

## **FALL ON ROCK, PLACING PROTECTION**

### **New York, Shawangunks**

In November 1981, a young woman (18) fell while trying to clip in to a fixed piton on Try Again (5.10). (Source: Brad Snyder)

#### **Analysis**

Twelve of the 14 accidents in the Shawangunks this year were leader falls. These last two illustrate what can happen when a climber's focus shifts from the most important concern to a secondary function. (Source: J. Williamson)

## **FALL ON ROCK, FAILURE OF RAPPELLER, CLIMBING UNROPED**

### **North Carolina, Crowders Mountain**

In April 1981, a person was rappelling from Crowders Mountain when he knocked off an unroped climber. (Source: T. C. P. Zimmermann)

#### **Analysis**

While there are no further details on this accident, I will quote Zimmermann's general comment in a letter to me, "It seems to me that the incident holds various lessons." (Source: J. Williamson)

## **FALL ON SNOW, BAD WEATHER**

### **Oregon, Mount Hood**

At 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 21, a group from the Mazamas gathered at the Cloud Cap Inn on the northeast side of Mount Hood and began a trek toward the summit via the Cooper Spur route.

As the group was descending from the top, ten of the 16 climbers who reached the summit suffered a fall of up to 2,000 feet from the chimney to Eliot Glacier. Five climbers were killed and five others injured.

Jack Bohl (29) of Portland, one of the climbers who fell, described the scene in a nutshell: "We were going up the Cooper Spur route and we had gone up to the summit. The weather wasn't bad when we started, but when we reached the summit about 11 a.m., the weather had deteriorated. It was windy and wet. We were going back down when one of our rope teams slipped. They went sliding uncontrollably through a narrow and steep chute, knocking down seven others and everybody wound up sliding down together. We slid under the Eliot Glacier and came to a stop."

No one knows exactly what caused the accident; apparently someone lost his footing. Bohl indicated that the weather could have caused the climbers to rush a bit and that that may have been a factor. "We were concerned about getting down because everyone was getting cold and wet and it was getting late," he said.

After the fall, the six climbers who did not get tangled up in the human avalanche worked their way down the mountain. According to Sheriff Lynch, three of them went to Cloud Cap Inn for help and the others headed for Eliot Glacier to aid the victims. Meanwhile, John Goss (20) was digging himself out of trouble and trying to help the others do the same.

According to Bohl, those who fell first—the leaders of the climb—suffered the worst

punishment and died. "Our fall did create kind of an avalanche, though, and that may have cushioned us from hitting the rocks," he added.

Goss said that he was able to free himself after the fall and then began working to help others. "We stopped just on top of Eliot Glacier in deep snow," said Goss. "The first thing I did after I realized I was not injured badly was yell out to find if anyone was alive. I got several responses."

About 30 feet away, Goss saw a pile of people, ropes and equipment. "I got three of the people out and asked them to help the others, then I left by myself to go and get help." Goss got back onto the Cooper Spur route and headed for camp. He met up with another group of climbers and told them of the trouble; they relayed the message to Cloud Cap Inn where a call was made to the sheriff.

It wasn't long before several area rescue teams and the sheriff were on the scene. The 304th Aerospace Rescue and Recovery Squadron with its helicopters was also called in.

Because of darkness and poor climbing conditions, the bodies of the five dead climbers were left overnight. By 6:00 a.m. Monday, June 22, rescue crews were already setting out—a distance of at least two miles from Cloud Cap Inn—to bring back the bodies.

Some 25 volunteers from the Hood River Crag Rats, Alpines and Moresco search and rescue groups aided in carrying the bodies and gear back to Cloud Cap.

Those killed in the accident were climb leader George Anderson (36), Boring; Jim Darby (35), Newberg; Garth Westcott (35), Bend; Larry Young (33), most recently of Corvallis; and Leah Lorenson (39), Vancouver, who died of cardiac arrest in a Portland hospital about 10:40 p.m. Sunday. (Source: *Hood River News*, Hood River, Oregon, June 25, 1981)

### Analysis

It was not an unseasoned climbing group that made history with this fall. The Mazamas are regular climbers who have scaled about every peak around.

"They are a large climbing organization," said Sheriff Lynch. "I think they have about 2,500 members." Lynch pointed out that he did not know what level of experience the climbers had, but he said that people he talked to indicated that most of them had five or six years under their belt.

According to Art Israelson, who aided in the rescue, the leader of the climb, George Anderson, "was a very careful climber."

However, the Mazamas group was hardly the first climbing party to fall from the chimney to Eliot Glacier. Reports have it that ten people have died in the same area on the peak in the last 30 years.

Dick Pooley, a member of the rescue group and a seasoned mountaineer, called the area from which the climbers fell "very dangerous." He said, "It's one of those areas where you can't relax. You're directly exposed to the glacier. We call it the chute."

Jim Dixon, a member of the Moresco group from Portland, agreed. "You can almost say it's a popular place to fall," he said. "It's happened so many times. The fall line comes over onto the glacier, so when you take a fall, instead of coming down the Cooper Spur route, you swing down and come onto the glacier." (Source: *Hood River News*, Hood River, Oregon, June 25, 1981)

### FALL ON ICE, FAILURE OF ICE SCREW, EXCEEDING ABILITIES Vermont, Smuggler's Notch

On February 9, 1981, Larry Dieringer (26) was climbing with a group from the Stowe