

FALL ON ICE, ASPHYXIATION**Maine, Mt. Katahdin**

On February 19, 1980, Victor Pavidis, Jr. (32) perished in a fall from a technical ice climb on the Chimney. Paul Grossman, a close friend of Pavidis, had been climbing with him and they were about 400 feet up an approximately 700-foot ice wall. The climb was vertical and the approach was the Chimney route located in the south basin of Mt. Katahdin. Pavidis was lead man of the two-man climbing team. The other four members were above Pavidis and Grossman doing another climb. Pavidis had requested that the pitons that had been driven in for the lead team (the team above) be removed as he wanted to make the climb totally on his own without the assistance of equipment left behind by the lead team. His request had been granted with the exception of one piton which was left anchored in place. It was explained to this officer that, in proceeding with the climb, Pavidis reached the point where there was an outcropping of ice which he would have to climb or go around. He had two small ice axes, one in each hand, which he was using to assist him in maneuvering. One was attached to his belt by a safety line while the other was not.

Grossman reports that around 1 p.m. he heard a startling expression from Pavidis who followed it with a slight scream. Grossman said that when he looked up, Pavidis was just hanging with his right arm raised and was making a gurgling noise. Grossman then started to climb up to Pavidis as rapidly as possible. However, in the process, he lost his footing, fell approximately 100 feet and landed in a snow field below. He was not injured. During his recovery from the fall and his return to Pavidis, a fellow climber from the lead team (above), Jim Butler, rappelled back to Pavidis' side and was able to cut him loose.

By this time, Grossman had arrived and assisted him in administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and CPR. They reported that Pavidis appeared to respond to the mouth-to-mouth resuscitation with a raising and collapsing of his chest. Grossman advised that they worked on Pavidis for approximately 20 minutes to a half-hour, after which time they were unable to detect any vital signs. Pavidis' eyes were dilated and there was no pulse or heartbeat. At this time, approximately 2 p.m., the team members decided that they would move Pavidis off the ice field to the base of the climb. They proceeded to do this and continued until after dark. They then left the body and returned to base camp. They reported the incident to Ranger Tom Chase about 8:15 p.m. It took the rest of the day and most of the next to evacuate the victim. The victim's death was caused by his becoming entangled in his climbing rope during the fall which resulted in asphyxiation. (Source: Irwin Caverly, Jr., Supervisor of Baxter State Park)

Analysis

Caverly's description of the evacuation and the ensuing work with reporters, family contacts, and so forth indicate how much time and effort are involved in an operation of this type, especially in winter. He also points out that roughly 20,000 people climb Mt. Katahdin per calendar year and that 700 to 1,000 of these do so in winter. Since the first fatality in 1963, there have been a total of 14. This good record is largely attributable to the education provided by park personnel to visitors. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ICE, CLIMBING UNROPE**New Hampshire, Mt. Washington**

On January 22, 1980, John Zedick (25) was leading two friends, Brian Kring and Kim

Ankeny, up the Fan to climb Odell's Gully. They had stayed at the Harvard Cabin the night before. The Fan, normally full of snow, was extremely icy with rocks jutting out, making it a "no fail" scene. Although Kring and Ankeny had asked about roping up, Zedick continued. He was just going over the last little bulge when he fell and slid about 200 feet, bouncing off the sharp rocks as if in a pinball machine. He wasn't tied into his tools. He came to rest between two large boulders. He remembered most of the fall and didn't lose consciousness. His friends rushed down to help him.

He received serious injuries but was moved successfully by the rescue team to Pinkham Notch and then transported to the hospital. (Source: Rick Wilcox, Mountain Rescue Service Leader)

Analysis

The conditions were unusual for this time of year, as the rocks are normally covered with snow. Even the trail required the use of crampons because of the ice. Also, Zedick was not able to use any of his ice tools. (Source: Rick Wilcox, Mountain Rescue Service Leader)

AVALANCHE

New Hampshire, Mt. Washington

Early in the afternoon of March 8, 1980, three climbers were caught in an avalanche near the top of Odell's Gully in Huntington Ravine. The leader, Dave Gustafson (an experienced technical ice climber), was swept from his stance by a mass of heavy fresh snow. Gustafson's nearly 300-foot fall was held by his belayer Trey Barry. Amazingly, Gustafson sustained only a broken hand and a puncture of the left thigh. In attempting to stop the fall, the belayer bruised his arm and sprained his ankle badly. Ron Granbery, who had been stationed at the belay stance with Barry, sustained no injuries.

Gustafson was able to lead the descent safely with serious injuries and minimal gear (some was lost during the avalanche) and under conditions of impending darkness and heavy snow-fall. Lacking ice screws, Gustafson pounded ice hammers into cracks in the rock to provide anchors on the final rappels. Although aided by the Harvard Mountaineering Club caretaker, volunteers, and United States Forest Service and AMC personnel, this party was fully capable of self-rescue. (Source: from a report by Jack Corbin, Assistant Manager, Pinkham Notch Camp)

AVALANCHE

New Hampshire, Mt. Washington

Sunday, April 6, 1980, was a clear, relatively warm, late-winter day. A winter of light snow and seasonably cold temperatures had resulted in excellent ice climbing conditions throughout the White Mountain area. It was this attractive combination of conditions that drew Jeff Tirey and Richard Morse to a day of climbing in King Ravine's beautiful Great Gully. At 9:30 a.m., as they were about to complete the climb, a large piece of overhanging wind slab snow broke loose, creating an avalanche that dragged both climbers approximately 1,000 feet to the bottom of the gully. Both climbers sustained multiple injuries; neither could move and there were no other people in the remote area.

About 11 a.m., three hikers on the Air Line Trail heard screaming from somewhere in King Ravine. Two of them went down to notify the AMC at Pinkham Notch, while the third, Justin Whitney from Winthrop, Maine, descended into the ravine to investigate. Two