

CHINA LAKE MOUNTAIN RESCUE GROUP
P.O. BOX 2037
RI DOECREST, CA 93555

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

AUGUST 3-5	Minarets	Finco
AUGUST 10-11	Temple Crag	Amster
AUGUST 12	Meeting	Amster/Kliman
AUGUST 14	Tracking Practice	Training Committee
AUGUST 17-18	Mt. Whitney East Face Pink Perch	Mitchell Mason
AUGUST 24	Mt. Whitney Marathon	B. Rockwell
AUGUST 26	Summer Party	Rockwells
AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 2	Arrow Peak Tuolumne Meadows	C. Burge Hinman
SEPTEMBER 9	meeting	Ingle/Castro
SEPTEMBER 11	Horse Collar Practice Tahquitz	Training Committee
SEPTEMBER 14-15	Tahquitz	Finco
SEPTEMBER 18	Uniform Map System	Training Committee
SEPTEMBER 21	ELT Practice	TerHeun
SEPTEMBER 28	Stretcher Practice Fossil Falls	Training Committee



OPERATION REPORTS

85-7

5/19/85

Alert

Yosemite

Stogsdill

I received a call from Arnold Gaffrey of the Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team at 0745 Sunday, 19 May 1985, asking if we would put as many as possible of our members on alert for a search in Yosemite. Three overdue hikers had left the Glacier Point area for a 14 mile day hike on Saturday, 18 May, and did not return. The hikers consisted of one adult male with a history of diabetes, and two children. One of the children was age seven; the other's age was not given. If the operation went, CLMRG was needed to be on the road no later than noon. Arnold said he would call me back as soon as he got word from the Yosemite search base. Yosemite was going to conduct a hasty search, then give the word for the callout if unsuccessful.

I called Sheila Rockwell to coordinate the callout and to let me know the number of responses as soon as possible so I could relay our level of participation. Sheila called back with a commitment of eight not counting me. I called Arnold with this number and said that CLMRG could probably double that number by evening, as we had a number of our people out climbing that day.

The operation was called off at 0930 when Yosemite searchers located the overdue hikers. They had overestimated their ability to complete the hike in one day and had to bivouac overnight. All of the hikers were apparently in good condition.

China Lake personnel committed to the search were: Stogsdill, Hine, Sakai, Mitchell, Wisecarver, Geyer, Silverman, DeRuitter and Ingle.

8 5 - 8 5 / 2 0 - 2 1 / 8 5 R e s c u e B e n c h L a k e H i n m a n

At 1230 hours on 20 May, the Inyo County Sheriff requested CLMRG assistance in the rescue of an injured climber from the Bench Lake area. Laura Ganter and Sean Collinworth, both twenty nine years old and both of Santa Monica, had been climbing University Peak the previous day when they were injured in separate falls. They were several hundred feet from the summit of the 13,632 foot peak when the first fall occurred at 1400 hours. Sean was climbing unroped on class 5.4 rock when a hold pulled loose, causing his fall. He fell some 50 vertical feet, landing on a snow slope where he slid for another 150 feet, bouncing off rocks before coming to a stop. Miraculously, he survived with only an injured ankle and several abrasions. While descending to him, Laura slipped on an icy rock and fell. She slid down the snow, bouncing off rocks before coming to a stop 200 feet lower. She suffered more serious injuries than Sean. They were able to make the 2000+ foot remaining descent without the aid of a rope to their camp at Bench Lake with no further incidents. The next morning Sean walked out the four miles to the roadhead at Onion Valley and contacted the Inyo County Sheriff.

An advance team consisting of Adams, Huey, Hine and Finco left China Lake at 1400 hours. Meanwhile the NWC helo piloted by Lt. Friedrichsen and with CLMRG members Mason and Sakai aboard flew to the area but because of gusty, high winds blowing down canyon they were unable to land. The advance team arrived at Bench Lake at 1745 hours. Laura was mobile, but in mild shock. She had several lacerations and abrasions on her head, back and right arm and leg. Her ankle was badly swollen, as was her right thumb and index finger. She complained of muscle spasms in her lower back and a dull pain in her chest, and appeared to have difficulty in breathing.

