

partner lowered Pisciotta down to the base of the climb which is still about 130 meters above the ground, then went and reported the accident.

A team of climbers brought up a stokes litter, ropes and other gear, and Pisciotta was lowered, immobilized in the stokes litter to avoid further injury to his ankle, with two attendants, to the ground. The lowering was started after dark, and was complicated by loose rock, brush and the broken, low angle nature of the rock wall in that area, requiring the assistance of numerous climbers.

After reaching the group, we evacuated Pisciotta by litter to the road, and then by vehicle. Several of the rescuers were stung by wasps, after a nest was apparently disturbed in the dark while descending through the woods. (Source: Michael Murray and Gary Colliver, SAR Rangers, Yosemite National Park)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY**

### **California, Yosemite Valley**

On October 20, 1985, about 1000, Ken Byers (41) was leading Catchy (5.10d) on the Cookie Cliff. J. Farmer was at base on bottom belay using a Sticht plate. At 1130, Byers reached the "crux" move, about 25 meters above base. He tied into protection to rest and study the route for the next move for about 20 minutes.

At this point, Farmer said he could see Byers, but knew he was having trouble at the crux move. The rope had gone slack and Farmer knew Byers had tied into protection. There was no verbal communication between the two. Byers said he thought Farmer could see him when he unhooked his static protection to start climbing again.

Farmer felt the slack rope move up and thought Byers was climbing. However, Byers had slipped and had started falling. Farmer let rope feed out, realizing too late he was falling. She apparently panicked; she did not drop her braking hand to activate the Sticht plate belay device. Instead she tried to arrest his fall with a hand grip around the rope, which burned/blistered her hands. She was unable to stop Byers' fall. He fell about ten meters and hit on a ledge injuring his left hip and right foot. Farmer and Byers then talked to each other and decided he should be lowered to the base. Farmer then belayed Byers down to her position.

At this point Ray Lassman, a climber who had witnessed part of the accident, arrived at Farmer's location and assisted her in lowering Byers another five meters down toward the base. However, Byers experienced severe pain and had to stop the descent approximately five meters above the base. There, he awaited help to be summoned by Lassman.

The National Park Service SAR team responded, providing emergency care at the scene, technical evacuation and transportation to Yosemite Medical Clinic. Byers had sustained a broken femur and possible fractured foot, and was helicoptered to Sacramento for definitive care. (Source: H.R. Steed, Park Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

## **FALL ON ROCK**

### **California, Joshua Tree National Monument**

On September 22, 1985, I (Allen Sanderson [22]), was leading a moderate 5.8 crack on Dogleg. I had made good progress placing protection every two to three meters. About 12 meters into the climb, my foot slipped off the rock. I was able to stay on the rock and was moving upward when my hand jam slipped out. Subsequently, I fell about two meters, cutting my elbow on my way down. My partner, Mike Reeske, lowered me down. We