

office to report the accident and ask for an evacuation chopper. Three of the glider people were EMTs and one took over the care of Clements while Kassuba and Helmcke began making preparations for a ground evacuation in the event that this should become necessary. During the course of these preparations, MRC member, Al Errington, who was en route to a high camp for a Sunday morning summit attempt, happened upon the scene. In addition, a Seattle Mountaineers' climbing party on the Dogs Head prepared to render evacuation assistance.

Helmcke, Kassuba and Errington decided that Clements' injuries did not truly warrant a chopper evacuation in view of the prevailing conditions of wind, blowing snow and approaching darkness. They prepared to slide the injured climber down the smooth, icy flank of the Dogs Head using ice ax belays and nearly 600 feet of the assembled community's climbing ropes. As the rescue operation began, two Huey helicopters from Portland's 304th Air Force Reserve SAR Unit made low passes over the Dogs Head in attempts to land. On one of these passes, a ground team of four members of the 304th was put down above the lowering site. They descended with a litter and contributed considerably to the rescue. Once the team had lowered Clements to the bottom of the snowslope, his litter was slid down to a point where it could be pulled by snowmobile to the upper parking lot and a waiting ambulance. The parking lot was reached at 7:45 p.m. in total darkness. (Source: Joe Kassuba and Al Errington, Seattle Mountain Rescue)

Analysis

This accident on Mt. St. Helens, together with one in July of 1979 (not reported last year), may be the last for a short while. The 1979 accident involved slipping on "nasty little pumice ball-bearings," as Peg Painter reported on herself. The next climbers on this mountain may need different equipment. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK, FAILURE OF NUT, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Washington, Leavenworth

Jean Heineman (23) and I had been climbing together for some weeks in Yosemite Valley and were in Leavenworth finishing our trip of climbing. I had been climbing rock for most of the decade, but Jean had started only the year previous. Jean's technique was solid; just the day previous she had seconded me on a 5.10b route, but she had been leading for only several months, though up to 5.9. On May 24, 1980, we decided that for her to practice leading more she would lead Classic Crack (5.8), a climb normally top-roped. She led up about 7-8 meters and placed a #8 hexcentric in what looked like a poor placement since the nut slotted outward with little crack constriction below it. She then led several meters above it and began to have trouble jamming the crack. I yelled up to her to come down since it looked like she would fall. She pushed on and fell, pulling out the nut, which pulled her over backwards as it pulled. She hit the ground on her heels, then her back, and blacked out for several moments. I examined her and there was no evidence of injury, so after a few minutes she got up and we climbed a bit more. Then she said she was sleepy, so she took a nap in town, after which I took her to the hospital in Leavenworth. It turned out that she had bruised her back and chest from the impact of the fall. (Source: Robert Loomis, letter to the U.S. editor)

Analysis

Heineman had followed and led harder climbs but still needed to find her level of control in

leading through. She chose to climb on when she was in trouble on bad protection. The nut proved unreliable. She should have backed off to lead what she felt in control of, reset the nut, or doubled the nut with a back-up nut. I should have made her rest more and taken her directly to the hospital. (Source: Robert Loomis, letter to the U.S. editor)

AVALANCHE

Washington, Mt. Baker

On June 7, 1980, four rope teams—a total of nine people—were involved in an avalanche at the 10,700-foot level of Mt. Baker on the Roman Wall. They were carried down 400–500 feet and Carl McGrath (40) suffered a fractured ankle. He was evacuated by the climbing party to the 6,700-foot level to camp, where he was treated for the injury and hypothermia. (Source: Lynn Dayton, Bellingham Mountain Rescue Council)

FALL ON SNOW, FALL INTO CREVASSE, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS

Washington, Olympic National Park

At 10 a.m. on July 13, John Ury (34) and Roger Drake (30) were climbing West Peak from the Eel Glacier when Ury lost his balance and fell, pulling Drake with him, over 300 feet down snow and rock ledges where they landed in a bergschrund. At the time of the fall, they were near a rocky ridge and so decided not to take off their crampons. “But we should have,” Ury said. Soft snow balled up in his crampons, which is why he lost his balance.

Ury broke his ankle and leg but was able to hobble around enough to build a snow cave. Drake was disoriented and was eventually found to have suffered a fractured neck vertebra. Ury contemplated trying to hike out and get help but said, “You never leave someone with a head injury alone.”

After a cold night, they spotted a hiker a mile away and got his attention. He notified park rangers who called out a Chinook helicopter from Whidbey Air Station. The climbers were hoisted from the bergschrund and flown to Port Angeles where they were taken to the hospital.

Ury told reporters, “You always think of what you would do in case of an accident, but when it happens, you’re never prepared.” (Source: Jack Hughes, Olympic National Park, and *The Daily News*, Port Angeles, Washington, July 14, 1980)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED

Washington, Mt. Shuksan

On July 18, 1980, Dick Sawyer (48) died in a fall while climbing Mt. Shuksan with eight other members of the Mazamas. The party was not roped. The climbing party had reached the Fisher Chimney area, passing the first chimney and following a ledge to the second chimney. This chimney was ascended to about the 6,100-foot level by Sawyer, who was leading the climb. He went around a corner standing on a slab. Sawyer was about 20 feet above the next climber when suddenly rocks began to fall and he fell 200 feet free. Park Service rangers were in the area and arrived within minutes of the accident. They located Dr. Mackert, who was climbing with the group, and assisted her down to Sawyer. He had died instantly in the fall. Although he was wearing a hard hat, it came off during the fall. (Source: Lynn Dayton, Bellingham Mountain Rescue Council)