

himself knocked down the steep soft snow about 1.5 meters, with no feeling in his arms or legs. Fortunately, McConachie had already placed and clipped the rope through an anchor so the rope's tug on McConachie did not pull him off.

Nearby companions and other climbers came to Isherwood's assistance, taking over the belay and trying to make him comfortable. About that time, feeling began returning with a tingling sensation. Immediately upon being able to move, Isherwood moved with minor assistance back to the more protected spot. There he rested for several hours before walking out under his own power. X-rays taken the next day revealed fractures of the spinous processes of cervical vertebrae 5 and 6, requiring immobilization of the neck for a period of eight weeks. (Source: Bill Isherwood)

### **Analysis**

We were aware of the potential for falling ice during the climbing, hence our use of helmets and identification of a protected belay stance. The block which struck me was the largest all day, although the path I was standing in was subject to a spray of lesser ice chips much of the day. I saw the block coming and ducked in toward the slope trying to avoid its full force and hide under my helmet—I succeeded in the second of these. Once again, thank goodness for the protection the helmet gave. I guess if you climb enough years, one of those falling projectiles is going to bounce your way.

It is common to ask a second to try to give that extra margin of rope to reach the optimum belay spot. In general, the belayer provides plenty of warning about the approaching end of the rope, but the best place to stop often seems to be just a few feet further. We need to weigh such requests against the conditions the belayer may be exposed to.

McConachie reported that on the following weekend an un-helmeted climber stood, belaying for over an hour in the same area as I was when struck. McConachie warned the climber of the obvious hazards and related my misfortune. The climber remained unmoved and unscathed. (Source: Bill Isherwood)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION**

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

On February 13, 1988, Jeff Smith (23) took a ten meter fall while attempting to climb "The Blob" (5.7). An improperly placed piece of protection failed to arrest his fall and Smith sustained a closed left femur fracture. Subject was rescued by nine members of the Joshua Tree Search and Rescue Team and then air evacuated. (Source: Tom Patterson, Ranger, Joshua Tree National Monument)

## **FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT, NO HARD HAT**

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

On February 15, 1988, Brad Wade (28) took a seven to eight meter leader fall while climbing "Enos Mills Glacier" (5.10) on the Lost Horse Wall and sustained serious head trauma. He was rescued by seven members of the Joshua Tree Search and Rescue Team.