

## **Analysis**

This type of medical emergency, involving an expedition member who does not disclose previous medical conditions to other expedition members, has become more common in recent years on Denali. This places all involved personnel in harm's way. This issue raises a series of ethical questions: Should such an individual be allowed to climb in the first place? Should someone like this—who jeopardizes so many people—be fined and escorted off the mountain? Or, should the NPS allow the situation to remain status quo? What most bothered the author of this report is that this Hong Kong climber wanted to go back up after a few days of rest at 14,200 feet. He was told he could not, under the authority that he would be “Creating a Hazardous Condition” (36 CFR 2.34[4]). It seems unfortunate but likely that Mr. Man would rather have died than come back without tagging the summit.

## **FALL ON SNOW**

### **Alaska, Mount McKinley, Denali Pass**

On June 10 at 1945, Lev Sarkisov (61) of the Denali-2000 Khalatian Expedition (D2K) was descending unroped from Denali Pass on Mt. McKinley when he stumbled at the 17,400-foot level and fell 400 feet. Sarkisov sustained numerous broken ribs and was stabilized at the 17,200-foot high camp. On May 12, a large rescue team lowered him to the 14,200-foot camp where he was evacuated by military Chinook helicopter to Talkeetna. From Talkeetna he was flown to the Alaska Regional Hospital in Anchorage where he was diagnosed with eight fractures on six ribs.

## **Analysis**

This was the second rescue this season where a European climber fell descending the Denali Pass traverse unroped, using only ski poles. Both men were fortunate that they were not killed, though both required extensive rescue operations. The D2K party was adamant that Lev Sarkisov be flown off from the 17,200-foot high camp without delay, regardless of the weather conditions. They learned very quickly that the Park Service does not provide a European-style helicopter rescue service and that Denali's weather dictates everything. For the past 20 years the Park Service has tried to educate climbers with reference to the exposure of the Denali Pass traverse and our inability to provide instant rescues. There has been some headway made regarding Europeans who frequently acknowledge Park Service concerns, and many more are now descending with an ice ax, as witnessed by this author. Those who refuse to listen and end up being rescued create hazardous conditions for all rescuers involved. The Park Service and many volunteer rescuers are frustrated with this attitude.

## **AMS—ASCENDING TOO FAST, CLIMBING “ALONE”—BUT DEPENDING UPON OTHERS**

### **Alaska, Mount McKinley, Denali Pass**

On June 25 at 1940, Ranger Meg Perdue received a radio call from Volunteer Ranger Karen Hilton at the 17,200-foot high camp regarding a solo climber