

Switzerland: An anxious vigil in the mountain centre of Grindelwald mirrored world-wide concern as an Alpine rescue drama unfolded on the mighty Eiger Peak.

Following this incredible route, four climbers (two Italian and two German) attempting one of the most dangerous mountain feats in Europe - were trapped - a thousand feet from the summit.

As day followed day - planes searched the 13,000 foot peak - the preliminary to a full-scale rescue.

Some idea of the task that faced the rescuers - in the vastness of this great mountain, can be gained by watching the slow progress of the plane - although it was travelling at well over 100 miles per hour.

Above the climbers, as their strength slowly ebbed ~~was~~, was this sheer wall of ice...

And if, in their exhausted state, they could reach the summit - there was no safe haven - only this terrifying drop!!!

Daily, brave pilots dived with death as they flew close to the mountain to report progress - as three of the climbers ^{continued} ~~continued to push forward~~ the ascent - foot by foot - up that sheer North Wall.

Meanwhile, following this customary route - an international team of Alpine Guides carried up ~~cables~~ and hoisting equipment to attempt the first rescue of its kind in the Alps...

These aerial pictures show the rescue party making its way to that terrifying summit - above the North Wall. There, they planned to lower rescuers by rope - and so bring up the trapped climbers...

Mountain Rescue Team

2464

Throughout the operation - instructions were radioed ~~to the rescuers~~
from the village of Kleine Scheidegg to the rescuers - who, ^{because of} ~~through~~ an
overhanging ledge, were unable to see the trapped men...

~~AMXIOUS WATCHERS MAINTAINED THEIR VIGIL~~
↑ as the German Guide Alfred .
Helepart was lowered - and brought Claudio Corti - an Italian - to
the summit.

After seven agonising days and nights on the frozen peak - ~~he was~~
severely frostbitten - ~~but~~ ^{he was} still alive...

~~THE~~ ^{HAD.} ~~mountain~~ ~~side~~ ~~of~~ ~~Eiger~~, cold
and remote ^{HAD.} claimed three more victims..