



Rock climber Bruce Johns strains for a handhold at the top of "Mushroom Rock."

Climbing class makes it ...

By **TIM McALAVY**
Battalion Reporter

It begins in your toes, an uncertain quiver that escalates to the ankle and up the leg. A spasm of high tension which grips the stressed muscles of a rock climber on granite.

There is no room for the weak-hearted on the slick granite slopes of Enchanted Rock, the mecca of dedicated rock climbers 12 miles north of Fredericksburg in the Texas Hill Country. A massive outcropping of crystalline granite, Enchanted Rock attracts many yearly visitors who look at its spectacular formations or climb on its craggy, weatherbeaten slopes.

In the succession of climbs necessary to develop the self confidence of a good climber, one learns to trust the body and heed its warnings.

"The climber who doesn't respect his or her own physical limits won't go far even with the best of equipment," said Free University rock climbing instructor David Hinz.

Hinz and his brother Mark recently led a group of 10 Aggies, all enrolled in this semester's Free-U rock climbing course, to Enchanted Rock for a weekend.

Following a brief exchange of handshakes and several last minute checks of day packs, the Aggies began the 15-minute trek to the site of the first climb.

CHIMNEY CRACK:

A chimney climb is a slow vertical ascent in which the climber is wedged between two sheer faces of rock. With a lifeline of rope around his waist and an anchor man at the top of the crevasse, the climber wedges himself between the rocks by alternately pressing his feet against each stone face. The climber often climbs as little as six inches per step on the way to the top.

"Man, my legs are really shaking," climber Bruce Johns said upon reaching the top. "I thought for awhile that I wasn't going to make it up that one."

MUSHROOM ROCK:

At the base of the mushroom-shaped boulder located on the southern slope of Enchanted Rock, the climbers learned the commands "on billet" and "off billet" under the patient direction of the Hinz brothers.

These commands are the climber's verbal cues to the anchor man at the other end of the rope lifeline. "In billet" means that the climber is secured to the rope and ready to climb. "Off Billet" means the climber has reached the top of the climb.

The anchor man each signal with



Carol Burris ascends the granite slope of "Bloody Jam."

"billet on" or "billet off," keeping the climber reassured that the anchor man is present at the other end of the rope.

"That was a rough 25-to-30 feet," said climber Mike Tietenmyer at the top of mushroom rock. "I'm going to

have to get in better shape if I want to keep this up."

BLOODY JAM:

On this high, tilting 55-to-60 foot slope the climbers scaled a narrow crack in the granite by "jamming" their feet sideways in the crack and clinging to precarious fingerholds. Painful cuts and scrapes from the granite surface were common.

"That one's not bad after you make the hump about three-fourths of the way up," said Mark Westhaffer at the top of "Bloody Jam."

RANDY'S ROCKS:

These two oblique shack-sized boulders resting on a 45 degree slope proved to be the most frustrating for the climbers. Only the friction of hands and feet against granite knobs and crystals supported the climbers' spider-like crawl to the top of the climb some 15 feet above.

"Hugging that rock face and trying to keep your center of gravity is pretty rough," said climber Kurt

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