The helo spent several hours in Independence waiting for wind conditions to abate, but the winds persisted, so it returned to China Lake with an offer to attempt to return the next morning. The remaining CLMRG members arrived at Onion Valley at 1700 hours. In talking with Sean at the roadhead,

I learned that the gusty wind conditions had been present for several days. I also knew that high winds had been forecast to the south. Based on these facts and Laura's condition, I decided to proceed with a carryout evacuation that night rather than wait for an improbable helo evacuation the following morning. By 1915 hours we had hiked to Bench Lake with the Thompson litter and ropes. By this time the victim's shock condition had improved. She had been given hot soup and her ankle and hand had been immobilized. She was placed in a Zee traction device before being tied into the litter.

The evacuation began at 2030 hours as the last light was fading. The first mile proceeded down snow slopes to Flower Lake. This was accomplished with four 200-300 foot lowerings. The abundance of trees for anchors allowed this to occur very smoothly in two hours. The three miles from this point to the roadhead consisted of a good trail covered by intermittent snow banks. The grueling task of carrying the litter down the trail without a wheel occupied the next five hours. We reached the roadhead at 0330 hours, where Laura was transported to the hospital in Lone Pine. After a breakfast in Olancho compliments of the Inyo Sheriff, we secured at the hut by 0800 hours.

Participating in the operation were Hinman, Adams, Hine, D. Burge, Mason, Finco, Gleason, Sakai, Mitchell, Seibold, Bonbright, Martin, Wisecarver, Sinclair, DeRuiter and Ingle. Van Verst operated base camp and C. Burge and Slates coordinated the operation.

Comments:

1. Besides the Thompson litter, we also took a Stokes litter and wheel on the operation. At the roadhead we discovered that the cover which allows the Stokes to slide easily on snow was missing. Sliding a Stokes on snow without a cover does not work, because snow builds up in the litter, gradually constricting the victim against the tie-in straps. This forced us to use the Thompson with no wheel. Use of the wheel would have saved at least two hours and some sore backs. The option of using both litters and transferring the victim from the Thompson to the Stokes after leaving the snow was ruled out. We certainly need to make sure the cover is with the Stokes before leaving the hut on any High Sierra operation.

2. On this terrain the victims should have had a rope and known how to use it. The rope gives the option of roping-up or rappelling off if the climbing gets more difficult. The rope would have also made for a much safer descent after the falls occurred.

8 5 - 9 6 / 3 / 8 5 R e s c u e M t . W h i t n e y S a k a i

On 3 June at 1030 hours the Inyo Sheriff called requesting assistance in evacuating an injured climber, Andrew Richey, from East Face Lake. The victim's party had been climbing on the east face of Mt. Whitney when they decided their route would not go. During their descent the victim fell and received unknown injuries. He was assisted to East Face Lake by his companions. An air advance team of Adams and Hine was dispatched to Armitage Field at 1110 hours and a ground advance team of Finco, Sakai and Mitchell was dispatched at 1200 hours to proceed to Whitney Portal and up the north fork trail. Six other members followed within the hour to Lone Pine airport.

The air team was delayed awaiting clearance from Scott AFB and when the helo did fly it was restricted to 6000 ft. ceiling due to reported high winds aloft. Consequently, it did not proceed beyond Lone Pine airport.

The ground team started up the trail at 1455 hours after a short interview with the reporting party at the Lone Pine substation. At 1305 the Forest Service helo, which also had been called, picked up the victim and transported him to Southern Inyo Hospital. All personnel were called back to the airport and were on their way home by 1600 hours.

Members participating were Adams, Renta (operation leader), Hine, Finco, Sakai, Joy, Mitchell, Dan Harris, Rogers, Silverman, McDowell, Brainerd and Anderson. Coordinators were Wyatt, S. Rockwell and S. Harris with Stogsdill and Atkins helping. Others committing were Huey, Wisecarver, Jones, Castro, Van Verst and Ingle.

8 5 - 1 0 6 / 1 0 - 1 1 / 8 5 R e c o v e r y R i d g e c r e s t M a s o n

At 2050 hours on the evening of 10 June, during our regular monthly CLMRO business meeting, I accepted a call from Sgt. Cooper of the Kern County Sheriffs Office concerning a body found in the local area. One of our own members, Bob Joy, was jogging southwest of Ridgecrest in the local hills when he discovered the decomposed body of 28 year old Kenneth Whitmore, who had been missing for three weeks. Joy reported his grisly find to the sheriffs office, and after a quick investigation, it was concluded that Whitmore had apparently committed suicide with a small caliber pistol. A small number of rescuers was requested because of the sensitivity of the situation and also because at the time the cause of death was not known. Twelve of us departed the meeting and met with the sheriffs personnel near the scene. After a short climb up a hill behind the White Star Mine, the body was loaded into the stretcher and carried down to the vehicle. We met the Kern County coroner at 2345 hours. CLMRG personnel were back at the but at 0020 hours on June 11.

