

Action is being taken for better inspection of ropes, and to substitute weights for the practice of lower belays.

*California, San Francisco*—On March 25, 1956 Bruce Frederick (16), with two companions, attempted an ascent of Lands End cliff. After his companions turned back, Frederick continued alone, reaching a point about 25 feet from the top before falling some 275 feet back to the base of the cliff. Rescue operations by firemen, police, and Coast Guard took three hours since the victim had to be raised to the road at the top of the cliff.

The boy's injuries were diagnosed as fractured skull, broken neck, fractured ribs and legs, punctured lungs, and internal injuries. He died the next day.

*Source:* William Siri.

*Analysis:* (W. Siri). No climbing experience, no training, and no equipment, and site not used for practice climbing because of extreme hazards and rotten rock.

*California, Sierra Nevada*—On June 28, 1956 John Brinkmann (15) was injured while climbing the NE ridge of University Peak. The party was led by Scoutmaster Jim Fairchild, who had had mountain experience with the Sierra Club; the climbing party consisted of six. In addition, there was a doctor in camp. The party was on the mountain in good weather, following the easiest route up the NE ridge. The leader had a rope and various emergency equipment; the rope was not being used at the time of the accident, because the terrain did not seem to justify it. Brinkman was following behind several others. At one point the climber in front of him, who was slightly heavier than Brinkmann, pulled himself up onto a ledge by grasping a 70-pound boulder. Brinkmann grasped the boulder, which felt solid, and started to pull himself up; he does not remember exactly how he pulled on the rock, but the only alternative route at that point was to one side, on steep snow. Brinkmann's father, who was with the group and examined the place, concurs that there was no alternative. The boulder suddenly came loose and fell on top of Brinkmann, injuring him chiefly in the chest. Evacuation was performed by the party and packers operating in the area. Brinkmann's father praised Fairchild's experience, judgment, and performance throughout.

*Source:* Interview of John Brinkmann and Mr. G. H. Brinkmann by D. Harrah. Newspaper account.

*Analysis:* (D. Harrah). One could argue that the party should have been roped, but on the other hand this sort of mishap occurs to climbers in terrain where no rope would be used; it looks like "just one of those things." The party was in a strong position as far as rescue necessities go, with plenty of manpower near at hand, a doctor in camp, and a rope for lowering the injured man.

*California, Yosemite (1)*—On May 27, 1956 Dr. Robert Franklin Johnson (28) was killed instantly in a sheer fall from Castle Cliff east of the Lost Arrow. He had climbed up Indian Canyon where there is no trail to the rim of the canyon. He was alone and had not registered for the climb nor had he left word with anyone specifically of his plans. He apparently attempted to make a short-cut back to the Valley down a crevasse in the cliff and slipped or lost his footing and fell about 80 feet to a ledge. An extensive search was made for him from May 28 to June 2 by rangers and members

of the Sierra Club rock climbing section. The body was seen from a helicopter on the morning of June 2. Rangers and a rescue crew of volunteers descended the cliff with ropes and recovered the body which was then buried in a suitable place nearby on the cliff, as it was considered too dangerous a task to remove it from the cliff.

*Source:* John C. Preston, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park.

*California, Yosemite (2)*—On June 28, 1956 Larry Hawley (19), an employee of the National Park Service, suffered a broken neck, shoulder, ribs, and collar bone when he fell while descending a chimney about one mile west of Taft Point. He and Mark Powell, both members of the Sierra Club, were going down a chimney about a thousand feet from the top of the cliff when Hawley fell about 10-15 feet to a ledge. It is not known definitely but apparently a rock was loosened and dislodged and either hit Hawley or caused him to loose his hand- or foothold and fall down the chimney. Ropes were not being used at the time. A ranger rescue crew took 9 hours to remove this severely injured man from the cliff.

*Source:* John C. Preston, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park.

*California, Yosemite (3)*—On August 29, 1956 Ronald W. Beck (19), fell about 150 feet and was killed while attempting to climb Grizzly Peak near LeConte Gully, off from the Sierra Point trail. He had removed his shoes and tried to cross a smooth section of rock when he slipped and fell to a ledge below. He was accompanied by two other young men on this climb but his companions did not witness the fall.

*Source:* John C. Preston, Superintendent, Yosemite National Park.

*California, Yosemite (4)*—On June 9, 1956 an accident occurred on the lower part of the Royal Arches on a pitch known as the "Bear Hug," an open, high-angle chimney that is climbed mainly by friction holds. The party was on a standard and frequently used route. It consisted of two ropes of two climbers, all of whom were experienced rock climbers, and several of whom had been on this climb before. The rock was dry and the weather clear and warm. Clark McKemper (40) led the Bear Hug pitch belayed by Phillip Boetler from a ledge at the start of the pitch. Twelve feet above the ledge McKemper placed a piton for protection. About 12 feet above his piton he slipped and fell back to the ledge, landing on Boetler who was not, however, dislodged. McKemper suffered abrasions and an injured back but was able to descend under his own power aided by the other climbers.

*Source:* William Siri.

*Analysis:* (W. Siri). The pitch on which the accident occurred requires fine judgment and considerable skill. It is one that easily leads a climber to overextend himself because there are no intermediate resting points and continues as an unbroken friction pitch to the top. If McKemper felt at all uncertain he should have placed a second piton, though in fairness to him it should be added that the nature of the rock may have made this nearly impossible.

*California, Sequoia National Park*—On July 24, 1956 Gerry Rule (16), while climbing with a companion on a steep talus slope above Hamilton Lake, slipped and fell some 40 feet. He was pinned under a large boulder all night, until a rescue party consisting of Park Rangers and trail crew employees, in company with a physician, could reach the victim. Rule