

Sawada (25) were relaying loads up from a lower camp. Nishikawa, leading the first rope of this latter group, was only 160 vertical feet below the col on a 30° slope when a section of the slope 490 feet wide, 650 feet long and about 1 foot thick broke away even with him. As the first three climbers were swept away, Kuwahara plunged his ice axe into the deep snow. This hasty belay held, but the nylon rope connecting him to Sawada (only 6 mm. nylon) broke. (The second rope). The avalanche went only 150 feet below Kuwahara before cascading over a 200 foot vertical drop. All three were killed. The bodies of Nishikawa and Miyamoto were recovered.

*Source:* Vin Hoeman after interviewing Shoichi Kimura and corresponding with Nubuo Kuwahara; Mel Marcus.

*Analysis:* The willingness to take risks to accomplish an objective are sometimes in direct proportion to the distance climbers have come and the amount of preparation they have made for a climb. However, there is also the element of poor judgment due to inexperience with mountains the size of Vancouver, or with glacial conditions in general. Although they had used this slope previously, it was undeniably steep enough to avalanche under some conditions.

*British Columbia, Northern Selkirs.* On 16 July Sargent Janes (41) Reed Markley, Penny Ohler and Bill Pratt, members of the 1968 AMC Selkirk Expedition, were returning to Fairy Meadow cabin via Friendship Pass after climbing Pioneer 10,660 feet by the East Ridge. The accident occurred as a result of rockfall while descending unroped over a steep band of loose rocks separating two snow fields near the bottom of the Shoestring Glacier. While James was attempting to locate the best descent route, a 2 foot diameter boulder broke loose immediately above him. He was forced to make an uncontrolled leap in order to avoid being crushed. He managed to avoid the boulder, but having lost his balance, Janes fell backwards and landed headfirst on his back on a pile of large rocks about 15 feet below. Fortunately, Janes did not sustain any serious injuries other than a number of bad bruises and was able to walk to the cabin. He was wearing a hard hat and climbing pack which undoubtedly did much to prevent serious back or head injuries.

*Source:* G. Sargent Janes.

*Analysis:* Better route finding would obviously have prevented this accident; however, this party was attempting to find the easiest means of descending over the rocks at the time. Janes did not actually touch the boulder before it broke loose. Such an accident can happen to anyone and the wisdom of wearing a *hard hat* even on non-technical routes was again demonstrated. It is also interesting to speculate on the role of the climbing pack in preventing a serious back injury. The use of a rope might have prevented a fall, but it would have increased the probability of rockfall and might well have hampered Janes' ability to dodge the boulder.

*Mt. Sir Donald, Selkirk.* On 1 August J. B. Swanson (27), Steve Tandy, John Pinamont, and Garey Tandy had climbed Sir Donald via northwest