

to Brown the evening of the 5th. Meanwhile, Stepniewski was able to walk to Wonder Lake with Ellingsen's assistance. On May 6, Park Ranger John Haller flew into Wonder Lake to investigate. They were able to land near Wonder Lake with a wheeled Supercub. Haller remained at Wonder Lake while Stepniewski was flown out. Due to bad weather, Haller was not able to be flown out until May 8, 1976. Dausel and Ellingsen skied back to Park Headquarters. (Source: Bob Gerhard, McKinley Park.)

*Analysis.* Splitting up an already small party was not good. If Stepniewski and Ellingsen had skied properly down the glacier (keeping the rope fairly taut between them), the crevasse fall probably would have been a only minor accident. (Source: Bob Gerhard, McKinley Park.)

*FALL, CLIMBING ALONE—Alaska, Mt. McKinley.* Gunther Schmidt (35) was a member of a five-person Australian expedition climbing the West Buttress route on Mount McKinley. All members of the party reached the summit on July 21, shortly after a Canadian party. When the party started their descent one of the Australian experienced trouble breathing so party leader Helmut Linzbichler told Schmidt to go ahead alone and try to catch up with the Canadians who had a doctor in their party. Before reaching Denali Pass (about 19,000 feet), Schmidt apparently slipped and fell down a steep slope leading directly down to the 17,200 feet basin on the West Buttress route. He slid and tumbled over 1000 feet and came to rest in a shallow crevasse. He was apparently killed instantly from a broken neck. His fall was witnessed by members of the Canadian party he was trying to catch up with. (Source: Bob Gerhard, McKinley Park.)

*Analysis.* No one saw the start of Schmidt's fall. Whether he fell off the ridge and down the steep slope or whether he was trying to descend the slope to save time is not known. Many climbers have negotiated this area unroped and/or alone. (Source: Bob Gerhard and Jed Williamson.)

*FALL, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, EXPOSURE.—Alaska, Mt. McKinley.* Joe Ebner (28), Richard Rose (41), Bill Joiner (25), and Larry Fanning (28) were members of a six-person expedition climbing Mount McKinley via the Pioneer Ridge Route. The party left Wonder Lake on June 17. By July 11, the party had reached a point above 18,000 feet on the ridge, above all the difficult climbing, and approximately one half mile from the summit of the North Peak. Two members, Swenson and Blume, who had done most of the route-finding and leading up to this point, were well ahead of the other four. They climbed over the North Peak and descended to Denali Pass. They did not rejoin members of their party for several days.

At almost 5 p.m. (on the 11th), Larry Fanning became ill. Party leader Joe Ebner put in a radio/phone patch call to a doctor at Providence Hospital