

the tremendous view of the glacier and surroundings. Once on the ridge, I was moved inside the helicopter and flown to the Tioga Road, where an ambulance was standing by to take me to Mammoth Hospital. Then the helicopter flew back to pick up Ann, who had a sprained ankle, and the rest of the crew. Ann got a ride to the hospital from a member of the Mono County Sheriff's Office.

After numerous X-rays and a CAT scan, the doctors at Mammoth Hospital informed me of the injuries: concussion, broken mandible, a badly broken left wrist, hairline fracture of the C5 vertebra, sprained knee, sprained clavicle and several lacerations to the face. The broken wrist turned out to be the worst. The fall had shattered my scaphoid, a notoriously difficult bone to heal, in five pieces, requiring surgery and three pins to put it back together. Five months after the accident, I am just beginning to regain motion in the joint. Still, things are progressing, and I hope to be back climbing come springtime.

Analysis

This is my first accident in nearly ten years of climbing. Although I consider myself a cautious climber, I must admit to having taken this climb for granted. I was focusing on the climb ahead and failed to appreciate the changing terrain. As the leader, I should have protected the climb using a running belay. In addition, I was carrying all the ice protection, leaving Ann ill-equipped to deal with the situation when I became injured. On future climbs, we will each carry appropriate gear.

Having time to reflect on the accident and the injuries I sustained, and more importantly the ones that I did not, I am very glad to have worn a helmet. There is no doubt my injuries would have been much more severe, if not fatal, had I not been wearing one. Although I felt no pain in my neck, I also turned out to have a hairline cervical fracture. Use of a cervical collar and backboard is standard procedure to prevent further spinal injury after such a trauma as mine. That gear is hard to come by on a glacier, but the result of improper movement in such a situation can be catastrophic. Whether to stay on the steep, cold ice, immobilized by a partner or descend to a safer, more comfortable environment is a tough call and a consideration every lay rescuer needs to think through. That is where Wilderness First Responder training can stack the cards in your favor. (Source: Pedro and Ann Frigola)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION/BELAY

California, Tahquitz Rock, The Step

On October 19, we believe that David Kellogg (32) and Kelly Tufo (41) had completed the climb and had finished up on Super Pooper or White Maiden's Walkway. They were taking down their belay system when one of them slipped, pulling both of them off. They fell about 700 feet to their deaths.

When found at the bottom of Tahquitz, the two were still roped together with the rope still in David's belay device. We also found David's cleaning

tool broken in half. One half was next to David and the other half was about 30 feet away. Kelly's cleaning tool was still clipped to his harness.

Analysis

This is what we believe happened through analysis of the scene, interviews from witnesses, review of harnesses and gear at the county morgue, and re-examining the scene from top to bottom: We believe David had his cleaning tool out and was trying to retrieve the last cam when one of them slipped. Note that there are two possible exit routes that are safe to walk away from—if you don't slip or trip! The basic lesson: Stay on belay until you are in a position where there is no danger of a slip/trip that could pull you over the side. (Source: From a report submitted by Glenn Henderson, Riverside Mountain Rescue Unit)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPED

California, Temple Crag, Venusian Blind Arête

Linnea Erickson (age 22) had told a friend that she planned to solo climb the Venusian Blind Arête route (IV, 5.7) on Temple Crag. On Friday, October 24 Linnea left her camp at Third Lake carrying a light pack containing climbing shoes, chalk bag, jacket, water, and food. She crossed the creek below Third Lake, followed the well-used trail to the base of Temple Crag, successfully surmounted the permanent snowfield, and traversed below the Moon-Goddess Arête to the base of the intended route. She ascended the arête approximately 800 feet to the vicinity of a prominent gendarme. At this point she apparently fell into the gully between the Moon Goddess Arête and the Venusian Blind Arête. Her jacket was located directly beneath the prominent gendarme (about 200 feet) and her body was located on a ledge about 150 feet further down at about 11,500 feet elevation. She died instantaneously upon falling. She was reported missing on the morning of Sunday, October 26, and her body was spotted at 3:30 p.m. during a helicopter search. Her body was recovered Monday, October 27, by Inyo County Search & Rescue with the support of the USFS helicopter.

Analysis

Linnea had recently come west from New Hampshire. She had limited familiarity with the Sierra Nevada Mountains, having previously soloed Cathedral Peak (III, 5.7) in the prior week and Mount Sill and Mount Gayley the previous day. She was attempting a long and serious, albeit not technically difficult route. The nature of the routes on Temple Crag, however, tends to make route finding ability very important. It is easy to stray off the moderate climbing and onto difficult terrain. When her body was located, there was no indication of exactly where she fell or why. It is only possible to surmise that she may have been slightly off-route on more difficult climbing than the intended 5.7, or she may have encountered a loose rock (a common occurrence in the High Sierra). Free-solo ascents always carry the possibility of a fatal mistake, particularly in a setting where the climber has limited experience. (Source: Dave German, Inyo County Search & Rescue)