

LOSS OF CONTROL, VOLUNTARY GLISSADE**Washington, Pinnacle Peak Basin**

Around 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 12, an unidentified member of a Seattle Mountaineers party of 120 persons came to the Paradise First Aid office and stated that a member of their party had dislocated his shoulder while practicing self-arrest at Pinnacle Peak Basin.

Park Rangers Gary D. Olson and Lee Henkle went to the scene with three members of the Seattle group to effect the evacuation of the injured climber, G. Alex Miller. The rescue team arrived at the scene at noon. Miller complained of pain in his right shoulder. A doctor at the scene and a nurse named Margarettte stated that they believed Miller's right shoulder was dislocated. The two rangers and 30 members of The Mountaineers carried and slid Miller down to Reflection Lake, arriving at 2:15 p.m. Miller and other members of the party gave the following account of the accident.

Miller was practicing self-arrest on his back and tried to stop himself. He had the head of the ax in his right hand and dislocated his right shoulder when he attempted to stop himself; he then let go of the ice ax and slid farther down the hill. He slid 300-400 feet in all. Miller was unroped at the time of the accident. Miller, who was transported to Seattle from the park by members of his party, stated he would go to the University of Washington Hospital. (Source: Gary Olson, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING UNROPE, PARTY SEPARATED**Washington, Mount Rainier**

On the morning of July 17, 1981, Peter Brookes (26) and Robert Schreiber (29) were climbing Liberty Ridge on Mount Rainier. They were climbing unroped and started their climb that day from Thumb Rock (10,800 feet).

Brookes and Schreiber lost visual contact with each other around 9:00 a.m., when Brookes proceeded ahead of Schreiber after crossing to the east side of the ridge crest onto a steep snowslope leading to the top of the "Black Pyramid." Brookes was last seen at the 12,500-foot level just above the Black Pyramid. While completing the route to the summit, Schreiber was unable to reestablish visual contact with Brookes. Upon reaching Camp Schurman at 4:00 p.m., he reported Brookes missing. A search was initiated which lasted until 10:40 a.m. when Brookes' body was recovered near the center of the west face of Liberty Ridge at about the 10,000-foot level.

Schreiber was interviewed again after being notified that his climbing partner had been found dead and his body recovered.

Schreiber provided the following additional information. Brookes had been granted a leave-of-absence from work (McDonnell-Douglas Astronautics Company, Huntington Beach, California) to travel and climb in the Pacific Northwest. They had left the Los Angeles area on June 24, 1981 and were due back approximately August 3-4.

They had selected five climbs as their goals: (1) Liberty Ridge (Mount Rainier); (2) North Ridge (Mount Stuart); (3) Coleman Headwall (Mount Baker); (4) Price Glacier (Mount Shuksan); (5) West Ridge (Forbidden Peak). They also intended to climb other peaks as time and inclination dictated.

Schreiber mentioned that Brookes had kept a brief diary of the trip in his (Schreiber's) car. Schreiber and Ranger J. Krumbink retrieved the diary, which was written in a 3" X 5" spiral notebook. Krumbink gave Schreiber a property receipt for the diary as it might possibly be of value in the investigation of the possible causes of Brookes' accident. This docu-

ment provided a good summary of Brookes' activities from the start of the trip in Los Angeles on June 24 until the two men began their climb of Liberty Ridge on July 14.

Brookes and Schreiber had done research on the Liberty Ridge route prior to their attempt by reading *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America* by Steve Roper and Allen Steck. They had photocopies of pages 106-11 with them.

They also had read *Cascade Alpine Guide: Columbia River to Stevens Pass* by Fred Beckey. They hand copied the information from pages 116-18 for reference.

They had hiked or climbed every day since July 3 without a significant break.

On July 14, they drove to Sportman's Park (State Park), Yakima to shower and prepare their packs for the attempt of Liberty Ridge on Mount Rainier. They had spent the previous night in an apple orchard.

