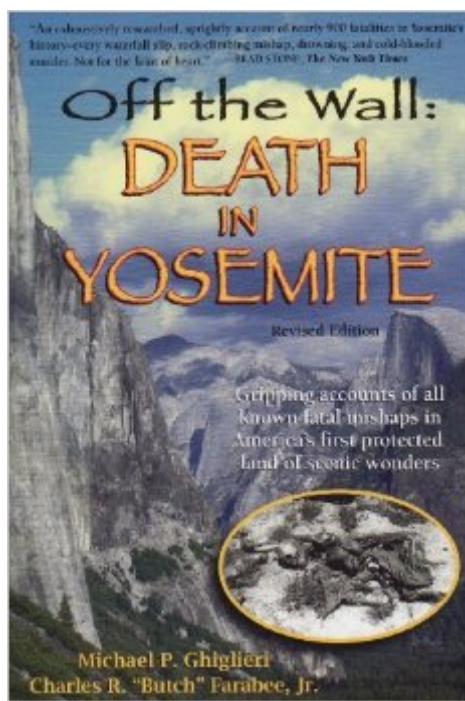


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Off The Wall: Death In Yosemite



Synopsis

Gripping accounts of all known fatal mishaps in America's first protected land of scenic wonders.

Book Information

Paperback: 608 pages

Publisher: Puma Press LLC; 1st edition (March 28, 2007)

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Customer Reviews

When I was last in Yosemite, April of 2007, I hiked to the top of the Yosemite Falls Trail and, after taking a quick break, decided to head for Eagle Peak. Alas it started to snow and after about 1/2 mile I turned back. A trail maintenance ranger at the bottom of the trail, who knew of my plans, asked when he saw me if I had made it. "No," I replied. "I turned around." He then mentioned that someone else, facing the same conditions that day, had not made the same choice. On the broad shoulder of Half Dome, with snow flying, this person had decided to go for the top, even in the bad conditions and even though the cables were not properly strung. He slipped and fell. I never found out if he lived, but the description offered by the ranger fits a pattern found repeatedly in this fabulous book. Young men taking foolish chances end up hurt and/or killed. This book is a sequel to the immensely popular *Over the Edge: Death in Grand Canyon* and like the first volume it is somewhat morbid. The authors, one of whom was a Search and Rescue (SAR) ranger in Yosemite for many years, catalogue all the ways one could conceivably die in Yosemite and then devote a chapter to each. Murder, suicide, and motor vehicle deaths are all covered, but so too is a variety of deadly accidents experienced by climbers high on cliffs, hikers lost or off route from established trails, drowning victims, people falling over the edge of waterfalls, and even people who jump off cliffs hoping to parachute safely to the valley floor (BASE jumping).

This book was written by a retired National Park Ranger who well documented all the known fatalities that have occurred over the last 150 years within the Yosemite Park boundaries. The text is divided into chapter categories such as: Waterfalls, Base Jumping, Snow, Aircraft Down, Falls While Hiking, Drowning, Lost, Murder, Homicide. Each chapter gives what amounts to a study on select events within the category and then provides a full summary of the fatalities within that category at the end of the chapter which includes incidents that were not fully described in the case study. The style of writing is not dry at all and includes hints of sarcasm or humor where appropriate. For example, one woman was killed while illegally BASE jumping (parachuting) off of a cliff. The event was advertised and the Park Service knew of it in advance because the event was a "protest" to demonstrate the "safety" of BASE jumping. The author points out the irony that the woman DIED as she attempted to protest the "unnecessary" prohibition against a sport she felt was "safe." The text even provides eye witness recollections of the final words people uttered as they slipped to their deaths (you can guess a few of those words). Details of the deaths can sometimes be gruesome, but there is only one photo in the entire book and that is on the front cover. (A man who starved to death in the 1930's after being trapped by an early winter storm). The book is actually an excellent source of wilderness education. If you are the type of person who learns from the mistakes of others, you will benefit by reading the book.

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