

Analysis

In addition to little water intake, Truecki had a history of nose bleeding problems. He has to have his nose cauterized every two years or so. (Source: John Dill, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALLS ON ROCK, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

California, Sierra Nevada, Charlotte Dome

On July 7, 1984, Michael Renta (37) was off route on the eighth pitch (5.7) of Charlotte's Web when he injured his ankle and ribs in a five to six meter tumbling fall. Renta's partner, David Brown (42), lowered him and took over the lead and was on route, above the crux section, when he fell three meters to a ledge, severely injuring his ankle. Two other members of the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group who were above them returned and helped them up and over the peak, returning slowly to camp, with great pain to the injured climbers. Assessing the situation, the team decided to arrange for an evacuation. (Source: Excerpted from China Lake Mountain Rescue Group *Operation Reports*, Number 84-9)

FALLING ROCK

California, Yosemite Valley

At 0030 on August 9, 1984, Todd Mazzola (22) and Michael Daugherty (22) reported that they, their climbing partner, Craig Thomas (26) and a separate climbing party, Paul Augustine (40) and Eric Hutchinson (20), were sleeping on Dinner Ledge on the South Face route of Washington Column when rockfall landed on them.

During the afternoon the climbers had observed other persons climbing the South Face above them, apparently attempting to reach the summit that day. After retiring, Mazzola noticed small quantities of gravel falling on Dinner Ledge from above, possibly dislodged by the climbers above.

The climbers lay down to sleep about 2045. At 2215 Mazzola heard a "thud noise" followed by a shower of gravel. He and the other climbers scrambled to the wall side of Dinner Ledge to reduce their exposure to the rockfall. After a time period, described by the involved parties variously as 20 seconds to five minutes, it was noticed that Hutchinson had not moved from his sleeping position. Mazzola and Augustine examined Hutchinson who was lying in a prone position on top of his sleeping bag. A wound described as an abrasion with surrounding "stretched skin" was noticed on the left side of Hutchinson's lower back. Hutchinson was unresponsive and, it became quickly apparent, not breathing. Mazzola, trained as an EMT, also determined that the victim did not have a radial pulse. No signs of animation were displayed by the victim. Their efforts at CPR were in vain, so they rappelled off to inform the Park Service, who effected a rescue and recovery by 0930. (Source: J. R. Tomasovic, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

The party above was, as an interview with them indicated, trying to be careful. They were climbing at night on rotten stuff. While the possibility of being hit was a