

FALL ON ROCK, NO PROTECTION, SELF-RESCUE **California, Yosemite Valley**

On May 18, according to his partner, Steve Keiser (19) was leading the second pitch of Sentinel Rock, 40 to 50 feet out on “easy” rock, when he fell about 7:30 a.m. Unconscious briefly, he recovered and was able to walk after being lowered and/or rappelling to the ground. Several climbers on nearby routes responded, helping him down the third and fourth class ramps to the talus and then to the trail. At 10:30 a.m. NPS received a report that an injured climber was being evacuated from Sentinel Rock by other climbers. He was thought to have a broken arm and facial injuries and had managed to reach the talus at the base of the approach ramps. Dill left immediately (11 a.m.) for the scene with the reporting party and a medical kit. A litter team followed a few minutes later. Dill contacted the victim about 200 feet above the trail near the stream. He was alert and able to walk to the trail with a belay from his friends and after medical treatment (body check, arm splint) he was carried in the litter to the ambulance and enroute at 12:45 p.m. (Source: Park Ranger Dill, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

This situation was caused by a good climber falling and receiving injury that may have been lessened had he placed protection. It is also an excellent example of self-rescue. Instead of immediately calling for help, Keiser chose to have his partner lower him down two pitches and he was able to be helped and belayed by other climbers across the nasty sections of the approach ramps. Keiser was met by the rescue team at the end of the most difficult terrain. He could have easily made it to safety if there was not a rescue group nearby. This is an excellent example of independence from aid by a rescue group. If more climbers acted in this manner, there would be less need for organized rescue groups and government involvement. (Source: Tim J. Setnicka, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, NO HARD HAT **California, Yosemite Valley**

On May 28, 1978, at 8 a.m., Phillip Bard (29) and Gary Gissendaner (21) began climbing Quarter Dome’s north face. The climb went well, with an average of a pitch an hour being climbed. During the climb Bard stated that Gissendaner may have seemed a bit impatient and wanted to climb faster. Prior to the beginning of the climb, “someone” had stated that “there are lots of free pitches” on the climb, meaning that some of the direct aid pitches could be free climbed.

At the sixth pitch, it was Gissendaner’s turn to lead. He looked at it and thought that he could “free” it, even though the pitch is rated 5.7, A-1 in George Meyer’s *Yosemite Climbs*. Gissendaner said that he would come back down and pick up the pitons, if he thought that he could not free the pitch. Gissendaner started the pitch and was able to place three or four chocks along the way and then found a fixed pin. Above the pin, he placed two more nuts and then climbed about 15 feet above the last point of protection.