

ground, decide on a backup method, practice it, and stick to it once you're on the wall. With a little experience, it won't slow you down, and it might save your life. (Source: Lincoln Else, Yosemite Climbing Ranger)

WEATHER, STRANDED—BENIGHTED, INADEQUATE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT, EXHAUSTION

California, Yosemite National Park, Tuolumne Meadows, Fairview Dome

On September 19, two Japanese climbers, Kengo Tagai (31) and Akira Uasa (39), began ascending Fairview Dome at 0830. when they reached the 4th class area of the route (about 2-300 feet from the top), they were exhausted and the rock was wet from snow-fall. They were unable to complete the route, and as they only had one rope, were unable to descend. They spent the night huddled under a nylon tarp on a ledge. They had no bivouac gear.

On the following day, Tagai climbed out, but Uasa was unable to follow. Akira Uasa was short hauled off, then helicoptered to Mammoth Hospital for treatment for kidney failure. Kengo Tagai had frostbitten toes and swollen feet, but suffered no permanent damage. (Source: From an NPS SAR report)

STRANDED—INEXPERIENCE

California, Yosemite National Park, Tuolumne Meadows, Tenaya Peak

On September 26, Marvin and Mary Kilgo (both 42) became stranded about three or four pitches from the top of Tenaya Peak. They requested help. Another climbing party reported this to rangers, who responded by rappelling down to them.

The Kilgos had adequate clothing and equipment, but had limited outdoor climbing experience. The rangers set up a top-rope situation for them, so they were able to climb to the top.

(Editor's Note: Two more examples of being stranded—for different reasons, but with the common denominator of being in a new and unexpected situation.)

STRANDED BY WEATHER—INADEQUATE GEAR, FOOD, AND STRATEGY

California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan

Just before midnight on October 16, a cold front brought heavy rain to Yosemite Valley. Several climbing parties managed to retreat from big wall routes, but four teams caught high on the face of El Capitan were stranded by what became a four-day winter storm. Three of these parties survived long enough to be rescued by the National Park Service, but two climbers died from hypothermia three pitches from the top of the Nose. This account summarizes the problems the parties faced and the roles that preparation, strategy, and luck played in the outcome. First of all, here is a description of the situation on each route:

Tempest. On Monday, October 4, two weeks before the storm began,