

attempt the climb. On the retreat, they got off route and Abrams fell when a hand hold pulled out. He came to rest on a ledge 30 meters lower at the 4100 meter level. He had severe face and head lacerations, bleeding from the ear, and unequal pupil size. Fortunately, another party observed the fall. The rescue process proceeded very well at several critical phases, and Abrams was helicoptered to the hospital after dark. He was extremely dehydrated in addition to his injuries, but survived. (Source: Robert Rockwell, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

Analysis

These climbers turned around on a very well known route (Grade II, 5.4) before attempting the technical part. This occurred around noon, indicating a start several hours later than usual. They had been observed in this extremely popular climbing area for almost a week and had not attained a single summit. (Source: Robert Rockwell, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

FALL ON SNOW/ICE, FALL INTO CREVASSE, CLIMBING UNROPED, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, WEATHER California, Mount Shasta

On Friday, September 28, 1984, Jerry Ackeret (45), John Sharp (32), John Colteaux (49) and Peter Muzio (38), all from the San Francisco area, attempted a climb of Mount Shasta via the north side. They started at North Gate and climbed the Hotlum-Bolum route, bivouacking overnight around the 3000 meter elevation. Saturday morning the party split up, Ackeret and Sharp heading back down and Muzio and Colteaux continuing on up the mountain. It was a calm, sunny day, and neither seemed to be expecting a storm. Both reached the summit and started down. It seems they were unaware of the topography, as they chose a route that led to one of the most dangerous and precipitous portions of the mountain—the headwall just above the Hotlum Glacier. Muzio, in the lead, attempted to cross a steep, six meter wide snow chute. He stepped out onto the chute to kick-test the conditions. Underneath the layer of snow was ice. Colteaux later recalled Muzio stating, “I don’t think it’s safe.” At that moment Muzio’s ice ax slipped and he fell down the chute about ten meters, struck two rock outcrops and disappeared. Colteaux called to Muzio for about a half hour, then climbed back to the summit hoping to find someone to go for help. It was almost sundown, and finding no one, Colteaux bivouacked on the summit. During the night of the 29th, it started to storm with blizzard conditions. He had no tent or sleeping bag. The only food he had was some peanuts and raisins from the day before. The storm continued until Sunday afternoon. Colteaux again got lost attempting to retreat via the south side. He wandered out onto the Whitney Glacier to around the 3950 meter elevation. Here he spent the night in a small crevasse. “I got up every half hour, stamped my feet and tried to keep everything from getting wet,” Colteaux stated. The sun rose at 0700 and Colteaux stated the route ahead was “terrible.”

In the meantime Sharp and Ackeret reported to the Siskiyou County Sheriff that Colteaux and Muzio were missing. The sheriff’s office requested the California Highway Patrol helicopter to assist and the CHP observed Colteaux on a rock outcrop above the Whitney Glacier. They could not land because of the high winds.

Another helicopter was called in to help and rescued Colteaux. A hazardous search



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ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Purpose and Description: The primary purpose of these reports and the Annual Report of *Accidents in North American Mountaineering* is to aid in the prevention of accidents. The person filling out the form should be familiar with the circumstances of the accident and, therefore, either the person(s) directly involved should complete it or at least review it. Full narratives and suggestions for future climbers are welcomed. If any persons involved wish to remain anonymous, in cases where no rescue was involved, the editor will honor that request.

1. REPORT COMPLETED BY (name and address or affiliation with accident):

2. DATE OF ACCIDENT: _____

3. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION: _____ **ROUTE:** _____

4. NAMES (or use a number) AND AGES OF PERSONS DIRECTLY INVOLVED:

1. _____	AGE: _____
2. _____	AGE: _____
3. _____	AGE: _____
4. _____	AGE: _____
5. _____	AGE: _____

5. TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS IN PARTY OR CLASS: _____

6. DETAILS OF THE ACCIDENT:

A. ROCK SNOW ICE RIVER UNKNOWN

B. ASCENDING DESCENDING UNKNOWN

C. IMMEDIATE CAUSE (YOU MAY CHECK MORE THAN ONE):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> FALL OR SLIP ON ROCK | <input type="checkbox"/> FAILED TO FOLLOW ROUTE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FALL OR SLIP ON SNOW | <input type="checkbox"/> LIGHTNING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FALL OR SLIP ON ICE | <input type="checkbox"/> FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FALLING ROCK OR OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> SKIING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCEEDED ABILITIES | <input type="checkbox"/> PRUSIK OR ASCENDING DEVICE FAILURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AVALANCHE | <input type="checkbox"/> ASCENDING TOO FAST |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXPOSURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXHAUSTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRANDED | <input type="checkbox"/> INADEQUATE BELAY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAILURE OF RAPPEL | <input type="checkbox"/> EQUIPMENT FAILURE (BE SPECIFIC) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ILLNESS | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LOSS OF CONTROL—VOLUNTARY GLISSADE | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FALL INTO MOAT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (BE SPECIFIC) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> NUT OR CHOCK PULLED OUT | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PITON PULLED OUT | <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN |

for Muzio resulted in finding his ice ax and some personal effects, with indications that they had been violently ripped from the owner. The area was steep and filled with large crevasses. The search was called off after discussion with the family. (Source: Dan Bryant, Punto Alto Mountaineering, Siskiyou County Sheriff)

Analysis

Many climbers on Mount Shasta are not prepared for the mountaineering conditions they can encounter. Autumn is also recognized as a hazardous time to be on the mountain. The terrain Colteaux and Muzio were in called for the use of mountaineering equipment and techniques. (Source: Dan Bryant, Punto Alto Mountaineering, Siskiyou County Sheriff)

FALL ON ICE, CLIMBING UNROPED, INEXPERIENCE

California, Mount Gilbert

On October 14, 1984, Richard Harris (24) was climbing the 300 meter north couloir of Mount Gilbert (3990 meters) with Jim Jacobs. Jacobs, the more experienced, was instructing Harris. They had a rope, but were not using it. About 16 meters from the top of the couloir, Harris slipped. He fell about 250 meters down the 50 to 60 degree couloir to the glacier below. After regaining consciousness, he complained of back pain and probable broken ankles. Jacobs was apparently unnerved by the experience and would/could not descend the couloir unaided.

The accident was observed by other climbers who attended to Harris and went for help. Another party in the vicinity was able to carry some overnight gear to assist Jacobs; they climbed the couloir using headlamps and descended safely the next morning. The China Lake Mountain Rescue Group assisted in the rescue, and flew Harris to the hospital the next morning. (Source: Robert Rockwell, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

Analysis

Surviving a fall of this length and having the good fortune to be helped by others in an isolated area like this will hopefully not provide confidence to other potential free solo climbers that such is the usually the result. (Source: J. Williamson)

EXPOSURE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING, WEATHER

California, Yosemite Valley

On October 18, 1984, the bodies of Sadatamo Keiso (35) and Kenji Yatuhashi (32), both of Hiroshima, were retrieved from 16 meters below the summit of El Capitan, where they had frozen to death in a storm reported as the worst in 19 years. Thirty-five centimeters of snow fell, and temperatures were -12° C and below.

At the same time, Brian Bennett (26) and Norman Boles (25) were rescued from the Zodiac route, and Edwin Drummond (39), was rescued from the North American Wall, which he was attempting to solo. (Source: J. R. Tomasovic and Michael Mayer, Rangers, Yosemite National Park)