Others participating in the operation were: Hinman, Adams, Jay, Amster, Wisecarver, Dan Harris, Castro, Rogers, Sherman, Kliman, Jack Thornberry and McDowell.

8 5 - 1 1 6 / 1 1 - 1 2 / 8 5 R e s c u e M t . W h i t n e y H u e y

We were contacted by the China Lake Police at 1815 hrs. on Tuesday, June 11. Since this was the first meeting of our annual class on mountaineering and rockclimbing, the police had come to the lecture hall to request our assistance. I called the Inyo County Sheriffs Office and was told that a young man was stranded on a ledge approximately 800 ft. below the Mt. Whitney trail in the 3000 ft. long couloir between Mt. Whitney and Keeler Needle. The man reportedly had been calling for help when two hikers on the trail above established voice contact with him at 1300 hrs. He had had no experience in the mountains, and was wearing only shorts and a tee shirt.

Based on this information, an immediate attempt was made to get a helicopter to take a crew to the area. However, the helo arrangements were not made quickly enough to leave before dark. Lt. Cleary from NWC agreed to have the helo in the air by first light the next morning. Based on the information that the victim was in the Whitney/Keeler Couloir, it was plausible that an extensive raising or lowering operation would be required from the top of the trail. Since the victim might be hypothermic by morning, it was determined that a large helo could also be useful in moving personnel quickly to the top of Mt. Whitney. Lee Lucas placed a call to Edwards Air Force base asking for their assistance.

An advance team consisting of Renta, Gleason and Sakai left the hut at 2000 hours by auto. Other teams left at 2030, 2100 and 2200 hrs. The advance team interviewed the reporting party and other friends of the victim and ascertained that he was very inexperienced in the mountains, was not a hiker, and had taken off from the group to go alone up the north drainage rather than up the main trail to the top. He was reported to have a pack with him with some food, water, a jacket, and long pants.

Anderson, Van Verst, Amster and ham operator Monte Shinn set up base camp at the Lone Pine airport. Two teams left the trailhead at Whitney Portals at approximately 2400 hrs. One team, consisting of Renta, Dan Harris and McDowell, was sent up the Whitney Trail. Two teams, consisting of Gleason, Sakai, Castro, Hine, Hinman and me, went up the north drainage. We were followed by Adams and Rogers who left the trailhead an hour later.

The first two teams were on the ridge near the base of the couloir by 0530. The victim could not be seen immediately. However, after using signal whistles (which the victim later said had only sounded like birds chirping) the victim was located approximately 3/4 of the way to the top of the couloir. A snow chute climbed up the couloir for approximately 1000 ft. The victim was about 200-300 ft. above the snow, on clear rock. We also signaled the victim with a mirror so that he would see that rescuers were near. We determined that, due to the danger of rockfall and the victim's proximity to the top that the best way to safely attempt a rescue was from above.

A Chinook helo had been put on standby at Edwards AFB. However, it had experienced a malfunction and estimates were that it would not be available until after 1300 hours.

The NWC helo arrived at the Lone Pine airport at 0630 hours, and agreed to ferry CLMRG members to a higher location to affect the rescue. Hinman and Hine were picked up and taken to within 100 ft. of the notch between Whitney and Keeler. They yelled to the victim to stay where he was and that they would soon be there to help him. Within a few minutes Hinman and Hine spotted someone going down the snow in the couloir and thought that the victim had fallen. Members of the team who were still on the ridge below the couloir went to investigate. When they arrived at the base of the couloir they met men who identified himself as the victim. He stated that he had not fallen.

