

piton, arriving at the most difficult move on the route. At this time, observers had occasion to talk with him and his comments led them to believe that he was aware of his delicate position and did not want further distraction, but he appeared to be in command of the situation. At this time the observers moved out of sight. About five minutes later, having apparently decided to drive another piton, Frank fell, pushing himself away from the face in approved technique in order to fall clear. The time was 7:40 p.m. After falling about 38 feet the force on the system caused the piton to twist and fracture at the neck and the carabiner to bend. The gate of the carabiner was not forced open; neither was it jammed shut so that it could not be opened later. Frank continued falling for another 70 feet at which time Rusty applied such a dynamic belay as was possible with Frank, by now, only 10 feet or so above the base of the rock. Frank's initial impact was on his hips, having been flipped by the rope, then he bounced and hit his head and came to rest on his back. Accepted mountain rescue procedures were initiated by sending one of the other climbers in the area for help, while others gave aid to the injured and gave moral support to Rusty as he made his own way off the face. Upon arrival of the county sheriff's deputies and an ambulance crew, litter evacuation was carried out over rough terrain. Frank remained unconscious and was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital.

*Source:* Miles B. Henderson and Tom Dillon, Climbing Committee, Spokane Mountaineers, Inc.

*Analysis:* Both Frank and Rusty were experienced climbers and mountaineers, and Frank was the Climbing Committee Chairman of the Spokane Mountaineers, of which both were established members. In spite of an obvious lack of protective pitons, it is believed that the fall would have been severe but not fatal had the piton not fractured under stress. Rusty's belay anchor held solidly and he would have been able to hold the fall but for the apparently defective piton driven by Frank. In the 60 feet between Frank and Rusty only the one piton was placed. Rusty was wearing a hard hat and Frank was not. Had Frank been wearing a hard hat he may have sustained lesser injuries. We strongly urge all climbers to wear protective head gear during all climbs. Rusty was wearing a short sleeved T-shirt and suffered severe rope burns on the forearm and back.

*Washington, Mt. Stuart.* On 15 June Douglas Merrill (26) and Robert Stull (26) began their climb at 7:00 a.m. from their camp at Ingalls Creek. The route is Becky's route 1. The climb included a long easy couloir which opened up into a snowfield below the false summit. "We crossed the snowfield to the east and climbed a rock rib to the false summit. We then crossed the ridge from the false summit to the snow below the main summit. Crampons were installed at this point since the snow was crusty on the surface. Stull led making large foot holes to the summit. The summit was reached at noon and 2 hours were spent relaxing there in the warm sun. During this time we were joined by a second party of climbers. At 2:00 p.m. everyone on the summit began to descend.

The snow had softened a bit, but it was still slightly crusty and everyone was wearing crampons. At this point, Merrill appeared somewhat nervous about descending. He leaned back toward the slope placing his full weight on the back edge of the heel of his boot. He also failed to hold his ice axe properly. Although these things were mentioned several times, he failed to improve his style and descending to the rock ridge leading to the false summit was very slow. The snow below the false summit was still crusty but the snowfield should have been a very easy route down from this point. As we walked across the snow immediately below the false summit, Merrill slipped and failed to do a self arrest. He slid approximately 50 feet on the snow while making an incorrect effort to do a self arrest. He then gave up the self arrest and turned to see where he was going. At this time his body rotated and he hit a rock with his ribs. He rotated further after hitting the first rock and then hit a second rock only ten feet away with his head. He continued sliding on the snow for another 1500 feet. Keith Hopkins, a climber from another party, reached him immediately and began first aid. Doug was conscious when I reached him and we were able to move him to a dry rock and put a down parka on him before I left for help. Merrill succumbed from his injuries prior to evacuation."

*Source:* Robert J. Stull.

*Analysis:* (Stull) Both members of the party were in good physical condition and high spirits before the accident occurred. It is believed that the accident is essentially due to inexperience and improper use of the equipment (ice axe and crampons).

*Washington, Peshastin Pinnacles.* On 28 June Jim Nieland and Gerald Calbaum (32) were climbing Peshastin Pinnacles. Jim Nieland led the direct west face of Dinosaur Tower. He reached the upper ledge where he belayed Calbaum. The latter clipped into the rope with a standard carabiner from his waist sling to a figure-8-loop on the end of the climbing rope. Jerry had reached the 2/3 point where the pitch became steeper. He had previously called for tension with apparent plan to use the rope for direct aid in the next move. Russ Maynard who was photographing the climb had noticed that he had taken up a slight amount of slack about the time he called for tension. He suddenly called "falling" and skidded down the entire 50°-60° friction slab for about 75 feet with sudden arrest by pine tree at the base.

The belayer felt the rope go slack at the time of the fall. After the fall the figure-8-loop was still intact and the carabiner still on the waist sling around the climber.

*Source:* R. M. Maynard.

*Analysis:* Rope loop apparently became loose from carabiner during the temporary release of tension from the climbing rope. Accident would have been prevented by use of bowline-on-a-coil or a locking carabiner between the rope loop and the waist sling.

It is felt less likely that the climber accidentally unclipped from the climbing rope while snapping in retrieved carabiners with pitons.