

was “rotten,” so he placed two TCUs in what he also described as “rotten” rock, in a crack. He then went off belay, and was in the process of equalizing a fixed line from the two bolts for his partner to ascend (jumar up). Broxon said that he had estimated that the bolts were sufficient for a fixed ascent, but did not want his weight to be on them in addition to Sturzenacker’s. He also said that he had intended to tie off to the bolts as well, after he got the equalized line in place.

Broxon told me that the entire eleventh pitch had gone well, indeed that the whole climb had gone well, and that he really did not know what had caused him to fall. He said that the eleventh pitch was all free, graded 5.9, and that while he was setting up the belay at the time of the fall, he was on a ledge which was relatively clean and about one foot wide. Broxon had no specific recollection of what led up to the fall, but did speculate that he may have “passed out.” He said that he and his partner had not eaten at all on the day of the fall, as their food had dropped (come unclipped) first thing that morning. Broxon could think of no other possible causes or factors.

Broxon said that he did not remember the fall itself either, but “came to” after Sturzenacker began to haul him back up to his (Sturzenacker’s) belay. He said that the carabiners were still in the bolts on the eleventh (Broxon’s) belay, and that the two TCUs were with him after the fall. (They had pulled.)

Broxon said that he and Sturzenacker had climbed extensively together, including for one year as show climbers on the Matterhorn in Disneyland. He said that his only wall was the Standard route on the NW Face of Half Dome, and that he had led about four 5.12 free climbs. He described himself as an A3 aid leader, and said that they did have a bolt kit on the climb. He and Sturzenacker had never done a wall together. (Source: John R. Christiansen, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING/LOOSE ROCK, UNROPED

California, Clyde Minaret

On June 22, 1991, Bruce Parker (45) and Kathy Moore set out to do the fourth class “Starr’s Route” on Clyde Minaret. The route has some high fourth and low fifth class rock with a long third class area.

They moved well, passing through the third class section and proceeded 250 meters up a large gully, belaying over some low fifth class spots. About 50 meters below the summit ridge, they encountered another low fifth class area. Bruce made the necessary moves unroped. He was wearing climbing shoes and Kathy mountaineering boots.

Kathy felt that she was pushing her limit on unroped fifth class rock and having summited previously, she chose to start down while there was daylight. She was to set a rappel and move down. Bruce planned to continue to the summit. From a position above Kathy, he noticed an apparent easier route down. He chose to climb over and scout the route for Kathy. The time was 1445.

Kathy shortly heard a rockfall and turned to see Bruce in the air along with a large boulder. He cried, “Rock,” and disappeared from view. She called, but received no response.

The descent to camp took five and a half hours using sun bleached slings for anchors and no prussiks. Bruce had been carrying most of the climbing gear. At Minaret Lake, Kathy met two climbers, one of whom went for help. The rescue officially started at 2300 with Mono County and June Lake Search and Rescue involved. By the time Kathy started out in the morning, one helicopter run had been made. She rode on the second flight in order to pinpoint the fall area.

It took a day and a half to find the body. Bruce had fallen 250 meters and had not moved since he had landed.

Analysis

Bruce was a competent, experienced climber. What exactly occurred when the rock came loose is unknown. (Source: Bob Hicks)

STRANDED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, INEXPERIENCE

California, Yosemite National Park, Lembert Dome

On June 30, 1991, at 1230, Mary Swartz (25) came to the Toulumne Meadows Ranger Station to report that her friend Mark Fritz (26) was stranded approximately one pitch up a climb on the southeast corner of Lembert Dome. The name of the route was said to be either Human Fly Trap, Overexposure, or Neophyte. According to Swartz, the victim was not injured but wanted to discontinue the climb and rappel down. He lacked sufficient equipment to do so. Swartz said that Fritz needed another rope and stoppers to establish a rappel point.

I accompanied four members of the Toulumne Meadows SAR team to the scene. Heiskell and Allen climbed to the victim with a rope and protection and helped him rappel to the bottom of the climb.

Fritz stated that he felt that continuing the climb was beyond his ability. Fritz said that there was a bolt at the top of the pitch from which he could have set up a single rope rappel, but the bolt did not appear safe. Rescuers agreed with Fritz's opinion.

Fritz said that he had been climbing two years and could lead 5.8 climbs. Fritz's companion, Swartz, was described as a novice. (Source: Jeanne Gill, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

California, Thunder Bolt Peak

On July 8, 1991, Kent Jameson (32) fell from a ledge on Thunder Bolt Peak. He had rappelled to the ledge and was waiting for his friend, Terry Robinson, to rappel down to him. Jameson fell 100 to 150 feet. Robinson rappelled down to him, noted his injuries, and continued down to Palisades Glacier to get help.

A mountaineering school was holding class there, and Robinson told one of the instructors to get help. He then took sleeping bags back to his friend and waited with him through the evening. Robinson said Jameson told him during the night that he had failed to secure himself to the ledge before releasing the rappelling rope.

A backcountry U. S. Forest Service ranger notified Inyo County Search and Rescue.

Jameson was alive through the night and died shortly after Robinson spotted the forest service helicopter at 0630. Robinson performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation for as long as possible. The cause of death is listed as a punctured lung. (Source: From a newspaper account in the *Daily Independent*, July 9, 1991, Ridgecrest, CA)

FALL ON ROCK, EXPOSURE, WEATHER, INADEQUATE CLOTHING

California, Mount Whitney

On September 6, 1991, Reeves Magi (40ish) and Douglas Siegfried (35ish) were attempting the East Buttress Route on Mount Whitney. At 1600 their calls for help