

heart murmur could have some effect on Pohl's adjustment to altitude, although there is no proof for this as yet. Second, he was predisposed towards concern about HAPE. (Source: J. Williamson)

FROSTBITE, EXPOSURE, BAD WEATHER

Alaska, Mount McKinley

Mark Hesse (31) and John Hesse (29) of the Hesse Amputee expedition were flown into Kahiltna Base Camp on April 29, 1982. John had no right leg and Mark's plan was to assist his brother up the West Buttress route. On May 3, at 3900 meters, John developed a sore shoulder from his crutch/ski; they both returned to Kahiltna Base. John was flown out on May 5.

On May 7, Mark set out to catch Mike Covington's guided party of 12 on the East Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier. He skied with the group until May 10, then continued alone to the base of the American Direct.

Hesse started climbing on May 11 and spent the next 7½ days on the face. On May 17, he intended to summit but stopped at 5900 meters that evening. A storm moved in and Hesse grew concerned about his exposed position. At 0430 on May 18, he left for the summit, without eating or drinking; he reached the summit at 1100. At 1530, he had descended to 5300 meters, where he was given hot drinks and food before continuing down the West Buttress. Another climber carried Hesse's pack down the fixed line. At 1950, Hesse arrived at 4400 meters. During the day, six of his fingers had become frostbitten. Dr. Peter Hackett, who was with the High Latitude Research Program, thawed the frozen fingers and administered morphine for pain.

Hackett recommended evacuation from 3100 meters and Ranger Robinson gave his consent. Fred Agree, who had been running a dog sledding operation on the Kahiltna Glacier to explore the potential for business in 1983, was contacted and advised to meet Hesse and Bill Ennis (another injured climber) at 3100 meters to transport them to Kahiltna Base.

At 1200 on May 19, Dr. Holm Newman, who was also with the High Latitude Research Program, accompanied Hesse to 3100 meters. At 1530, Agree sledged Hesse to Kahiltna Base (for a fee of \$150.00); Hesse was flown to Talkeetna at 1700 by Doug Geeting. At 2000, Geeting flew Hesse to Providence Hospital in Anchorage. (Source: Jon Waterman, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analysis

Hesse had suffered similar frostbite on his fingers while climbing the Cassin Route on Mount McKinley in 1979. That year he walked down all the way to the Kahiltna Base Camp.

Hesse felt that Agree's price was unreasonable and that, had he known the charge before he was tied onto the sled, he would have walked to Kahiltna Base. It is arguable that Hesse's frostbitten fingers would have been a liability in walking on the glacier. Hesse commented that the 50-minute sled ride was more frightening than his solo climb of the South Face!

After this incident, a misunderstanding developed as to whether Hesse should

have paid for the cost of his dog-sled "rescue" or whether the costs should have been borne by the National Park Service. The main reason for this misunderstanding was the lack of direct radio communication between the 4400-meter High Latitude Medical Research camp and the NPS Ranger Station in Talkeetna. Better radio communication could have prevented this.

Hesse is a talented, seasoned climber. His solo ascent of the South Face was a remarkable achievement. (Source: Jon Waterman, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

ALTITUDE SICKNESS, FALL ON SNOW, FROSTBITE, INEXPERIENCE **Alaska, Mount McKinley**

On April 26, 1982, the ten-member Denali 101 Expedition flew from Talkeetna to the Kahiltna Base Camp to climb the West Buttress route on Mount McKinley. The expedition was comprised of participants in a mountaineering class that was given in Anchorage; and most of the members were inexperienced. The group traveled slowly up the glacier and two members left during the first week due to personality conflicts. On May 16, at 1000, the remaining eight members left for the summit from the 5300-meter camp in cold, clear weather with little wind. As the group slowly made their ascent, a rope team of three (Doug Burger, Jay Hornberger and Leslie McDaniel (28)) separated and went ahead due to cold feet and the slowness of the rest of the party.

At 1945, when the other five (Bill Ennis (32), Robert Hoffman, Bo Fuaco, Ray Commisa and Niles Wood (28)) reached the 5900-meter level, the first three were out ahead. At this elevation, Wood started suffering severely from the altitude. His symptoms were disorientation, exhaustion and slight hallucination; he was also collapsing regularly. At 2010, Commisa called Denali National Park via a Radio Anchorage unit. He talked with Chief Ranger Tom Griffiths and informed him of the situation and asked about the feasibility of a helicopter evacuation. Griffiths told Commisa to start descending with Wood immediately and to call back in one hour with a progress report.

After the initial contact, there was no further transmission as Commisa had called from a blind spot where the Radio Anchorage unit didn't work. Ranger Bob Gerhard contacted the Rescue Coordination Center (RCC) and notified them of the situation at 5900 meters. RCC decided to send two U.S. Army Chinook helicopters to Talkeetna in order to be ready for a possible rescue. The helicopter arrived in Talkeetna at 0100 on May 17. Ranger Scott Gill in Talkeetna was informed of the situation at 2030 on May 16 and made arrangements for an 0400 surveillance flight with Talkeetna Air Taxi.

As Commisa's group started down, Wood's condition began to improve and they were able to descend to 5300 meters without much difficulty. At the 5300-meter camp, Wood was feeling much better. The group of three climbers spent that evening totally unaware of the problems that the rest of the group was having in trying to get Wood down. At 0100 on May 17, the three were descending from Denali Pass at the 5400-meter level, just above the 5300-meter camp. Burger was in front, Hornberger in the middle and McDaniel in the rear. As they descended,