

A park visitor had reported to Gary Garret at the Lost Horse Ranger Station of observing a stranded climber on the Lost Horse Wall hanging by a rope. JOSAR members Jim Munro, Tom Patterson, Becky Patterson, Karl Pearson and Gary Garret responded. Upon our arrival at 1622, we observed Wade and Robert Alexander being lowered from below by Terrie Catlow. All three individuals are instructors from the Pacific Crest Outward Bound School and were climbing off duty when the accident occurred. Alexander reported that about 1615 Wade fell backwards, striking the rear of his head. His protection had pulled out. Apparently he was hanging inverted about 15 meters above the base of the rock and Catlow, who was belaying, lowered him approximately eight meters to an outward bulge in the rock.

Alexander then climbed to Wade's location and righted him and placed additional protection to secure the rope. Catlow lowered both subjects to the ground. I arrived on the scene five minutes later and observed Wade to be unresponsive with a massive amount of blood exiting the occipital wound at the back of his head. Wade rejected an orophranging airway and became combative. His level of consciousness fluctuated and he vomited on two occasions.

We immobilized him in a short backboard, administered high concentration oxygen by mask, controlled bleeding and evacuated him to the roadside in a Stokes litter. Joshua Tree Ambulance paramedics initiated advanced life support and subject was flown to Desert Hospital.

Wade was listed in critical condition in intensive care with an occipital fracture and right temporal contusion. Mentally he is disoriented and has no recall of the accident. (Source: Tom Patterson, Ranger, Joshua Tree National Monument)

(Editor's Note: Wade has recovered except for not remembering the accident and having short term memory loss.)

STRANDED—AMONG OTHER THINGS

California, Yosemite Valley

Here are a few examples of non-climbers in situations which ended up costing NPS personnel considerable time and funds.

At 1620 on March 17, 1988, Ranger Jim Tucker was dispatched to Swan Slab to size up a request for assistance by a stranded climber. Upon arrival at Swan Slab at 1625, Tucker observed an individual, later identified as Gale A. Schuck (17), standing on a narrow ledge approximately 15 meters above the ground. Schuck was uninjured, but stuck. Schuck had been "free-soloing" with only a pair of friction climbing boots on for equipment. He had no ropes with him. He was located approximately two meters east of the large, main crack system.

Tucker summoned SAR officer Bob Howard, who arrived on scene at 1640, with basic climbing equipment. A ranger belayed for Howard, who ascended the main crack system, tossed a climbing harness to Schuck, talked him through doing it, clipped him into a belay rope, and then talked him through climbing up off the ledge to the head of the main crack system. Schuck was then able to downclimb this crack with no difficulty, while still belayed.

Schuck advised Ranger Tucker that he was a new Yosemite Park and Curry Company employee, that he had just bought a pair of friction climbing boots, and that this was the first time he had been climbing in them. He was warned about rescue costs,

advised about climbing schools, and asked to recreate safely.

On April 1, 1988, at 1635, I was dispatched to the Bridalveil area on an unconfirmed report that someone had fallen over the Bridalveil Waterfall. Upon my arrival I met with some park visitors and the park superintendent, Jack Moorehead, who told me there were two people on a ledge near the "Overhang By-pass" climbing route to the east of Bridalveil Falls. One of the park visitors was focusing her camera when she saw one of the individuals fall 15 meters, about 15 minutes earlier.

I went immediately to the area and was able to scramble to within 60 meters of the injured party, but there was a rock face between us. I was able to make voice contact with the group. The victim's partner, Matthew Paden, was able to tell me that the victim, Rafael Villalobos (23) had fallen over six meters. He was conscious and breathing shallowly, had abrasions to his arms and legs, and had large abrasions to the left chest. He did not lose consciousness after the fall, but needed to be rescued.

I notified Search and Rescue Officer Bob Howard, who was leading the rescue team. Howard and other rescue personnel climbed to the victim. They lowered him in a litter, with a rescuer, two pitches to a steep ravine, then belayed it down 60 meters of steep and loose rock. He was transported to the Yosemite Medical Clinic via the Valley Ambulance. Villalobos and his partner Matthew Paden (25) told me in essence they were just scrambling up the rock face with no particular destination. They had no climbing gear with them, no climbing experience, and were wearing street shoes.

And on April 3, 1988, about 1500, Dispatch received a 911 call from Harry Snodgrass (20). He reported a friend, John Hawkins (26), stuck on a cliff somewhere near Middle Cathedral Rock, with no climbing gear. Ranger Bob Bandy brought Snodgrass to the SAR cache, where I interviewed him. Two SAR site climbers and I then took climbing gear and had Snodgrass lead us back to the scene, which turned out to be Penny-Nickel Gully, a fourth-fifth class area on the east flank of Middle Cathedral Rock. In the meantime, Rob Gustke and Gunnar Paulsen, descending from a climb in the area, had heard Hawkins yelling for help and had climbed to his assistance. When we arrived, they were rappelling to the base of the gully with Hawkins. He and Snodgrass, with no climbing equipment, formal training, or experience, had set out to climb Spires Gully and Penny-Nickel Gully to the rim. They were using the "Green" park map as a guide and had no real idea of the hazards.

Further, on April 27, 1988, Bernhard Streicher (21) was going to rappel from the climb called "Gripper," but decided to walk down a ledge because his rope had become tangled. He threw it to his partner, then walked the wrong way and became stranded in darkness. NPS personnel rescued him, and all returned by 0130. (Sources: Rangers Jim Tucker, John Dill, Frank Dean, and Paul Dulasse, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, IMPROPER HARNESS TIE-IN

California, Joshua Tree National Monument

On March 25, 1988, Paul Miller (24) fell eight meters while climbing Gap Rock on a route called "Visual Nightmare" (5.10A). His rope came untied from his harness. Subject sustained a fractured right foot, occipital head wound and numerous abrasions and lacerations. Rangers Patterson, Pearson and Winslow immobilized Miller on a full backboard, administered high concentration oxygen, splinted right foot and