

below the tent. While kneeling down and driving the picket with an ice hammer, he lost his footing and slipped. Monte Fryt (34) heard Williams call out as he began to slide. Williams slid down the 35 degree ice slope on his left side and it appeared that he attempted to self-arrest with a hammer. About 50 meters down, Williams dropped his hammer and attempted to grab onto a band of rocks. He was observed severely hitting his head on the rocks. He continued to fall another 300 meters to the 4500 meter level on the West Rib. Mitchell Fryt (28) was lowered to the rocks where he thought he could observe the still shape of Williams on the slope below. At that time Fryt felt Williams had fallen over 600 meters. The fourth member, Dan Sullivan (24), made a call out on their CB radio where he reached Kahiltna Base Camp who relayed the accident to the Talkeetna Ranger Station at 2035. At 2040, Doug Geeting of Geeting Aviation was contacted, having just returned from Mt. McKinley with Rangers Roger Robinson and Bob Seibert. At 2105 Rangers Robinson and Seibert flew to the accident site with Geeting in his Cessna 185. At 2230, Robinson and Seibert observed the apparently lifeless form of Williams. The three remaining members of the party were contacted by Ranger Robinson at 2235. They had decided to stay at their camp that night since they were tired, cold and very much in shock from the accident. When asked whether they could descend to the victim, they felt it would endanger their lives to attempt to lower or retrieve the victim.

Ten overflights of the victim caused the rangers to conclude that Williams had not survived the fall.

On May 13 the remaining three members traversed down to the 4350 meter camp on the West Buttress where they reported in with the Medical Research Group. At 1520 they contacted Ranger Robinson in Talkeetna via radio telephone and reported details of the accident.

On May 14 two acclimatized climbers, Mugs Stump and Terry Schmidt, were flown in to the 4100 meter level of the West Rib. They required two and a half hours to climb up to the victim and lower the body back down to a waiting helicopter. (Source: Roger Robinson, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

## **FROSTBITE AND FATIGUE, WEATHER**

### **Alaska, Mount McKinley**

Having been discouraged by over two weeks of bad weather, including four days of being pinned down at the 3350 meter level in a blizzard, four members of a Mountain Rescue Council (MRC) expedition from Washington broke camp on May 18, 1985, and began descending the Kahiltna Glacier. They lost wands in a whiteout and had to bivouac. On May 19, the weather was better, and on their descent to Kahiltna pass, they soon found themselves trading leads with two climbers on snowshoes. In the deep, fresh snow the climbers were breaking in to their knees, and sometimes their thighs in spite of the snowshoes. Both these climbers had incredibly large haul bags, a contrast to the sleds that our party was equipped with. As the descent continued, one of the climbers, Jim Raymond, revealed that he had summited and had frozen his toes on the summit day. When he told Dr. Hackett, he was advised not to let them thaw until he could reach hospitalization. The party pushed on to Kahiltna Base on May 19 with Jim Raymond experiencing increasing pain as his toes began to thaw. He would not give up his haul sack. Finally our party cut it off of him.

Rich Williams took Raymond's haul sack, while Tim Bustanogy shared Rich's sled. About three kilometers short of Mt. Francis, Jim Raymond's partner was down, "Flat out of gas." Raymond, frozen toes and all, took his partner's haul bag and muscled it straight

up “Heartbreak Hill.” By the time the six had reached base, Raymond and his partner were verging on delirium. Our group felt that this was an emergency situation and that Jim Raymond should be flown out. The next two climbers in line gracefully stepped aside and Jim Raymond and his companion were flown out. We have no further authoritative information, but understand that Jim Raymond lost parts of two fingers and two complete toes. (Source: Mountain Rescue Bulletin, October 1985, Washington)

*(Editor’s Note: This climber was prepared to face the consequence of the conditions which can often be expected on Denali.)*

## **HAPE, RAPID ASCENT, WEATHER**

### **Alaska, Mount McKinley**

The weather on Mt. McKinley during the months of April and May was consistently cold and stormy, which prevented climbing expeditions to move high on the West Buttress route. From May 21-25 there was a five day window of excellent weather where many groups moved high as rapidly as possible, causing four individuals to get HAPE and/or CE which required medical attention. All four of the individuals were seen and/or treated by the Medical Research Group and are listed separately.

Glen Lovelace (26) and his wife Sue took six days to climb from 2100 meters basecamp on the West Buttress route of Mt. McKinley to 5250 meters. The next morning Glen was suffering from a severe headache, muddled thinking and lack of appetite. That morning the pair descended, with Glen experiencing hallucinations while descending to the 4350 meter camp. Upon examination by the physicians, Lovelace was diagnosed as having HAPE and treated with O<sub>2</sub> and Diamox before descending under his own power to basecamp.

Edmond Schuster (49) was a member of a 13-man German expedition which took four days to get to 4350 meters from the 2130 meter basecamp on the West Buttress. Once at 4350 meters, Schuster had a headache and difficulty breathing. He went to the Medical Research camp and was diagnosed as having HAPE. Schuster was given some O<sub>2</sub> and Diamox which made it possible for him to wait while his party continued on to the summit.

Dr. Jacques Vallet (37) was a member of a four-man French expedition which took four days to get from basecamp to 4350 meters. At 4350 meters Vallet was examined by the Medical Research Group and found to have early signs of HAPE. It was recommended that he not ascend until the fluid in his lungs had cleared. But Vallet continued on to 5250 meters, where he had a headache and difficulty breathing. Vallet had to descend the following day with the help of his expedition members. The team had to retreat to basecamp the following day.

Hidenori Matsumoto was a member of a five-man Japanese expedition which took four days to get from basecamp to 4350 meters on the West Buttress. After the first night at 4350 meters, Matsumoto had a severe headache and could hardly move under his own power in the morning. He was diagnosed as having HAPE and CE by the Medical Research Group and give O<sub>2</sub> for the day and slept with O<sub>2</sub> that night before being taken down to basecamp the following morning by another climbing expedition. (Source: Scott Gill, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

### **Analysis**

A stretch of good weather caused many expeditions to move to higher elevations much too fast. The numbers of climbers getting Acute Mountain Sickness seemed to occur during