

**CORNICE COLLAPSE, BAD WEATHER****Alaska, Mt. Dan Beard**

Dave Kempfer (19) and Grant Henke (19) both of Anchorage, Alaska, were part of a group of five climbers spending the month of May in the Sheldon Amphitheater area. The two were experienced rock and ice climbers. Before flying out, the two planned one more climb in the area—the southwest ridge of Mt. Dan Beard. The ridge had been climbed earlier in the month by a party of four—Jeff Radford, Norma Green, Dave Jones and one other climber.

As Kempfer and Henke packed for the climb on May 25, several other members of the group prepared to fly out. Two of these climbers, Radford and Green had done the southwest ridge earlier and advised Kempfer and Henke to take four-days food, use a snow cave half-way up the route and go light to the top from there. They noted that Kempfer and Henke packed fairly lightly that evening, taking only four-days food as recommended.

Kempfer and Henke left the Mountain House on the morning of May 26. They set up base camp that afternoon at 6,000 feet on a plateau in the ramp leading into the cirque on the south side of Mt. Dan Beard. They put up a yellow dome tent with brown rain fly as a base camp tent.

On May 27 the weather was bad, with high winds and snow. May 28 started out good but conditions deteriorated as the day went on. May 29 was good, but May 30 was another bad-weather day with very high winds. May 31 was also bad but described as “moveable” by climbers in the Ruth. Kempfer and Henke did not return to the Mountain House to fly out on May 29 or 30 as planned.

Several climbers at the Mountain House, Jones, Doug Huvar, Lars Muller and Debra Page, became very concerned as the flyout date passed without any sign of the two climbers. They noted that in the past month the pair had rarely climbed in bad or marginal weather. They felt that Kempfer and Henke were not the types to sit and wait out long storms and should have descended.

Over the next five days, helicopter flights and ground exploration revealed that the two climbers had been resting together at a saddle below the summit, to which they probably had not climbed, when a cornice collapsed, resulting in a fall of 2,500 vertical feet.

These climbers’ friends worked hard during the search and recovery period and provided most of this report. (Source: David Buchanan, Park Ranger, Denali National Park)

**ALTITUDE SICKNESS****Alaska, Mt. McKinley**

Konrad Schumann (45), a member of the Stroebel Expedition from Germany, was evacuated from 12,800 feet on the West Buttress of Mt. McKinley on June 1, 1980.

The group had initially planned a quick ascent of the Cassin Ridge but a week of bad weather prior to their flight in had shortened an already tight schedule, and they changed their route to the West Buttress.

They flew in to base camp on May 27 and left immediately, heading up the Kahiltna Glacier. They arrived at the 14,200-foot camp on either May 30 or May 31—a fast ascent.

Schumann was sick the night of May 31. He became worse the next day and began to spit blood that evening. The party then began to descend.

At 6:10 p.m., National Park Service Mountaineering Ranger Gerhard received a call from

another German party on the mountain via Radio Anchorage. They reported that Schumann was at Windy Corner and was being moved down to the 12,800-foot camp site. He had received a 29 mg injection of Lasix earlier but was not improving.

At 6:28 p.m., the Park Service received a call requesting a helicopter evacuation. Akland Helicopters in Talkeetna was contacted. Pilot Jim Okonek and a Bell 206 were readied for the evacuation.

The pickup was made at 12,800 feet at 7:45 p.m. Okonek felt that of his many pickups on the mountain over the years, Schumann was one of the sickest he had seen. However, his recovery on the helicopter descent to Talkeetna was dramatic. Although semiconscious less than an hour earlier, he could walk off the helicopter. He was very weak but declined further medical treatment. (Source: David Buchanan, Park Ranger, Denali National Park)

### **Analysis**

Among the many cases of altitude problems this year, this one—probably pulmonary edema—illustrates that rapid ascent can affect even the experienced climber. (Source: J. Williamson)

## **PULMONARY AND CEREBRAL EDEMA, FROSTBITE, EXPOSURE, EXHAUSTION, HYPOTHERMIA, PARTY SEPARATED**

### **Alaska, Mt. McKinley**

A four-man MIKI expedition from Czechoslovakia arrived at McKinley Park on May 29. They checked in with Ranger Bob Gerhard on May 30 before heading for Wonder Lake to begin their climb of Mt. McKinley via the Muldrow/Harper Glacier route. On June 5, they arrived at 6,500 feet on the Muldrow Glacier. Here they left a small red dome tent with extra equipment and one of two small HF radios they carried. A third radio had been left at Eielson Visitor Center for National Park Service (NPS) personnel to monitor. On June 7, camp was moved to 10,600 feet at the base of Karstens Ridge. A storm arrived, and a rest day was taken here. On June 9, camp was moved to beneath Browne's Tower at 15,000 feet.

At this time, one member of the team, Jiri Novotny (33), was feeling poorly. He had very little appetite and was weak and tired. According to the rest of the party, he wanted to go higher, so camp was moved up to 16,000 feet at the base of Sourdough Gully on the Harper Glacier. Another member of the team, Dan Navratil (37) was a dentist serving in the capacity of expedition doctor. He gave Novotny ampicillin (an antibiotic) to treat a possible infection. On the basis of the information he had received from other Czechoslovakian climbers, Navratil believed this would prevent serious altitude problems. After reaching 16,000 feet, Novotny still felt weak and tired and Navratil continued to treat him with ampicillin. The team leader, Jan Mikeska (35), reported that all the members of the group had dark urine.

At noon on June 11, the decision was made to attempt the summit. Novotny still felt poorly and decided to stay in camp. Mikeska reported that he asked Navratil to stay with Novotny while he and Jan Matus (33) went to the summit. Navratil refused, saying it was not necessary to stay with Novotny, and recommended that Novotny continue to take ampicillin every six hours. At this point, Novotny could still walk but could only take liquids. The radio unit they carried was not able to contact Eielson Visitor Center at the prearranged times and was left in the tent. Novotny was left with twenty soups, tea, an orange, dehydrated food, and