

two rangers confronted one problem after another, but were determined to prevent John Craver's death from exposure. They fell when they stopped at 13,200 feet to fix their equipment on August 12.

Otis had climbed Mount Rainier once and Mount Baker once, while Ryan had climbed Mount Rainier 11 times. They had enough experience to handle a rescue under less severe conditions, Krambrink said. But "I don't think any of us would have sent (Otis) up there had we known what the conditions were."

Otis did not thrust his ice ax deep into the snow and snap his rope to it, a technique most climbers use for an anchor, the report said. His ax was later found with only the tip in the snow. Also, one of the crampons didn't fit his boot properly, and the other had broken in half and was no longer screwed in tightly.

In their last radio contact, Ryan said Otis was having trouble with his crampons. He used duct tape and then white athletic tape to try to secure them, the report says.

Otis probably found the park-owned crampons in the hut at Camp Schurman, the base camp for ascents up the northeast face. (Source: From a report issued by an eight member panel of National Park Service employees and independent climbers who reviewed Mount Rainier National Park's internal investigation)

FALL ON ROCK, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Washington, North Cascades, Liberty Bell

On August 14, Stim Bullit (75) and I (47) were climbing the third pitch (I led the first two pitches)—a crack above a ledge. Stim got to the crux of the 5.8 crack, couldn't figure it out and backed down. I volunteered to try to lead it, couldn't figure out how to climb the crux either, so I began to down climb. I fell while down climbing. My feet slipped off the wall. The protection held well, but my right leg apparently took full force of the fall on a ledge or other protrusion. After the injury, my leg would not hold my weight. We rappelled to the base of the climb; I bivouacked and Stim left and drove to phone mountain rescue people.

Analysis

I'm not a skilled technical climber and have never led above 5.7. I have done only a few top roped 5.8 pitches. My partner is much better technically and has led up to 5.9. In the hot flush of summit fever, I allowed desire to overcome judgment, exceeding my limit, and paid the price.

My repeated training in Mountaineering First Aid was very helpful. It allowed me to remain calm, set up a comfortable bivy, treat myself for shock, and even sleep until rescuers came. As much as I complain about getting recertified every three years, it's worth it. (Source: Kathy O'Toole)

FALL ON SNOW/ICE, MODERATE EXPERIENCE

Washington, Mount Rainier

On August 20, Scott Porter (32), Karl Ahrens (35) and Brian Nelson (32) were descending the upper Emmons Glacier after summiting. SMR members Kim Klasch and Bob Schumaker were on standby duty at Camp Schurman. At 1405 Klasch was watching parties on the route when he saw the group of three begin falling about the 13,400 foot level. They slid and fell about 2,400 feet down to the 11,000 foot level before coming to a stop in a crevasse. Klasch, Schumaker, and a Park Service Ranger left Camp Schurman

at 1440 to climb to the fallen climbers. In the meantime they had notified the Park Service of the accident. A Park Service rescue team was flown to the accident scene, and accomplished the rescue before Klasch, Schumaker, and the Park Service Ranger from Schurman could reach the scene. They directed another off-route party of two back onto the standard route and assisted them down to Schurman.

Porter and Ahrens were killed in the fall. Nelson survived. He was flown from the Emmons Glacier to Sunrise, and from there to Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma via an Army helicopter. From Madigan, Nelson was moved to Swedish Hospital in Seattle on August 24, where he was reported to be in critical but stable condition. It was his third climb on Mount Rainier. (Source: *Bergtrage*, Seattle Mountain Rescue, Number 146, January 1996)

(Editor's Note: Other than various people saying that the conditions were very icy, there were no other conclusions drawn in any of the NPS reports or newspaper articles received.

This accident brought the total number of fatalities on Mount Rainier to 67. Over the past 40 years, 258 people have died while mountain climbing in Washington State. Before the fall the previous week on Mount Rainier, the last fatal accident occurred in 1992. The worst climbing accident in U. S. climbing history in terms of total fatalities was in 1981 when ten climbers were buried by a large avalanche on the Disappointment Cleaver route.

There were a few other reports of accidents on Mount Rainier for the year, two involving falls on snow that could not be successfully stopped before an injury occurred, and one other involving crampons in which the victim cut his leg badly enough to require evacuation.)

FALL ON ROCK

West Virginia, Seneca Rocks, West Face

On August 20, Kel Young was leading "The Prune" at Seneca Rocks. He had placed protection above the small ledge which is just below the finish of the second pitch. After a couple of moves, he fell, toeing the ledge as he went by it. He was lowered to the ground with assistance from another party and evacuated by litter due to a fractured ankle.

Analysis

The second pitch of "The Prune" is notorious for doing in ankles here at Seneca. The count is two for the season so far. The small ledge just below the "Old Man's Traverse" ledge is a comfortable stance from which to place protection. Unfortunately, the vertical nature of the climbing above this stance almost ensures that in the event of a fall one will "toe" the ledge as one goes by it. (Source: John Markwell)

VARIOUS FALLS ON ROCK, MOSTLY CLIMBING UNROPEDED OR NOT ANCHORED

Wisconsin, Devil's Lake State Park and Peninsula State Park

Reports from Devil's Lake State Park provide an interesting contrast to the Shawangunks in that the average age of the climbers involved in the nine accidents reported for 1995 was 21. The youngest, which was a fatality, was an 11-year-old. He was at the top of a climb, alone, while his uncle was belaying his sister up. He was not tied in, and though