

returned to Kahiltna base camp by the 20th, so his pilot, Doug Geeting, began the first search efforts on the 21st. He flew the approach, Cassin Ridge and West Buttress making no sightings. The park service became involved after this flight with extensive helicopter and fixed-wing flying on the 24th, 25th and 26th. A single set of tracks was observed leading up into the cirque west of the West Rib and ending in avalanche debris. Continued searching in the area found no sign of Hoover. Search efforts were concluded late on the 26th. Hoover is presumed dead. (Source: Roger Robinson, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

### **Analysis**

In Hoover's correspondence with Ranger Seibert, he spoke of the Cassin Ridge as being the next logical step in the progression of his climbing career where the "difficulty in my climbs is quite evident as each successive climb has increased in difficulty and height." Hoover's climbing background did not reflect climbs with the technical difficulty on snow, ice, or rock which he would have encountered either on the Cassin or in the cirque where searchers followed tracks that were believed to be Hoover's. In Hoover's last contact with another climbing party, he expressed concern for his own safety in the heavily crevassed icefall in the upper reaches of the Northeast Fork, on the approach to the Cassin. The tracks believed to be Hoover's traveled up the Northeast Fork to near the base of the icefall, then turned into a cirque to the north. No known climbing routes begin from the head of this cirque. It is believed Hoover saw the severely crevassed icefall, decided it was too hazardous for travel, and looked for alternatives, probably venturing into the cirque. No one will ever know what he did after this, and considering the danger of icefall, avalanche, or crevasse, one can only speculate on his demise. (Source: Roger Robinson, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

### **FALL ON ROCK, STRANDED, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT**

#### **Arizona, Camelback Mountain**

At 1240 on January 24, 1987, the Phoenix Fire Department was notified that a male (18) had fallen about 60 meters to his death from a route known as Suicide Direct (5.8) on Camelback Mountain in Echo Canyon Park in Phoenix. His companion (19) was stranded about that high off the ground.

Camelback Mountain, within the city limits, is about 500 meters tall and consists mostly of rotten brecia and some granite. The first pitch of the climb goes 30 meters Class 4 to a large ledge, the second pitch continuing 40 meters at 5.8 with protection being five bolts placed by the first ascent party (including "eye" bolts—some since removed). The climb gains access to an upper portion of the mountain known as August Canyon.

The two had attempted the climb and were able to make it about 60 meters to a bolt, where there is a slightly overhanging crux move. The boy following slipped and fell. The stranded survivor had grabbed an old sling attached to the bolt there and hung on. Phoenix Fire Department called for CAMRA via the sheriff's department and team members were flown by helicopter to just above the victim, where fire rescuers had set up. By 1440 the victim was on the ground by way of an "uninjured

lowering," using a top belay as a team member rappelled along side with a leash line system. (Source: Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association—Accident Summary Committee)

### **Analysis**

This is one example of five situations in Arizona this past year where individuals got themselves into climbing situations and either fell or became stranded. None had climbing experience or were adequately equipped. The region in which the Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Team operates has an apparently disproportionate share of technical rescues for nonclimbers. As their committee points out, the rock in the Phoenix area beckons because of the "stair-step" appearance. (Source: J. Williamson)

## **FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPEO, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, EXCEEDING ABILITIES**

### **Arizona, Sedona**

On October 6, 1987, Brian Green (19) was climbing a 5.7 route on the Courthouse Rock Fountain, and while attempting a final chimney near the top, he fell onto a small ledge. Several blocks of sandstone came loose and pinned his left foot. After about two hours of being stranded in that position, he shouted to a hiker 40 meters below. The Sedona Fire Department's Technical Rescue Squad came and lowered the victim—requiring an estimated 75 person hours. (Source: Reed Thorne, Captain, Sedona Fire Department Technical Rescue Squad)

### **Analysis**

The climber claimed to have about four years of experience. He had no climbing shoes and no climbing equipment, however. The nature of the sandstone on this route warrants a rope and protection. The area is remote as well. (Source: Reed Thorne, Captain, Sedona Fire Department Technical Rescue Squad)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE SELF-BELAY**

### **California, Santa Barbara, San Ysidro Rock**

Excerpts of an account sent to us by a climber (27) may be instructive for solo attempts on rock:

I was climbing the 5.9 variation of Face Lift on San Ysidro Rock. It was a hard move, but I'd done it before with no problem. I fell once, going over backward, but got back up. I tried again. When I fell again, I was coming close to hitting a tree. I didn't want to do that. I put my foot out to stop myself, but it didn't stay. I rested a few minutes, then, with a sprained ankle, finished the climb and limped out to the Emergency room. In the future, I will be attached by two ropes when doing high exposure climbs, one to belay me and another tied to the back of my harness so that if I fall, I won't go over backward like I did this time.