

CORNICE COLLAPSE, BAD WEATHER**Alaska, Mt. Dan Beard**

Dave Kempfer (19) and Grant Henke (19) both of Anchorage, Alaska, were part of a group of five climbers spending the month of May in the Sheldon Amphitheater area. The two were experienced rock and ice climbers. Before flying out, the two planned one more climb in the area—the southwest ridge of Mt. Dan Beard. The ridge had been climbed earlier in the month by a party of four—Jeff Radford, Norma Green, Dave Jones and one other climber.

As Kempfer and Henke packed for the climb on May 25, several other members of the group prepared to fly out. Two of these climbers, Radford and Green had done the southwest ridge earlier and advised Kempfer and Henke to take four-days food, use a snow cave half-way up the route and go light to the top from there. They noted that Kempfer and Henke packed fairly lightly that evening, taking only four-days food as recommended.

Kempfer and Henke left the Mountain House on the morning of May 26. They set up base camp that afternoon at 6,000 feet on a plateau in the ramp leading into the cirque on the south side of Mt. Dan Beard. They put up a yellow dome tent with brown rain fly as a base camp tent.

On May 27 the weather was bad, with high winds and snow. May 28 started out good but conditions deteriorated as the day went on. May 29 was good, but May 30 was another bad-weather day with very high winds. May 31 was also bad but described as “moveable” by climbers in the Ruth. Kempfer and Henke did not return to the Mountain House to fly out on May 29 or 30 as planned.

Several climbers at the Mountain House, Jones, Doug Huvar, Lars Muller and Debra Page, became very concerned as the flyout date passed without any sign of the two climbers. They noted that in the past month the pair had rarely climbed in bad or marginal weather. They felt that Kempfer and Henke were not the types to sit and wait out long storms and should have descended.

Over the next five days, helicopter flights and ground exploration revealed that the two climbers had been resting together at a saddle below the summit, to which they probably had not climbed, when a cornice collapsed, resulting in a fall of 2,500 vertical feet.

These climbers' friends worked hard during the search and recovery period and provided most of this report. (Source: David Buchanan, Park Ranger, Denali National Park)

ALTITUDE SICKNESS**Alaska, Mt. McKinley**

Konrad Schumann (45), a member of the Stroebel Expedition from Germany, was evacuated from 12,800 feet on the West Buttress of Mt. McKinley on June 1, 1980.

The group had initially planned a quick ascent of the Cassin Ridge but a week of bad weather prior to their flight in had shortened an already tight schedule, and they changed their route to the West Buttress.

They flew in to base camp on May 27 and left immediately, heading up the Kahiltna Glacier. They arrived at the 14,200-foot camp on either May 30 or May 31—a fast ascent.

Schumann was sick the night of May 31. He became worse the next day and began to spit blood that evening. The party then began to descend.

At 6:10 p.m., National Park Service Mountaineering Ranger Gerhard received a call from