

UNITED STATES

AVALANCHE—*Alaska, Mt. Foraker.* Toshio Hirakawa (29), Yoshitsugo Yamaya (23), and Kenjo Koshiishi (28) were members of a five-person Japanese party planning to climb Mount Foraker via the Northeast ridge. On August 6, four members of the party were traveling (at 7900 feet) on a spur of the Kihiltna Glacier underneath Mount Foraker's southeast ridge. The party leader, Takeshi Ashizawa, had returned to the lower camp to get some forgotten equipment. At 8:20 a.m. a large avalanche broke off from Mount Foraker's northeasterly face approximately 4000 feet above the four. They saw it above them and at first thought it would not be dangerous, but soon realized it would travel as far as their location. The survivor, Tsukasa Uematsu, stated that he fell into a depression in the snow and felt the avalanche pass over him. He got up and found that his companions were gone. He and Ashisawa, who immediately came up from below, searched the area thoroughly and found only a glove and some blood stains on the edge of a crevasse which was partially filled with water and ice debris from the avalanche. Apparently Hirakawa, Yamaya and Koshiishi were swept into the crevasse and buried by the avalanche. Uematsu and Ashizawa stayed in the area until the next day but did not find any more signs of their companions. (Source: Bob Gerhard, McKinley Park.)

DIABETES, INEXPERIENCE—*Alaska, Mt. McKinley.* Jon Kushner (20) was a member of the Cleveland Bicentennial Mount McKinley Expedition climbing the West Buttress Route. Jon was a diabetic and needed two types of insulin. Somewhere around April 24, Jon's insulin froze and he was no longer able to use it. On April 28, while the party was at 14,000 feet, Kushner's condition had deteriorated badly enough that the party felt they should call for an evacuation. (Source: Bob Gerhard, McKinley Park.)

Analysis. Kushner did not notify the Park Service that he was a diabetic when he registered. He did submit a signed physician's certificate in which a doctor stated that he had examined Kushner and found him physically and temperamentally fit for a McKinley expedition. It is difficult to imagine that a diabetic climber who had any idea of the conditions likely to be encountered on a climb of Mount McKinley in April would allow his insulin to freeze. (Source: Bob Gerhard, McKinley Park.)

EXPOSURE, FATIGUE, INEXPERIENCED—*Alaska, Mt. McKinley.* The National Crampon party of ten members was flown onto the Kahiltna Glacier on April 22, 1976 to begin a climb of the West buttress route. By Sunday, May 9, seven members of the party were at 17,200 feet while three who were ill returned to 14,200. On Monday, May 10, John Thompson (23), Don Wheeler