They arrived at White River at 4:30 p.m. and registered at the Hiker Center for the climb of Liberty Ridge. Schreiber said they were informed by Ranger Jim Eggleston of the weather forecast and of the specific hazards of rockfall and icefall on the ridge. They were advised to take some screws and pickets. They were also advised that although the route is not recommended for this late in the season, it was in good condition "for this time of the year."

They arrived at White River Campground around 5:00 p.m., hiked into the upper Glacier Basin and camped on the mine tailings.

At 6:00 a.m. on July 15, they hiked over St. Elmo Pass and across the Winthrop Glacier, Curtis Ridge (Camp) and the Carbon Glacier where they had to routefind well to the west of Liberty Ridge because of large crevasses; they then cut back east to ascend the ridge. (Schreiber pointed out their approximate route on the diagram on page 117 of Beckey's guidebook.) They then climbed the ridge *unroped* to Thumb Rock, arriving at Thumb Rock at approximately 4:30 p.m. The decision to climb unroped was discussed briefly beforehand and was based on the danger of rockfall observed while approaching the base of the ridge.

At 4:15 a.m. on July 16, Brookes and Schreiber awoke at Thumb Rock. Around 5:30 or 6:00 a.m., Brookes put the rope under the back flap of his pack (inside his ensolite pad) and they started climbing. There was no discussion as to whether or not they would climb roped or unroped. Peter merely put the rope in his pack and Schreiber did not question the move. They climbed unroped above Thumb Rock. Brookes was in the lead at all times.

They ascended the narrow gully above Thumb Rock and then climbed eastward to a point where they crossed the ridge crest where they stopped briefly. This was the last time they were together. From this point, Brookes, who was stronger, climbed ahead of Schreiber; they were still unroped. Although they did not discuss staying together, Schreiber said Brookes could make better time. They both ascended the snowslope on the east side of the ridge toward the top of the Black Pyramid. They were climbing unroped, with Brookes in the lead by about 300-500 feet, to a point (located by Schreiber on the diagram on page 117 of Beckey's guidebook) between one third and midway up the snowslope (mentioned previously) which leads to the top of the Black Pyramid. From this point, Brookes increased the distance between himself and Schreiber.

Around 9:00 a.m., Schreiber lost visual contact with Brookes. He last saw Brookes ascending the top of the snowslope leading to the top of the Black Pyramid where the slope breaks and the angle of the slope decreases. The elevation at this point was approximately 12,500 feet.

At 9:30 a.m., Schreiber saw what he described as "an object, something silver, perhaps a water bottle" fly up in the air in the spindrift from the top of the Black Pyramid. He saw a "moving object in the snow" (the exact size was difficult to determine due to the distance

involved and the scale of mountain) fall out of view. Schreiber said the item "fell towards . . . below the Liberty Wall." About the same time, he heard what he described as a "muffled sound, not a mountain sound."

Schreiber continued climbing, following Brookes' tracks intermittently where the wind had not obscured them or the surface was not too hard to leave any trace. He estimated that 30 minutes after he saw the object fall, he reached the point just above the Black Pyramid. He was able to follow Brookes' tracks to a point about 50-100 feet below the top of the Black Pyramid. Here the surface of the snow varied from deep powder to hard windslab. The tracks that were visible seemed to head toward the top of the Pyramid. Schreiber did not notice any disturbance of the snow along the way.

Schreiber said he left large tracks in the snow from the top of the Black Pyramid to near the bergschrunds just below Liberty Cap. His tracks were not blown over or obscured quickly by the wind. He saw no sign of any tracks preceding his leading to the top of Liberty Cap and on to the summit. Upon reaching the summit, Schreiber met a member of the Torrey party which had a problem with a fatigued party member in the summit crater. Together they descended the Emmons Glacier to Camp Schurman where they reported the two problems to NPS personnel.

Schreiber remembered seeing Brookes stop only twice while climbing between Thumb Rock and the point at which he was last seen. Schreiber estimated the duration of these breaks as not more than two or three minutes each.

