

*New Hampshire, Mt. Washington*—On Wednesday, January 27, 1954, Phillip Longnecker (25) and Jacques Parysko (23) graduate students at Harvard University, but not members of the Harvard Mountaineering Club, built an igloo for a campsite at the foot of the steep headwall of Tuckerman's ravine; it was left of center of the headwall and about half way around to the left gully. This camp consisted of a hole nearly four feet deep and six feet across roofed over with blocks of snow and some ice fragments fallen from the cliffs above. The top was over a foot above the old crust and the site was on a slope of about ten degrees which led directly up to the much steeper headwall. No experienced person knew of the location of the igloo, although Longnecker was advised on Thursday not to camp at the foot of the headwall and not to climb on it because of the possible danger of slides from the three-foot snowfall of Wednesday night.

Sunday afternoon, January 31, Parysko's body was found on the Sherburne Ski Trail near the Harvard cabin about three quarters of a mile down from the camp. He was wearing no boots, socks, mittens, cap, or parka, and had badly scratched ankles. The medical examiner said he probably died early that morning. A very erratic set of tracks was followed back up the ski trail to the foot of the little headwall, where some more recent tracks and the high wind had obliterated them. A search of the ravine by the Mount Washington Volunteer Ski Patrol revealed no signs of the campsite and it was evident that much new snow had been deposited by the gale which was still blowing. At one point a small bundle of sticks for trail marking was discovered, but probing in the vicinity with a ski pole revealed nothing except four feet of fresh snow. The extremities of the men began to freeze in the sub-zero temperatures and they were driven out of the ravine.

That evening, a search party was organized at Pinkham Notch by Joseph B. Dodge, Hut Manager of the Appalachian Mountain Club, and early the next morning in clear weather, about twenty men, among whom were Forest Service representatives, ascended to the ravine. By digging a series of parallel trenches and probing between them, the campsite was located in the early afternoon.

Longnecker's body was found in his sleeping bag with a heavy block of snow ice on his head; the empty sleeping bag of the other man, together with the rest of his clothing was there. Four feet of wind-packed powder snow lay over the camp and no signs of any sizable avalanche were present. The snow was evenly stratified to within a foot of the old undisturbed crust. About 30 feet down the slope from the site were found on the surface some more green sticks in the same place as those of the previous day. In this area the new snow was nearly 6 feet deep and the bottom 4 feet not obviously stratified. In this bottom layer were some blocks of snow and ice. These may have been fragments of the igloo roof or may have fallen from higher up. To explain the position of the blocks and sticks, it is easiest to suppose that a small slide of snow may have occurred, which caved in the roof of the camp as it passed by but which was not large enough to bury the site. Mere wind erosion and deposition of snow do not seem to account fully for the facts.

*Source:* Andrew Griscom, *Appalachia* 20:104, Newspaper clippings.

*Analysis:* By Andrew Griscom.

While reconstruction of the accident can only be by guess, a few possibilities may be suggested. Some time early Sunday morning a slide caused the igloo to collapse. Confused by the accident and the terrible weather, Parysko may have jumped out of his sleeping bag and run down the mountain for help without stopping to dress himself properly. Ironically enough, he passed three telephones to Pinkham Notch Camp, two first aid caches, the new Tuckerman Ravine Shelter, and finally died of exposure close to the Harvard cabin, in which, at the time, there were ten people. He had seen all of these places earlier in the week.

The mountain experience of the two men was not great so far as is known. Longnecker was the leader and had done some winter camping and climbing in Colorado. Parysko had never been in the mountains before. It should have been evident that the camp was in an extremely exposed and potentially dangerous position. Had the igloo been dug in sideways and deeper so as to leave the original crust for a roof it would have been much stronger. If Parysko had been more experienced, the situation might still have been at least partially saved. It is hoped that in time all campers will realize that winter camping high in the White Mountains can be a very serious undertaking.

*Vermont, Norwich*—On October 12, 1954, J. B. Corbett (18) was climbing with two members of the Dartmouth Mountaineering club. They were traversing wet rock about 8 feet above the ground on a practice climb. They were unroped. Corbett slipped and in landing on the ground twisted his knee.

*Source:* J. B. Corbett, Dartmouth Mountaineering Club.

*Analysis:* The hazardous nature of wet rock is shown—there was no comment as to the type of footgear. Whether rope or felt shoes would have helped is not known. Whether a rope from above would have helped is difficult to assess. At this point it should be emphasized that the use of a dynamic belay on a fall close to the ground as this one was, may be more dangerous than a snubbed belay since allowing the rope to play out slightly might be enough to cause the man to strike the ground. Such a situation is a contra-indication for the use of a dynamic belay.

*Colorado, Sangre de Cristo Range, Crestone Needle*—Cleve McCarty, Tony Mueller (20), Rodney McWhinney and Robert Kulstad (27), Rip Collins (31) and Dick Wink set up a base camp at the foot of Crestone Needle (14,191 ft.) on August 23, 1954. Only two of the six members of the party were experienced, Mueller and McCarty. McWhinney was along for the fishing. Collins and Kulstad had had some training but lacked practical experience and Wink had none at all.

On the third day of the outing, August 25, 1954, after having practiced techniques and a few conditioning climbs the first two days, they attempted the Ellingwood ridge of the Crestone Needle. The party left camp at about 5:30 a.m. leaving McWhinney to go fishing. At about 6:30 a.m. the party arrived at the base of the ridge. A slight variation to the usual approach to the arete was taken instead of the usual zig-zag on grassy shelves. The variation consisted of heading straight up the ridge as it meets