

tected down bag was soon soaked and worthless. Hampson then climbed in Enger's sleeping bag with him. They could not get the bag zipped up most of the way and then held it closed around them with their hands. With this arrangement, they were able to keep the one sleeping bag comparatively dry and utilize each other's body heat. They had set up the bivy so fast that Hampson was still in his wet cotton pants and he could not find his polypro long johns. Hampson said that his legs got very cold, but that his feet were OK because he was wearing wool socks.

At times they experienced very high winds. Late in the evening the temperature dropped and the ledge was blanketed with eight centimeters of snow. They spent the night without sleeping and at times Hampson wondered if they were going to make it. In the morning it stopped snowing and they took turns getting out of the bag to see if they could get their gear set up for rappelling. Hampson found his polypro long underwear bottoms laying soaked on the ledge. He wrung them out and put them on in place of his cotton pants. The ropes were completely frozen with large chunks of ice which proved to be too much effort to remove by running the rope through carabiners. Also Hampson realized his mitts were missing and without them his hands were too cold to use effectively.

After realizing that they could not retreat, they started yelling for help and signaling to the Valley by waving gear. They were worried that no one would hear them or that no one would know they were there because they had not registered. Another party at the base of the climb heard them and reported their cries to the Little Yosemite Valley rangers. (Source: Daniel Horner, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

(Editor's Note: This lengthy analysis is presented in the hopes that the readers who climb where these weather conditions are possible will remember to prepare adequately. The potential savings to taxpayers and rescuers are significant.)

FALL ON ROCK, FATIGUE, DEHYDRATION, OVEREQUIPPED, INEXPERIENCE ON BIG WALLS

California, Yosemite Valley

On June 4, 1988, at 1200, disptach received a call from Wesley Walton concerning an injured climber on Half Dome. Walton had talked with people on top of Half Dome by CB radio. At 1215, six SARSITE climbers and I were flown to the top of Half Dome starting at 1330. At 1443, Kevin Brown arrived at Big Sandy Ledge after being lowered 150 meters. He met David Banks, who had an uncomplicated injured elbow, bruised seriously enough so the he could not climb. Banks was raised the 150 meters arriving at 1545. Brown, Klotz (Banks' climbing partner) and two Half Dome climbers who had helped jummarred out. All rescuers were flown out, ending at 1847.

Ranger Horner interviewed Banks later. He said that he had injured his arm/elbow in a slow, sliding fall on the pitch below Big Sandy on June 3. He was slightly off route and did not protect well. He fell about ten meters and stopped prior to hitting a large ledge. Banks was lowered to his belayer and then Klotz led the pitch to Big Sandy. Banks took an hour and a half to jumar to the pitch, which he did in a lot of pain. They were also hauling the largest haul bag anyone can remember seeing. (Source: Dan Horner and Bob Howard, Rangers, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

Banks and Klotz had each been climbing for several years, led at the 5.3-5.10 level, but had little wall experience. They had brought too much hardware and other gear, and their huge haul bag and lack of experience hauling meant long, tiring days. They were on schedule but had underestimated their daily food and water requirements by about half, however; and by the time of the accident they were tired, hungry and dehydrated. In retrospect, they felt their condition made an accident "only a matter of time." Two points:

1. By their own admission, they had too much gear; that's not an argument for taking nothing.

2. It's a good idea to develop your hauling and other logistical skills on "retreatable" Grade Vs. (Source: John Dill, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALLING ROCK, HAUL BAGS, AND CLIMBERS

California, Yosemite Valley

On June 16, 1988, a climber, Craig Herzog, called dispatch from Curry Security Office and reported that two haul bags followed by an object that "looked kind of like a body" came down off El Capitan. He and his friends were climbing Moby Dick when the accident occurred around 1215. Ranger Bryant drove over to the security office and brought Herzog to the rescue cache where he was debriefed.

Herzog drove to El Capitan with Rangers Howard and Jackson with size up gear. Climbers on the Nose were hailed and all parties were OK. At 1315 I drove Rangers Dalton, Gabler, Korthius and Savage to El Capitan. They searched for and found the haul bags at the base. Photographs were taken of the scene by Dalton. It appeared that there was a hauling accident because the ropes were damaged and there was valuable equipment inside the bags which a prudent person would not jettison from the top. No bodies were found, however.

Meanwhile Howard, Jackson and I scanned the southwest face for climbers high on the mountain but couldn't locate anyone. Jackson discovered a purple pile jacket stuck on a rock below The Heart. This was most likely the item that followed the haul bags in the initial report. It was described as an object which looked like a person "kind of floating down" after the haul bags. The search was called off after this item was found at 1430.

I interviewed Tori Wiley who was at the base of El Capitan below The Heart while two of her friends climbed Moby Dick. She described the haul bags coming down "like the sound of a jet plane getting louder and louder." She saw two black haul bags attached to each other with turquoise rope or handles. They were about 30 meters from the face as they came down. She was struck by a very small rock on the left center of her back. A small abrasion was visible.

Around 1600 the haul bags and ropes recovered by the foot search team were inspected at the SAR Cache. It looked like a hauling accident. It appeared that the climbers made it off the face and should be down in the valley later that day. That evening the climbers checked in with dispatch and a meeting was set up for the following day at the SAR Cache. (Source: David Panebaker, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)