In briefing the victim we found that he had left his pack approximately 50 yards below the cliff that he had become stranded on since it had ripped open. When he reached a small ledge on the rock he became frightened and could not go forward or back down the route. He stayed on the ledge all afternoon and night in only his shorts and tee shirt. He also stated that he had dodged many falling rocks during that time. In the morning he was aroused from sleep by what sounded like birds chirping. He saw a light, he saw the helo, and he heard voices above him. He was confused (possibly due to a mild case of hypothermia) and felt that no one could get to him. So he climbed back to the snow field and quickly went to the bottom of the route where he was met by the rescuers.

After giving him water and food, he was pronounced in good health and could walk out. CLMRG and the victim were all back at the trailhead by 1300 hours, and CLMRG members were in China Lake by 1600 hours.

Coordinator was S. Rockwell.

Comments:

1. The contribution of the NWC helo was very important to the success of this operation. Forest Service

Helos were busy fighting forest fires. The NWC helo crew performed exceptionally well at the high altitude. This was the pilot's first flight into the Whitney area.

2. The Whitney Keeler couloir is a very dangerous chute. Several people have been killed from rock fall in the chute and at the bottom of the chute. Had CLMRO members been required to extricate the victim from the chute they would have had to put their own lives in extreme danger. Usually we assist people in much less objectively dangerous situations.

85-12 6/26-27/85 Transit Trinity Alps Stogsdill

Al Green received a call from Jon Inskeep of Sierra Madre Search and Rescue Team at approximately 1230 hours on Wednesday, June 26, asking that CLMRG be put on alert for a missing 21 year old male in Trinity County. I was contacted by coordinator Barbara Slates. I called Inskeep for details of the situation. Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit had been searching since June 23 for Allan Rolfness of Chico, who had not returned from the previous day's hike. At this time it appeared that the mission depended upon getting transportation via a National Guard C-130 to Redding. At best, it looked like a departure time of 2000 hours or later.

At 1530 hours Dick Sale of Sierra Madre called, saying the operation status had changed from alert to search and that a C-130 would provide us with necessary transportation. He called again at 1900, stating that the aircraft could not pick us up locally. We were to be at the Van Nuys airport by 0700 in the morning.

By 0810 on the 27th we joined CRMRA teams from Sierra Madre, San Diego and Sylmar and flew to McClellan AFB in Sacramento, to pick up other rescue units before proceeding to Redding. There we received the information that Allan had been found dead from a fall on Gibson Peak, near Weaverville.

We flew back to Van Nuys at 1430 hours and were home by 1830, but were not quite able to relax. Arnold Gaffrey of Sierra Madre had told us earlier in the day that we might soon be receiving a request to help search for a missing hiker in Yosemite (see no. 85-13, next issue of the Talus Pile). This time of the year it's hard to plan your weekends ahead with any degree of certainty.

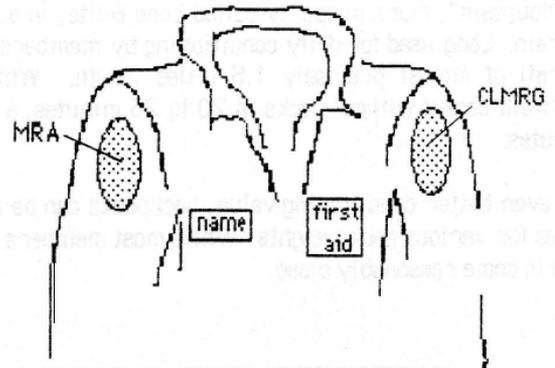
Members participating were Stogsdill, Amster, Finco, Mitchell, Geyer, Hine and Renta. Coordinators were C. Burge and Slates.



Patch Information for the Well-Dressed CLMRG Member:

For the benefit of newer members (and forgetful older ones), here is a review of the application of the various patches on our orange shirts. This use conforms with other teams in the California region of the Mountain Rescue Association.

All regular members are eligible to wear the CLMRO patch. The mountain is a simplified drawing of Mt. Whitney, as seen from the north. Since our activities are mainly concerned with the southern Sierra Nevada, this choice seemed appropriate. The East Buttress and the Mountaineer's Route are shown. In order to have a realistic rendition of the sheer east face, the "A" in "CHINA" should be centered when you apply the patch to the left shoulder of the shirt, 2 inches below the shoulder seam.



