

hard hat chinstrap popped, and the hat departed. Sarquis was standing below Smith while belaying him. Smith struck Sarquis on the shoulder knocking him down. Both were now on their backs behind the twelve foot spire where Sarquis had been standing a moment before.

After a few minutes Smith recovered to the point that he was able to walk the 100 yards back where the cars were parked. He rested well and made the trip home on the following day. His family doctor required him to stay in the hospital for several days for treatment of a strained back.

*Source:* Ellis Hedlund.

*Analysis:* (Hedlund) Darkness made it hard for others to see what Smith's procedure was. We did not see that he had used the same piton that held the ladder for his safety rope. If you take time to tell your teammates exactly what you are doing, they or you will discover the treachery of the situation. The climbers were lucky in this case. Never be a one piton climber or a two piton climber while using a single fracture when on a sixth class climb. (See accident that occurred on cliff near Dublin, Ohio, ed.).

*California, Yosemite Park, El Capitan.* On May 15 Jim Baldwin (24) and Ed Cooper were in the early stages of the climb of the then-unclimbed direct S.W. face on El Capitan (climb successfully completed in November, 1962). Because of the severity of the climbing, the fixed rope technique was being used. Party had been climbing single days, ascending to and descending from the high point every day; party climbed until reaching about 700 feet high, where the piton crack ended, and an overhanging blank wall was encountered for some distance. At this point, the prussiking up and down every day took too long, the party decided to spend its first night on the wall, hanging in slings. The angle of the climbing had been only 75-80 degrees before the overhang was encountered. At the end of the second day, some 56 feet of blank overhang had been overcome. In addition, when the second man removed the bolt hangers and pitons on this overhanging pitch, the rope was fixed so that it descended an additional 90 feet below the hanging belay-stance beneath the overhang. For perhaps 100 feet the rope hung free. It was a single 7/16 inch braided nylon rope of a very smooth quality, manufactured in Canada. It was a scary prussik, and the first test of the prussik was descending it, not ascending it. When coming to the overhanging section, Jim's prussik knots failed to grip simultaneously, and he fell 80 feet to the bottom of the rope where he was stopped when he came to the anchor point where the rope was fixed at the bottom. He suffered severe rope burns attempting to stop himself, and could not climb for three weeks. Inspection of the prussik knots at the base of the climb showed that they had been partly burned through.

*Source:* Ed Cooper.

*Analysis:* (Cooper) The ordinary two twists of the prussik knot are not always sufficient. I had for sometime used three twists in my prussik knot whenever presented with a situation that I was not completely familiar with, and this no doubt prevented a similar fall on my part;

as I did not know of the fall until I reached the ground. (The rock curved away beneath me at that point.) The smoothness of this particular nylon rope most certainly, and tiredness from a night spent hanging in a sling, perhaps contributed to the cause of the accident. (The safety precaution of having the other end of the rope secured should also be emphasized. If prussiking down is planned, and the other end cannot be secured, the alternative would be to have a large knot near the end of the rope to act as a safety measure, ed.)

*California, Taquitz Rock.* On July 29, James Michael McLain (24), joined a scheduled climb at Taquitz Rock with Don Rappolee (38). They decided to climb the "Switchbacks" (Route #28, *Climber's Guide to Taquitz Rock* by Charles Wilts) and left the group about 10:00 A.M. after Don had signed them out. The two men had not met prior to this time.

Quite a bit of time was expended on the first two pitches (the first one being classified as the most difficult of the climb). They alternated leads, Don taking the first and third. Don had made the third pitch placing three pitons: (1) behind the "Flake," and (2) a more secure one about 8 feet below the "Flake" to the left of the "Step Around," and (3) about two feet to the right of the "Step Around," then traversing approximately 33 feet to the right to a small ledge. He tied in and started to belay Mike to him.

Mike called for slack, removed his anchor and started to climb. Apparently, Mike removed the first two pitons before the accident occurred. About 15 minutes after Mike had called for slack, Don noticed that the rope, which had been lying along the 4th ledge, had suddenly dropped below the ledge. This concerned him as he thought the rope might have come out of the carabiner. He called to Mike about this, but there was no reply. Just about this same time, Mike said, "I think I'm going to fall!" and Don heard a scuffling noise. Don is unable to recall exactly what happened after this. The accident occurred about 1:20 P.M.

From the report of the people who heard the fall, it sounded as though there were two separate falls. Don called to a group at the base of the rock that there had been a bad accident. Within one minute, three members of this latter party were at Mike's side. Mike was found, unconscious, lying on his right side, doubled up, on top of several feet of rope. He was bleeding from the back of his head and neck. There was no bleeding from mouth, nose or ears. The rope had not been broken; there was no carabiner or piton on it. He appeared to have fallen in a fairly straight line since he landed almost directly below the "Step Around." First aid was administered for the head and neck wounds. Two young members were dispatched to Idyllwild Sheriff's office for help. Within seven minutes, Mike was strapped in a litter (kept permanently at Taquitz Rock) and was enroute to the roadhead. The litter party arrived at the roadhead at 2:30 P.M. having been reinforced by a rescue team from Idyllwild about 15 minutes earlier. The ambulance and doctor arrived almost immediately, Mike was given a sedative, placed in the ambulance and taken to Hemet Community Hospital where he