

further down the talus slope than they did. Both climbers agreed that had this piece of protection not held the injuries sustained could have been more serious. More importantly, an effective self rescue may not have been possible in this relatively obscure climbing area. (Source: John Kascenska)

FALL ON ICE, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPED

Washington, Mount Rainier, Gibraltar Ledge

On March 21, E. Dawes Eddy (56) fell 1600 feet while soloing the Gibraltar Ledge route on Mount Rainier. A four-person climbing team on the same route witnessed the accident and subsequent tumble down the 40–50-degree icy Gibraltar Chute. Eddy's fall was arrested where the slope angle decreased onto the Nisqually Glacier. One member of the witnessing party used a cell phone to alert the National Park Service while another member down-climbed to Eddy.

During the fall, Eddy had sustained bone fractures to his lower right leg and possible internal injuries. That climber helped stabilize Eddy and stayed with him while the other members of his team returned to Camp Muir to retrieve a rescue liter. The Park Service dispatched a helicopter with rangers Brenchley, Turner, and Winslow. They were flown near the accident site where they climbed to Eddy with rescue gear, litter, and medical supplies. Eddy was prepared for extrication and lowered to the helicopter, then flown to a hospital.

Analysis

Eddy had extensive experience climbing Mount Rainier, both solo and in the winter, and therefore understood the risk of his undertaking. Solo climbers in the winter can expect hidden crevasses, poor weather, and, most notably, no backup. Eddy was fortunate that another team was on the same route and witnessed the fall. He stated that no particular event caused the slip to occur, only that he recalled losing his footing and quickly falling backwards, sliding out of control before he could get into a self arrest position. Note that the slope angle was steep—50-degrees, and the snow was hard and icy. There had also been a significant amount of snowfall that winter. This coated the normally rock exposed gully, and he felt the snow helped to cushion his tumbles and prevent more serious injuries. Eddy was wearing his helmet and attributed his survival to this fact. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

FALL INTO CREVASSE, CLIMBING UNROPED, WEATHER

Washington, Mount Rainier, Muir Snowfield Paradise Glacier

On April 1, Michael Corroone (51) and Dan Gallagher (36) set out to climb Mount Rainier. Severe weather prevented a summit attempt, and they began descending back to Paradise on April 12. High winds, low visibility and white-out conditions continued, forcing them to follow compass bearings down the Muir Snowfield. Near 8,800 feet, the unroped pair simultaneously fell into a deceptively covered crevasse on the Paradise Glacier, the eastern edge of the Muir Snowfield. Gallagher's backpack caught on the slender entrance and he was able to extricate himself. Corroone, however, slipped through the crack and disappeared into the crevasse.