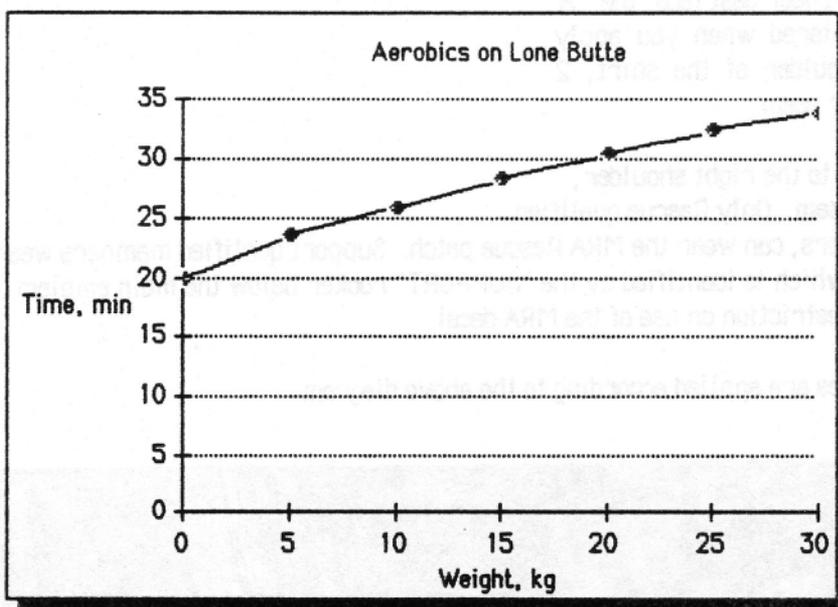
The MRA patch is applied to the right shoulder, also 2 inches below the seam. Only Rescue qualified members, and Team Leaders, can wear the MRA Rescue patch. Support qualified members wear the MRA Support patch, which is identified by the "SUPPORT" rocker below the main emblem. As an aside, there is no restriction on use of the MRA decal.

Name and First Aid patches are applied according to the above diagram.



"B Mountain", more properly called Lone Butte, is a local hill rising 1 100 feet above the surrounding terrain. Long used for daily conditioning by members of CLMRG, the most popular route of ascent is via a trail of almost precisely 1.5 miles length. While most conditioned mountaineers can manage a jog/walk ascent without packs in 20 to 25 minutes, a few strong individuals have done it in less than 16 minutes.

For even better conditioning value, backpacks can be carried. The following chart represents excellent times for various pack weights. While most members may not be able to meet these times, you should be able to come reasonably close.



1985 Summer Mountaineering Class

The annual basic mountaineering class given by members of CLMRG ended July 24. Forty one students received certificates from our lead instructor, Tom Stogsdill, at the graduation party at Robber's Roost.

This popular summer class has been taught for over 20 years and serves a two-fold purpose. The students learn safe mountaineering and backpacking skills, thereby lowering the chances that we will have to come to their rescue in the future. A few students also become sufficiently interested in mountaineering and mountain rescue to join CLMRG as new trainees. The class is by far the most effective way we have of recruiting new members.

Thanks to Tom and all the other members who assisted!

Nadine Stair, of Louisville, Kentucky. Has learned the importance of play. In her 85th year she wrote the following advice to others.....