"Brookes has always pushed hard on climbs," Schreiber said. "I cannot predict Peter's behavior. Peter has got pissed at me before and left me on technical sections of climbs. He is really unpredictable. Peter feels everything is easy while on it. He is a risk taker on white-water. Peter gets pissed off when held up." Brookes is "generally confident" but "takes chances"; he has climbed unroped in the past.

When Krambink asked if Schreiber considered Brookes a "risk taker" as a climber, he said, "Yes."

Schreiber said the two of them had not discussed any plans to meet or leave messages when they last talked to one another at the point where they crossed the ridge crest to the snowfield which ascends to the top of Black Pyramid. Nothing was discussed, they "just separated."

Schreiber brought up one change in climbing technique which may or may not be significant: he noted from following Brookes' tracks to the top of the Black Pyramid that while Brookes had utilized French climbing technique almost all the way to the top of the snow-slope which leads to the top of the Black Pyramid, Brookes' footprints showed that he had changed to a front-pointing technique for the last part of this steeper section of the slope. He thought it seemed a bit unusual, almost as if Brookes had become a bit "freaked" toward the top of the slope.

The two men had been climbing partners for approximately two to three years. Although Schreiber was uncertain, he thought he had known Brookes since approximately April 1979.

Neither had had any previous experience on Mount Rainier prior to their climb of Liberty Ridge. Brookes had just completed the North Cascades Alpine School, a basic snow and ice school, course (June 28 to July 3, 1981). (Source: J. Krambink, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

Analysis

It is almost impossible not to compare some of the circumstances of this situation with the

Mooney and Fowler accident on the same route in May, particularly as both took place within two months, making the stories even more dramatic. There has been a longstanding issue among climbers regarding guidebooks and climbing "gazetteers." Is the traffic on a given climb or in a given climbing area increased as a result of publicity? Several guidebooks have not been written because of strong feelings that climbing traffic would increase as a result. There are other issues here as well. Most salient is what happens when two quite strong but differing personalities merge for a climb of this intensity. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALLING ICE

Washington, Mount Baker

Maurice Vinet (33), Thomas Baker (24), and Clayton Straseske (32) were struck by an icefall and snow slide on Mount Baker on July 16, 1981.

Baker, an employee of Liberty Bell Alpine Tours, had been leading the three-man climbing party on the north ridge of Mount Baker. He suffered a broken wrist in the icefall.

Two members of the North Cascades Alpine School, David Bishop (23) of Bellingham and David Smethurst of Pittsford, New York, saw the injured climbers soon after they were hit by the ice and rappelled down an ice cliff to them.

"When I looked down one guy had slid a ways and was down by a snowed-over crevasse. I saw some chunks of ice still going by them," Bishop said.

The injured men were helped 300 yards down the mountain to a rock outcropping. Vinet's injuries prevented him from walking, so he was placed in a seat fashioned from rope and carried on Bishop's back, with Smethurst helping in case Bishop slipped.

The injured men were given food, extra clothing and a first-aid kit. When the injured climbers seemed to be in stable condition, Bishop and Smethurst continued down the mountain to summon help. (Source: *The Seattle Times*, July 18, 1981)

FALL ON ROCK, FAILURE OF PITON, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Washington, The Tooth

On September 13, 1981, David Erickson (25) fell 150 feet from the East Face of The Tooth. His partner, Steve Bremner (26) said, "When he first fell, the pitons held for a second or two and that broke his momentum. Then they gave out and he went down in midair. He never touched rock. I stopped him with a dynamic belay, then he slammed into rock." Bremner then lowered Erickson onto a ledge and anchored the two of them. "Dave's pack had fallen below. . . . I gave him my shirt and slept in my T-shirt."

The pair had no overnight camping gear.

Sunday morning, relatives reported the climbers overdue and King County police began a search.

A MAST helicopter from Fort Lewis dropped seven climbers at the summit of The Tooth late Sunday. They moved Erickson to a rock basin, where he was airlifted out the morning of September 14. Bremner suffered no injuries. (Source: *The Seattle Times*, September 15, 1981)