

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

were heard by other climbers at East Face Lake. One yelled that the other was hurt and hypothermic. Two climbers started up to help and one went out to initiate a rescue. China Lake Mountain Rescue Group was helicoptered in the next morning. The climbers from East Face Lake had been unable to reach the victims. As the rescue team was trying to reestablish voice contact, a body fell from the Buttress down into the Mountaineer's Route. The weather had turned bad and it was very cold, with snow and hail. The rescue team found that Reeves was dead at the end of the third pitch and that Douglas had fallen to his death into the Mountaineer's Route.

Analysis

Reeves and Douglas were not prepared for this climb and continued on in deteriorating weather. The face routes on Mount Whitney are very popular and are easily climbed by well equipped and well conditioned climbers, when conditions are good. However, an injury that would just be an inconvenience with good weather can be fatal if conditions change and become extreme. (Source: Art Green, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group Leader)

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT

California, Yosemite National Park

On September 7, 1991, John Medlock (28) was lead climbing the Nutcracker route on Manure Pile Buttress and was about 120 feet off the ground going around a large rock horn when he fell. For protection, Medlock had placed a sling around a tree below, a stopper protection chock, a Camelot camming device and three more stoppers above that as he began to climb around the horn. When he fell, the stoppers above the Camelot and the stopper below all pulled out of the crack. Medlock fell about 40 feet down the cliff face before the Camelot held his fall. Medlock hit on a small ledge as the rope caught his fall, landing on his right foot severely injuring his ankle. Medlock also sustained numerous abrasions on his hands, right arm and both legs.

Medlock was able to reach a tree nearby for stabilization, then was assisted by several other climbers. Medlock was lowered by rope about 40 feet to a large ledge located 40 feet above the base of the cliff where the rangers contacted him upon their arrival at the scene.

Medlock was diagnosed at Yosemite Medical Clinic as having a closed fracture and dislocation of the right ankle. (Source: R. Scott Bowen, Park Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

STRANDED, WEATHER, HYPOTHERMIA, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan

On September 27, 1991, four climbers were rescued from two different routes on El Capitan.

On September 15, the first winter storm of the season moved into the Central Sierra, dropping 4.5 inches of rain at lower elevations with snow level reaching 4,000 feet. On the evening of the 26th the NPS received reports of cries for help on El Capitan. Initial size-up indicated that two climbers, Simon Peck and David Megerle, were approximately 2,000 feet up the Sea of Dreams route and stranded in their hanging bivvy under a waterfall that had been created by the runoff from the storm. Both indicated that they were unhurt but becoming hypothermic and unable to move because of the storm. High winds had blown the rain flies from their porta ledges and both had