

Analysis

While the climbing group was generally experienced and well prepared, the soft snow conditions on Eliot Headwall obviously resulted in several slips and subsequent falls throughout the climb. The warm weather may also have resulted in poor ice conditions on the rock band. Eliot Glacier Headwall is a high-angle ice climb and is in very poor condition when the snow is soft. Head protection is suggested for the route because it is continually exposed to rockfall.

The failure of the belay from the rock band remains unexplained, although two ideas are reasonable. The rock on Mount Hood is often poorly indurated and frequently does not provide an adequate anchor point for a belayer. This may have been one contributing factor to the accident. A second idea has been postulated by the victims: They have suggested that they may have felt a false sense of security when they reached the rock band, thus relaxing their guard momentarily.

The injured climbers' decision to move themselves down the mountain, despite their injuries, greatly facilitated their rescue and played an essential role in saving their lives. Had they remained on the scene with Ravin, their evacuation would have been very technical and required much more time. (Source: W. Jerry Bryan, Hood River Crag Rats)

(Editor's Note: No other reports from Oregon were available at press time.)

RAPPEL FAILURE, CLIMBING ALONE, INEXPERIENCE

Texas, Mount Bonnell

On January 15, 1983, Bruce Spiegelberg (22) fell eight meters while rappelling on Mount Bonnell. "I was looking up, and it happened just like that," Spiegelberg said from his bed in Brackenridge Hospital. "It was probably a piece of glass, because the rope looked like a knife cut through it."

Spiegelberg fell eight meters while rappelling down the mountain, landing in sandy gravel. He said it was fortunate that he did not land on a nearby rock, which would have inflicted more serious injury. He sustained a fractured back and pelvis, which his doctors think can be mended through therapy.

"I was pretty lucky," Spiegelberg said. "If I had been higher up, I might have gotten seriously hurt."

He said he was attracted to the sport because of the thrill and because he likes heights. A native of St. Paul, Minnesota, he said he had learned rappelling from a friend about nine months ago.

"The climbing around here is pretty good, but I don't think it's high enough," he said. (Source: *Austin-American-Statesman*, January 16, 1983)

RAPPEL FAILURE, FAILURE TO TEST ANCHOR, INEXPERIENCE

Utah, Wasatch Range

On February 23, 1983, Kurt Fashimpuar (18) fell fifteen meters onto a scree slope when his two-and-a-half-centimeter webbing sling anchor broke just as he was about