

The subject was reached by team one at 1300. A MAST Chinook and Huey helicopters were on scene, and with SMR's Base Operations Leader Mike Maude as spotter, located the rescue party. The craft was low on fuel, but was able to hoist the subject along with SMR's Critical Care Nurse, Diane Eldrenkamp. Both helicopters returned to Alpentel, transferred the patient and Eldrenkamp to the Huey which transported the patient to Harborview Trauma Center. (Source: *Trage*, Fall—1990)

SLIP ON ICE, NO HARD HAT

Washington, Mount Baker

While descending Mount Baker around 2000 meters via Coleman-Deming Glacier on September 9, Steven Amber (27), Vincent Willard (25) and Reese White (29) approached the last slope directly above their tent site on the Hogback at 1700 after a successful climb. White was leading a roped descent, Amber in the middle, and Willard last. As they entered a crevassed area, Steven Amber slipped and fell. Willard turned into the ice and went into self-arrest position. As he swung his pick into the slope, the ice fractured away, and he too was pulled off his feet. His wrist loop was not around his wrist, and he immediately lost his ice ax. The two rolled a few meters and fell into a crevasse. Willard was knocked unconscious; Amber's fall was arrested before hitting bottom, and he was able to climb out unassisted.

Reese White immediately rappelled down and began treating Willard's head wound. Three other climbers in the camp below had witnessed the fall and climbed up to aid the injured party. Two of them stayed the night with White and Willard while the third member escorted Amber back to the camp. Authorities were notified of the accident. Willard and Amber were evacuated by helicopter the following morning at 0730 and treated at St. Joseph's Hospital in Bellingham. Willard suffered a fractured skull and ankle and compression fracture of the spine, Amber a fractured wrist and broken nose. (Source: Compiled from reports by Steve Amber, Vincent Willard, and Whatcom County Sheriff's Office)

Analysis

In late season ice conditions, it would be advisable to take an easier route. We could have gone around the ice entirely. It would have taken an hour longer, but the accident wouldn't have happened. We talked to two other climbers the day before, and they had gone around the ice on their descent. We also had two ice screws along, but to save time didn't use them. A helmet would have spared me my head injury. Sharper crampons and ice ax might have helped, too. P.S. Does this mean we get a free copy of 1990 Accidents in North American Mountaineering? (Source: Steven Amber and Vincent Willard)

(Editor's Note: Falling into a crevasse is not the recommended method of attempting to secure a copy of ANAM. Membership in the American Alpine Club is the best way to avoid the retail price.)

AVALANCHE, WEATHER

Washington, Dragontail Peak

Eric Simmonson (22) and his partner (22) left the parking lot at Colchuck Lake early on the morning of November 3 to climb Dragontail's north face in a day. The pair climbed up high on the route but decided to quit and descend the route because of freezing rain

and snowfall. The weather had deteriorated. The pair was unroped and down climbing when an avalanche hit them. Eric was thrown off his stance and fell approximately 300 meters down the couloir. His companion escaped being struck by the avalanche and was safely able to down climb the route. He thought Eric was killed by the avalanche. Eric also thought his partner was dead and managed to crawl down approximately 60 meters below the entrance of the gully before his companion reached him. The two climbers did not have any bivouac gear. A partial snow shelter was built for the victim and his partner left to go seek help. On his way down he encountered two hikers who were on their way up to Asgard Pass. He recounted the story of the accident. The climber proceeded out to notify the sheriff's department. The hikers reached the victim at 1430. They found the victim uncontrollably shivering. All his clothes were wet. They set up their tent, stripped him of his clothes and placed him in one of their sleeping bags. The victim told them he spit up some blood after the accident and was complaining of internal pains.

At 2300 two members from Central Mountain Rescue arrived. One was a paramedic. The victim was placed on an IV and given medication. Everyone spent the night just below the couloir. The medic noticed that the victim passed blood in his urine in the morning.

At 0700 on November 4, a team of 20 people was assembled at the PUD district station in Leavenworth by the sheriff's department to provide a carry out. At 1030 the carry out team reached the victim and at 1115 the carry out began with the victim placed in a litter. High winds, snowfall and lack of visibility persisted. At 1400 the victim had been moved to the lower end of the Colchuck Lake. A decision was made to continue transporting the victim down the trail. An Air Force helicopter from Spokane was put on alert with the idea of positioning it at the fish hatchery area on Icicle Creek Canyon. The weather continued to deteriorate. At 1600 the Stuart Lake-Colchuck Lake trail fork was reached. The helicopter was now positioned in Icicle Creek. Weather still made it insufficient for a fly-by. Fifteen minutes were requested to hold further transport in order to assess a "scrub or go" on a helicopter pickup at the swampy meadows just above the trail fork. The weather cleared slightly and the pilot/sheriff's department decided to do a fly-by and check conditions.

The helicopter landed and litter carriers were forced to ford a very cold Stuart Creek above waist level. The victim and medic were placed aboard the helicopter and transported to Wenatchee State Hospital. The victim's injuries were determined to be fractured vertebrae, broken ribs, and a broken thumb. (Source: Seattle Mountain Rescue Council)

Analysis

Eric and Cal felt the snow conditions in the lower and middle couloirs were stable at the time of the avalanche. They believe the avalanche started either in the upper (third) couloir or resulted from snow breaking loose from a ledge on the face that rises above the left side of the Hidden Couloir. They believe that being roped would have been no advantage in this situation.

The route description in Becky's guide warns of avalanche danger. (Source: Fred Stanley)

RAPPEL ANCHOR INADEQUATE, NO BELAY, NO HARD HAT

West Virginia, Cooper's Rock State Forest

On Saturday, July 21, 1990, Dan Audley (31), Marty Donahue and six Boy Scouts stopped on their way home from Camp Mountaineer to do some rappelling. They