

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

California, Yosemite Valley

On September 3, 1983, Peter Kohl (20) and climbing partner Robert Fostner were starting the first pitch of the South Face of Washington Column. Kohl, who was leading, had progressed past the lieback section and had moved on to some low-angle slab just below Dinner Ledge. Kohl fell far above his last protection on the lieback area and grounded out before protection could help. The total fall was 30–35 meters. (Source: Mike Mayer, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALLING ROCK

California, Yosemite Valley

On September 18, 1983, Robert Muhnicky (28) was leading the tenth pitch on the Northwest Face of Half Dome when a large rock flake he was on broke away. He fell onto his climbing partner, Toivo Kodas. The rock fell onto Muhnicky's foot, breaking some small bones.

The climbers descended on their own, and the victim was flown by helicopter to Yosemite Medical Clinic. (Source: Dan Dellinger, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Editor's Note: According to Ranger Gary Colliver, with this ledge now gone, the bolt ladder cannot be reached until several new bolts are placed.

FALL ON ROCK, UNROPED

California, Yosemite Valley

On September 11, 1983, Carol Moyer (28) fell about 100 meters to her death from the fourth pitch of Tangerine Trip on El Capitan.

According to her climbing partner, Raymond Kovac, she was cleaning the aid pitch under the roof and untied from the belay rope, relying on her jumars, which slipped off the rope. (Source: Jim Reilly, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

This is a summary of the summary report prepared by John Dill, SAR Ranger:

I interviewed Moyer's climbing partner, Raymond Kovac, and other climbers concerning Moyer's actions, statements, moods, and climbing experience prior to her death. I climbed to the scene of the accident (fourth pitch) and examined Moyer's rope and all other equipment left in place (and undisturbed) since her fall. Using her equipment, I reenacted what I knew of her movements, evaluated various procedures for cleaning the pitch, and looked for possible causes of the fall. I discussed the accident with several experienced climbers. We examined Moyer's equipment in detail, discussed appropriate techniques for cleaning the pitch and possible causes of her fall, and tested some of these hypotheses against the evidence at hand.

Moyer was described by acquaintances, in essence, as having climbed two long and strenuous routes within a few days before the Tangerine Trip. She was considered experienced, but not extensively. She was well liked and was in a good mood on the Tangerine Trip.