

*Washington, Mt. Rainier.* On the morning of September 10, a party consisting of Elmer Post (39), David Post (19) and James Bartram (19) attempted to make a one day hike to Camp Muir from Paradise and return. The weather at Paradise during the day was foggy with light rain and wind. Approximately half way up the route to Camp Muir, the party was joined by Jock Claringbould (18), who was also attempting to hike to Muir. The four men continued up to about 9,000 feet on the Muir snowfield. By this time the weather had deteriorated considerably, with freezing rain and snow being driven at them by gale force winds. At this time the men decided to turn back towards Paradise. Apparently at about this time the two Posts and Bartram also roped up. Claringbould did not rope up, but started down with the other three men. Conditions at this time were almost a complete whiteout, and the party, unable to locate any landmarks, drifted to the east and on to the Paradise Glacier.

At about 3:00 p.m., Bartram, the third man on the rope, plunged through a snow crust into a hidden crevasse. Elmer Post, the rope leader, also fell while attempting to assist Bartram in getting out of the crevasse. David Post also descended into the crevasse with the other two members of the rope team, and the men decided to attempt to wait the storm out in the shelter afforded by the crevasse. Claringbould decided to attempt the descent to Paradise alone. He wandered, apparently by chance, to the west of the accident scene, and found the old telephone line that runs from Anvil Rock down toward Paradise. He followed this downhill until he heard running water, and followed this drainage down to Pebble Creek. At this point he was able to follow the marked trail down to Paradise, arriving in the area at about 5:45 p.m. Claringbould was given a hot shower and food on his arrival at Paradise, and was then questioned about the location of the accident. He was probably in shock at this time and was unable to give any specific location. His information at this time indicated the scene was on the Muir snowfield at about 8,000 feet. It should be noted that if Claringbould had not come down, rangers in the area would have known nothing of the accident since the Post party had failed to register before leaving for the climb.

Our details of what took place in the crevasse during this time are necessarily sketchy. Bartram had moved down about 30 feet in the crevasse to the sloping snow floor where he had room enough to walk around. Later he indicated that the Posts were extremely exhausted and discouraged at the time the three first went into the crevasse. Bartram apparently attempted to coax the others into coming down to the lower part of the crevasse and keep moving, but the two men were unable to summon the energy to keep moving. Bartram indicated that the two men simply "gave up" and died of exposure about dark, (6:00-6:30 p.m.). Bartram stayed in the crevasse throughout the night, pacing back and forth and doing calisthenics in order to keep warm. Shortly after 7:00 p.m. Sunday evening, a nine man rescue party left Paradise in an attempt to locate the accident scene. In addition to the usual first aid gear, the party carried butane stoves and an Akja. The party was well equipped with rain gear and down clothing. The rescue party reached Pebble Creek, about two miles above Paradise, at about 9:00 p.m. At this point, the party was encountering winds of 40 - 50 miles per hour with higher

gusts as well as freezing rain and snow. Visibility was near zero. The rain gear was not sufficient to protect the party members due to the extreme winds, and a decision was made to turn back until morning. In the white-out conditions it was also decided that the party would not have been able to attempt safely a search above Pebble Creek. The Akja was left at Pebble Creek for use by the next rescue attempt.

At 5:30 a.m. the next morning a second rescue effort was made. Weather conditions were still poor, although less severe than the previous night. Claringbould was able to accompany the party at this time, and indicated that the accident scene was well to the east of the location he had given earlier. The rescue party was in the process of splitting into 3-man teams in order to search along the Paradise Glacier at about 8:00 a.m. when Bartram was sighted crawling out of the crevasse. Dr. Gerstmann rappelled into the crevasse a short time later and pronounced Elmer and David Post dead. Bartram was taken back to the rock cleaver at the edge of the glacier, put in a tent, and given hot tea and dry clothes. Dr. Gerstmann examined him and found no sign of frostbite. Temperatures in the area the previous night had dropped to an estimated 20 degrees. Bartram was later able to walk to Paradise. The two were evacuated by Akja litters to Paradise with the assistance of a support team.

*Source:* Paul F. Haertel, Park Ranger; Douglas Erskine and Cleveland F. Pinnix.

*Analysis:* The party was not properly clothed even for the weather at the start of the trip. No rain wear, down apparel, very little wool clothing. A compass and necessary skills may have helped them get back on the route. The basic survival ingredient was missing . . . *a will to live.*

*Alaska, Mt. McKinley.* The winter McKinley party composed of Jacques Batkin (36), Gregg Blomberg (25), Arthur L. Davidson (22), John S. Edwards (35), Raymond Genet (35), David P. Johnston (24), Shiro Nishimae (31), and George Wichman (39), flew to 7,400 on the south-east fork of the Kahiltna Glacier on 29 January and began ferrying loads up the glacier unroped. Some used skis or snowshoes, some not. At noon on the 31st Batkin and Johnston had just finished a lunch break and Johnston was ahead on snowshoes as they packed loads toward a new campsite others were preparing about 8,100 feet on the main Kahiltna. Batkin, who was carrying a very heavy load and not wearing skis or webbs, fell through a hidden crevasse. Johnston did not know it but those above looked down to see one approaching where two had been before and soon all were assembled at the hole which was blocked by Batkin's pack. Johnston jumarded in immediately and found Batkin caught on the second ledge some 50 feet down. He rigged a sling around him by which the others pulled him to the surface while Johnston jumarded up. Although he was out within half an hour of his fall, Dr. Wichman pronounced him dead of head and chest injuries.

*Source:* J. Vin Hoeman, Gregg Blomberg

*Analysis:* (Hoeman) Always rope on a glacier where the crevasses are thinly hidden. If impossible or impractical, skis or snowshoes will help.

(Blomberg) The area in which Batkin died was later found to contain