If I Had My Life To Live Over

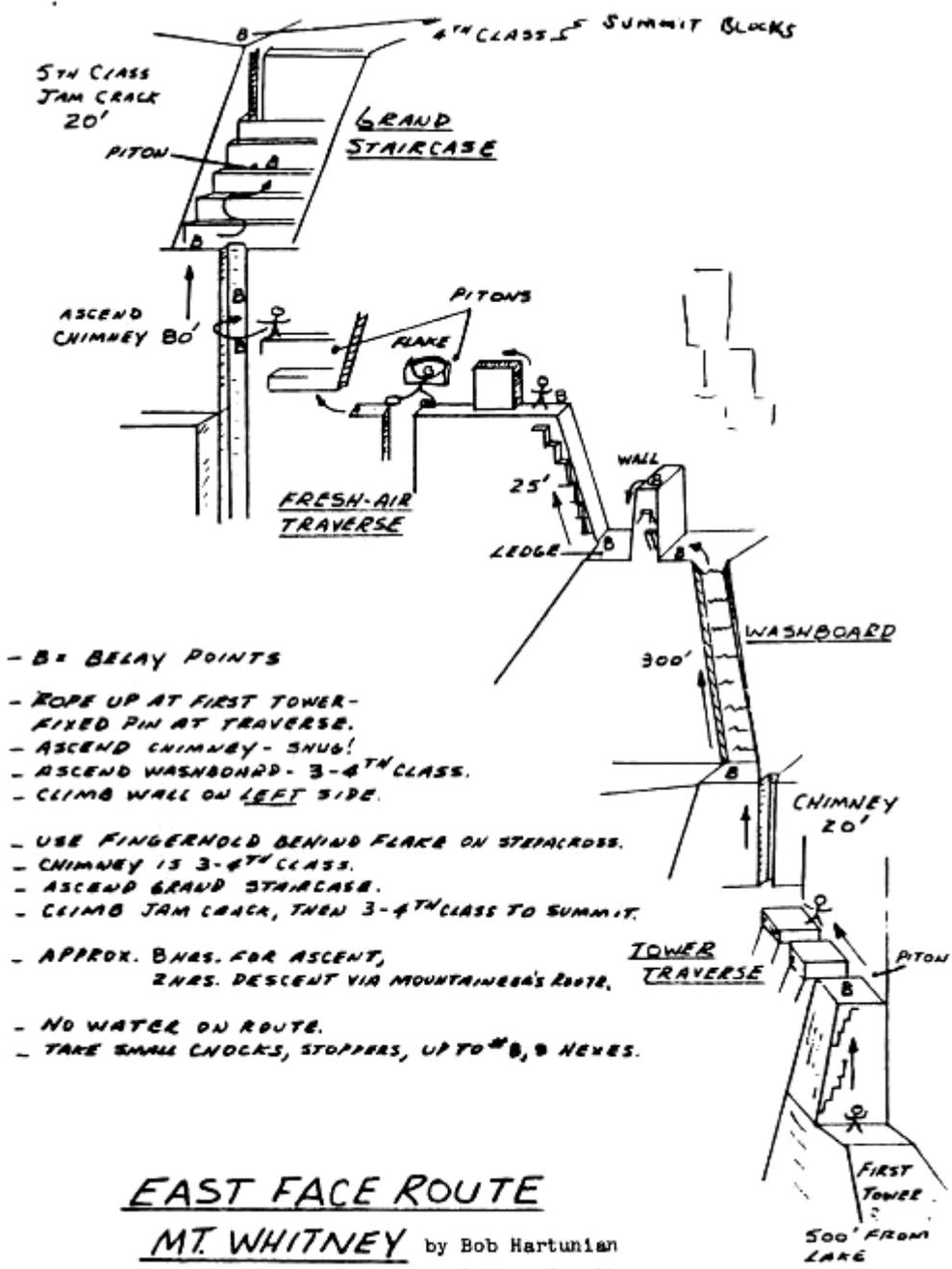
"If I had my life to live over I'd dare to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax. I would limber up. I would be sillier than I have been on this trip. I would take more chances, I would take more trips. I would climb more mountains. And swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I would have fewer imaginary ones.

"You see, I am one of those people who live sensibly and sanely, hour after hour, day by day. Oh, I've had my moments, and if I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else; just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I have been one of those persons who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat and a parachute. If I had to do it again, I'd travel lighter than I have.

"If I had my life to live over. I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I'd wade in more mud puddles. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies."



"Listen . . . is that our phone ringing?"



- B = BELAY POINTS
- ROPE UP AT FIRST TOWER - FIXED PIN AT TRAVERSE.
- ASCEND CHIMNEY - SHUG!
- ASCEND WASHBOARD - 3-4TH CLASS.
- CLIMB WALL ON LEFT SIDE.
- USE FINGERHOLD BEHIND FLAKE ON STAIRCASE.
- CHIMNEY IS 3-4TH CLASS.
- ASCEND GRAND STAIRCASE.
- CLIMB JAM CRACK, THEN 3-4TH CLASS TO SUMMIT.
- APPROX. 8 HRS. FOR ASCENT, 2 HRS. DESCENT VIA MOUNTAINEER'S ROUTE.
- NO WATER ON ROUTE.
- TAKE SMALL CHOCKS, STOPPERS, UP TO # 8, 9 HEXES.

EAST FACE ROUTE

MT. WHITNEY by Bob Hartunian
 from The Sierra Echo, newsletter for the
 Sierra Peaks Section, Sierra Club.