

turning over in the air. He was too high above the nearest piton to be checked by the rope; and he struck the belayer's ledge on one shoulder and the back of his head, sustaining a severe fracture of the skull from which he died about 16 hours later. The rope prevented a further fall. Telephone calls to experienced Sierra Club rock climbers, the County Hospital and the State Highway Patrol speeded the rescue. According to the attending physician, the injury was so severe that no amount of speed would have saved his life. The reason for the fall is not known.

*Source of information:* Sierra Club Mountaineering Committee.

*Analysis.* On careful study, a Sierra Club Committee could find no fault with the climbing and rescue technique employed. It can only be concluded that Hood was so far above his last piton that, even if the rope had come into play, a 40-ft. fall was bound to ensue. Hood was reasonably experienced and had a reputation as a conservative and careful climber; but, since most of his experience, according to reports, had been on the firm rock of Yosemite, he may not have had sufficient appreciation of the danger of unsound rock and of the need for additional care. Perhaps he relaxed his vigilance as the slope eased off, despite the poor quality of the rock, which should have kept him constantly on the alert. Whether the cause of his fall was a simple slip, loss of balance, a jerk from below, or the collapse of a hold, is impossible to determine. One may conclude, however, that his margin of safety was too slim and that more awareness of this might have saved his life.

*New Mexico Rocky Mountains:* In late October 1947, two girl secretaries from Los Alamos lost their lives on an icy slope of *Truchas Peak* (13,275 ft.), New Mexico's highest mountain. One was 34 years old, the other 35. Having climbed the peak, they were descending late in the afternoon to the point where horses had been left. With them was Sam Martin, whom they had employed as guide. Against his advice, one of the women took a shortcut across a wide expanse of ice (?). After going only a short distance, she fell and slid several hundred ft., cutting her leg and head. The party had no rope. Being unable to move the injured woman without one, the party made her as comfortable as possible; and her companion volunteered to remain with her while Martin went for help. The rescuers arrived shortly before noon the following day

to find the two crushed bodies several hundred ft. below the spot where the guide had last seen them alive.

*Source of information:* newspaper accounts.

*Analysis.* Although details of this tragedy are available only from newspaper accounts, several obvious points may be emphasized. Apparently the guide was inadequately qualified, both in experience and in equipment, to undertake the responsibility of leading such a trip. The mention of horses suggests that he may have been a horse guide rather than a mountaineer. Presumably the victims had no knowledge of the mountains. No experienced climber would attempt the crossing of a dangerous and extensive slope without a rope, nor after injury would he move from a secure position before the arrival of a rescue party.

The State Police were called upon to effect the rescue. Before they found the bodies, they returned to civilization to purchase 5000 ft. of rope and other equipment. This would have been an opportunity for a trained and well-organized rescue team from some near-by mountaineering organization. Pain, hunger and exposure may impel injured climbers to further their own rescue. Delay in getting rescue personnel into the field may therefore mean disaster.

*Tetons: (1) Symmetry Spire, St. John Massif.* In mid-June 1947, a climber, Hans Breu, was making an attempt on one of the cliffs in this district with a companion, George Senner. Breu decided to climb a more difficult pitch than his companion felt qualified to attempt; so he went up it alone. A slip occurred, and the more ambitious climber fell 100 ft. into a tree, which probably saved his life but left him with a chipped ankle. After Senner had notified park authorities, a rescue party brought Breu down in a stretcher.

*Source of information:* National Park Service and members of rescue expedition.

*Analysis.* This is another story of an unroped climber. Details are so sparse that only general conclusions can be drawn.

*Tetons: (2) Mount Owen.* On 8 August 1947 Clement Ramsland, an instructor in Public Speaking at the University of Minnesota, fell during a descent *en rappel* from a position above the saddle between Mt. Owen and the East Prong. As first man