some existing snow caves where they spent the night. The weather continued to deteriorate, and, on Tuesday, Shotten and Speck attempted to descend Longs Peak, but could only reach Granite Pass, about three kilometers, much of it on their hands and knees, in severe winter conditions. They dug a very small snow cave and spent the night at Granite Pass. That night Shotten became ill, showing signs of bad "flu" and complaining of chest pains "across his shoulders." On Wednesday Shotten's condition worsened and he was unable to continue the descent. The weather also had not improved, so Speck dug a larger snow cave. They spent another night at Granite Pass.

On Wednesday, Shotten and Speck were to meet Harry Kent, a Colorado Mountain School (CMS) guide and close friend of Shotten, at Chasm Lake for ice climbing instruction. When Shotten and Speck did not arrive, Kent became concerned and that evening coordinated with the park to search for the party early Thursday. On Thursday, Kent and Aaron Walters (also a CMS guide) departed from the Longs Peak trailhead with a radio to search for Shotten and Speck. At 1130, Speck showed

up at the trailhead and reported that Shotten was very ill, weak and unable to walk off the mountain. He also provided Shotten's location, which was relayed to Kent. Kent and Walters, literally on their hands and knees in the extreme winds, found Shotten and reported him to be incoherent and hypothermic. Kent advised that a rescue was impossible, due to weather conditions and the late hour, but that Shotten was responding well to rewarming measures and nourishment. Kent and Walters spent Thursday night with Shotten while a ground evacuation was arranged for early the next day. On January 7, fourteen personnel evacuated Shotten to the trailhead by noon. It was later determined at the hospital that he had suffered a mild heart attack. (Source: Charlie Logan, Rocky Mountain National Park)

FALL ON ICE, CLIMBING UNROPED, INEXPERIENCE

Colorado, Grace Falls

On January 2, 1983, Chris Waydeveld (19) and Royal Laybourn had topped out on the 35-meter, near-vertical, Grace Falls in Rocky Mountain National Park. They were on low-angle water ice at the top, which gently slopes toward the top of the falls. They unroped and started toward the edge of the ice to easy rock and snow. Waydeveld slipped, fell, and started sliding back toward the brink. Laybourn reached out to grab Waydeveld, was pulled off balance, fell, and started sliding as well. Both climbers slid over the edge and fell to the base of the ice climb. Laybourn, incredibly, sustained only minor injuries. (It was later determined that he suffered a mild compression fracture of the cervical vertebrae.) Waydeveld sustained multiple fractures, lost consciousness, and began to suffer from cold, injuries and hypothermia. Laybourn splinted the compound fracture with ice axes, moved Waydeveld to a rock prominence and went for help. Laybourn contacted a Colorado Mountain School guide, Dennis Laird, and his client who were nearby. Laird sent his client to the trailhead with Laybourn and responded to Waydeveld's location with a sleeping bag, stove, and other equipment.

Laird did a medical assessment, put Waydeveld in the sleeping bag and a bivouac sack, and carefully slid him down to a more protected spot. Low temperatures, high winds, heavy blowing snow and spindrift prevailed. Laird started reversing the effects of hypothermia and generally stabilized Waydeveld's critically deteriorating status.

In the meantime, word reached Park Headquarters at 1609 that there had been an accident on Grace Falls resulting in serious injuries. A rescue was immediately initiated, and by 1600, the rescue team had begun ground evacuation by toboggan back to Odessa Lake. Waydeveld was flown off by the Air Life helicopter at 1922. (Source: Charlie Logan, Rocky Mountain National Park)

(Editor's Note: A review of this rescue operation resulted in the recommendation that night helicopter evacuations from this high-relief topography and unpredictable weather area be discontinued.)

FALLING ROCK, NO HARD HAT, HYPOTHERMIA

Colorado, Notchtop

Since there were no witnesses to this incident, the following scenario is based on educated conclusions from the evidence found.