

Two men die after fall into crevasse

Two employees of ITT/Antarctic Services, Inc. (ITT/ANS), the National Science Foundation antarctic support contractor, were killed on 23 November 1986 while hiking about 2 mile northeast of McMurdo Station. Along with another ITT/ANS employee, Thomas J. Powell, the two men, Matthew M. Kaz, 25, of San Carlos, California, and John E. Smith, 44, of Portland, Oregon, were returning to McMurdo Station from Castle Rock, an outcrop about 3 miles from the station. They had deviated from the flagged route to go to nearby Scott Base, the New Zealand station on Ross Island.

The two victims fell approximately 70 feet into the crevasse. The third man, Thomas Powell, went to McMurdo Station to get help, and a rescue team was dispatched to the site immediately. The men were extracted from the crevasse but were unconscious when they reached the surface. They were taken to the medical facility at McMurdo Station where they were pronounced dead. Their bodies were flown to Christchurch, New Zealand, and onward to their hometowns in the United States. Their deaths has prompted the National Science Foundation to establish a special committee to review safety procedures in Antarctica.

These two fatalities are the first to occur in the U.S. Antarctic Program since February 1982, when a Navy enlisted man was killed while assisting in unloading USNS *Southern Cross*, the annual supply ship. Since 1946, 49 Americans (including these two men) have died in Antarctica while participating in the U.S. Antarctic Program.