

## COMMENTS

This tragedy resulted when a person who had lived in the Rocky Mountains for a number of years (and had been nearly caught two years before) failed to heed recognized avalanche conditions or warnings from other people. The only way to prevent such accidents is to close the road during hazard periods.

It is evident that all communities, highway maintenance stations, winter resorts, etc. that are in even occasional avalanche country need a complete avalanche rescue cache.

Careful analysis of the lower part of the debris before it was disturbed by dozed snow would have revealed the actual terminus of the debris. This would have resulted in a search of all the debris, and undoubtedly the car and two of the victims would have been located much sooner. It is believed all three victims died instantly, so earlier discovery would not have saved any of the victims.

Here again the importance of carefully analyzing the debris to find the actual terminus can be seen.

No. 64-1 CARDIFF PASS, ALTA, UTAH 12 January 1964

## WEATHER FACTORS

On 12 January in the Cardiff Pass area, there was an estimated 15 inches of day-old, powder snow on a wind-blown surface. Early-winter depth hoar formation had been strong.

## ACCIDENT SUMMARY

On 12 January, 1964, ten members of a mountain club ski tour encountered dangerous avalanche conditions while skiing north of Cardiff Pass. At approximately 1:00 p.m., they began skiing north along the right side of the Cirque. As the fourth skier, Mrs. J. W., was crossing the first open stretch of snow, a slab avalanche broke loose approximately 50 feet above the ski track. The slide, about 100 feet wide, ran 300 to 400 feet before piling up 8 to 10 feet deep at the bottom. The fracture line was about one-foot deep.

When the avalanche occurred, the first skier, J.M., was beyond the path of the slide. The second skier in line held on to some trees and was not affected. The third skier, M.D., was carried 300 feet, but was not buried, and easily freed himself. Mrs. J.W., however, was caught in the center of the slide. She attempted to ski it out, but eventually was pulled under.