of the initial crevasse fall. It is also important to note that three other climbing teams reported passing the stranded climbers while descending Liberty Cap. They offered assistance however the two-person Bullard party declined, perhaps feeling their situation was not urgent at the time. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

FALL ON SNOW/ICE

Washington

Two climbers requesting a rescue for a third team member on Liberty Ridge contacted Mount Rainier National Park early on June 16th. The injured climber, Talbot (60), had severely broken his lower leg during a 200-foot fall while descending the route. Unable to down-climb, his partners stabilized him at 10,000 feet on the ridge before going for help.

NPS climbing rangers assembled a rescue team and flew to the Carbon Glacier. The rescue team ascended 1,000 feet of technical mountaineering terrain to provide emergency care. Talbot was lowered 900 feet on 40 to 60 degree snow and ice slopes to the glacier at the base of Liberty Wall. There, a helicopter could land and Talbot was transported to the Park Service heli-base where an ambulance awaited. The rescue took four hours round trip.

Analysis

There have been a number of injuries like this on Liberty Ridge and similar mountaineering routes, which are notorious for loose and dangerous snow, rock and ice conditions that change rapidly depending on the weather, and altitude. One day the snow may be hard, the next it may be sugar. Climbers should also be prepared for strenuous physical exercise with heavy packs and technical terrain. These difficulties, coupled with altitude and the severe weather, make Rainier a place where simple accidents often turn into large emergencies. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

HAPE AND HACE

Washington, Mount Rainier

While spending the night on the summit of Mount Rainier, off duty climbing rangers Gauthier and Patterson were contacted by the leader of a scientific research team, who informed them that one of his team members was suffering from mountain sickness. The rangers found Haley in his tent, disoriented, suffering from slurred speech, and unable to support himself. Team members indicated that his condition had deteriorated significantly in the previous 15 minutes and that his behavior was abnormal. A helicopter was requested, but nightfall and altitude prevented a safe response. Within 15 minutes of the initial assessment, Haley became unconscious and unresponsive. Assisted rescue breathing was provided throughout the night while a climbing team from Camp Muir attempted to reach the summit with oxygen, but newly formed crevasses and whiteout conditions prevented their efforts and Haley was evacuated shortly after sunrise by an Army Chinook helicopter and flown to Madigan Hospital. He was unconscious and in critical condition.