

by Ranger Detterline. Detterline advised him to visit the Estes Park Medical Center.

Estes Park Medical Center reported that he had sustained a tibial fracture posteriorly on the medial malleolus. (Source: Jim Detterline, Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

## **FALLING ROCK, POOR POSITION**

### **Colorado, Eldorado Springs**

On June 21, 1986, a Japanese climber was hit by a rock while sitting at the base of a climb on the Redgarden Wall in Eldorado Springs State Park. No other climbers were visible above him when this occurred. He had an open fracture of his tibia and fibula on one leg, and was evacuated by members of the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group. (Source: Tom Mullen, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group)

## **FALL ON SNOW, UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, LOST ICE AX**

### **Colorado, Maroon Bells**

On July 26, 1986, Greg Mace (42) and three other Mountain Rescue-Aspen members departed on a scheduled training exercise to scout alternative evacuation routes and to locate helicopter landing zones, and generally to get acquainted with the Maroon Bells. They followed the standard route to the summit of North Maroon Bell, then over to the summit of South Maroon Bell. At the top of the long south couloir they sorted the gear and put on crampons. Greg, with the strap of his ice ax on his wrist, stepped out onto the snow to test it. Somehow he lost his footing and fell, either on his side or on his back. He rolled over to self-arrest, although he may not have been able to get his hand on top of the ice ax. While trying to arrest, Greg lost his ice ax and his wrist somehow came out of the strap.

Greg then slid approximately 225 meters down the snow and ice to a point where the couloir takes a turn, and went feet first into the rocks. His companions reached him quickly, but there was little they could do. One of them went for help, glissading the entire remaining length of the couloir and running out to the trailhead. The response from MRA was smooth, and a helicopter took off from Montrose almost immediately, but Greg succumbed to his injuries before outside help could arrive. He had dislocated his left shoulder, broken virtually all the ribs on his left side and punctured his left lung. (Source: *Colorado Search and Rescue Board*, Volume 20, Number 2, July 30, 1986)

*(Editor's Note: The victim was President of the Rocky Mountain Region of the MRA at the time of his death, and had been with the Mountain Rescue-Aspen for 15 years.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, PARTY SEPARATED, CLIMBING ALONE**

### **Colorado, Sangre de Cristo Range**

On July 28, 1986, a Colorado Mountain Club party of 12 approached the east side of Ellingwood Peak (4307 meters) in the Sangre de Cristo Range in southern Colorado. The leader and party were strong hikers, but not experienced climbers and none of the 12 had seen or done the route before. The east face is a continuous wall that rises from 3680 meters up to the narrow summit ridge. The wall is broken in one area by a steep

series of rocky grass covered ledges. Variations in climbing speed caused the group to spread out. When rocks bounded down from the climbers above, several below turned back. As the ledges turned difficult, the leader decided to call a halt to the climb and shouted ahead for all to come back. The victim, Michael Levine (42), who had climbed the highest, shouted, "Why?" and continued to the ridge.

Levine had not returned by nightfall, so the group returned to Colorado Springs, after informing the Sheriff of Huerfano County of the situation.

Extensive and widespread foot-searching by Colorado rescue groups, aided by helicopters, failed to locate the victim.

On August 31, a possible sighting of clothing in a small, shallow ravine on the sheer face, slightly south and 245 meters below the Ellingwood summit, proved positive on September 2 when the body recovery was made. The site was at the 4000 meter level where a ledge in the ravine stopped his freefall. Assumption is that the victim was going for Blanca Peak, and fell while dropping south of Ellingwood summit on a rocky ridge to Blanca. After reaching the body by a difficult ascent and rappel, it was bagged and lowered off the wall, followed by an evacuation to the roadhead. (Source: Peggy Parr, El Paso County Search and Rescue)

### **Analysis**

This area is full of crumbly rock and severe drop-offs. The terrain demands caution and reduced speed. The victim needed a ride home from another climber in the party, and was probably hurrying to include Blanca Peak. (Source: Peggy Parr, El Paso Search and Rescue)

*(Editor's Note: No mention is made as to why the victim felt he could question the leader's decision. It is indicated that the victim was considered to be experienced.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK, FAILURE TO TEST HOLDS**

### **Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park**

(On August 26, 1986, Doug Grimm [40] was climbing the northwest corner of Twin Owls on Lumpy Ridge when he fell. Here is his report.)

The fall resulted during a down-climb of an easy 5.4 pitch on the northwest corner (backside) of the Twin Owls, when a 45 by 60 centimeter rock being used as a hold came loose. I failed to recognize the rock as a separate piece and thought it was an attached part of the main rock.

I had belayed my partner down the ten meter pitch and reminded her to put in protection, even though she had an upper belay, to prevent any penduluming, and to protect me when I followed. I had just removed the last runner remaining and was using both hands on a "bulge" when it (very surprisingly and quickly) pulled out and I fell over backwards approximately three to four meters to the ground onto some boulders landing on my tailbone. After some rest I found that I could walk and a rescue/carryout was not needed. X-rays later revealed a broken sacrum. (Source: Doug Grimm)

### **Analysis**

One factor is recognizing potential hazards, such as the large chunk which "appeared" to be a solid part of the main rock. I am in the habit of testing holds which seem questionable—this one didn't at the time, but I'll certainly be more careful in the future.