

almost directly to it. Three of us scaled the 30-foot wall of the base, then entered the hatch wearing miner's lamps. The inside of the tower was fascinating! Eighty-eight cells ran the entire height of the tower; each one was 42 inches wide and all of them were riveted together. Only one of these cells had an opening at the top, so we prepared for the gruelling trial-and-error process which would tell us which one it was.

We spent parts of three days climbing and mapping routes that might lead out. The procedure was slow, and after climbing 750 feet eight or ten times, we began to wonder if we were making any progress at all! Steel ladders led us to dead ends time and time again. But finally, after having climbed 47 of the 88 cells, we got lucky. I heard one of the guys yelling about an incredible sight, and I knew he was there. Indeed, what a sight it was! The 700-foot high, 360-degree view of San Francisco and Sausalito has to been one of the finest of any metropolitan area in the world. We were elated.

Amidst our brief celebration came a dark

cloud on the horizon: what about the gear? There was the cameras, radios, and especially my rig: a rather bulky T-10 packed in an old Handbury container. How could we possibly haul all that stuff to the top, stopping every 15 feet to push it through the

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narrow 22-inch hatches that were inside the cells? Not being able to come up with an answer, we decided to return to the hotel and ponder the question further. On our way down, however, Lady Luck smiled on us once again. While squeezing through one of the hatches, I caught a glimpse of a steel cable several cells over. An elevator!

We made our way over to that cell and

followed the cable down to a small platform, which was no doubt used to haul painting supplies and equipment to the top. It was completely enclosed from our location, and we could see that the only place it opened was at the sidewalk on the roadway level. So close and yet so far! It was getting late in the morning, and we decided to leave in case one of the workers dropped by. They say work on the bridge never stops; as soon as they finish painting one end, they start all over on the other!

We left the structure with mixed feelings ... the elevator was our only hopes of getting all the equipment to the top, but how could we get inside? We certainly had no intentions to damage the thing. Fortunately, one of the team members was an old Navy buddy of mine. As we left, he said to give him a few days to ponder the problem, and he would see what could be done. I knew that he would come through; he had done so on several occasions before, and I guessed this would be no different. During our tour in the Pacific around the time the Vietnam War was winding down,

