

Analysis

This accident is reported primarily to provide the reader with a description of what the climbers were feeling when it was taking place. O'Callaghan summarized the group's feeling in general as follows:

"We were certainly well equipped materially," he reflected, "but you never know if you'll be ready to handle an emergency mentally. The essential key to our group's responding so well was that no one truly panicked. In spite of the severe shock we all felt, everyone kept functioning and contributed to the group effort."

O'Callaghan continued, "We talked a lot about how this would affect our mountain lives. We all said that Clint's death would cause us to reevaluate and just look at things for a while. How this affects our mountaineering just remains to be seen, I guess." (Source: *Signpost*, July 1982)

SLIP ON SNOW, FATIGUE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Washington, Mount Anderson

On July 27, 1982, Dr. Robert Thompson (40) and Dr. Robert Oaks (40) were injured in a fall on Mount Anderson in Olympic National Park. Ranger George Bowen was given the following information by Maura Oaks, wife of Robert Oaks.

According to her, the party failed to reach the summit of Mount Anderson because of snow conditions and lack of equipment. They were descending the Flypaper Pass on the Anderson Glacier side.

The party was strung out down the chute with Oaks bringing up the rear. Thompson was about midway down the chute. Oaks began to sway and stumble. He had a large, heavy day pack on and the center of gravity was quite high. He pitched forward and began sliding down the chute. Thompson took a stance below Oaks with the thought of slowing down his rate of descent. Following their collision, they both tumbled into a bergschrund near the bottom of the chute, where they fell about three meters to the bottom.

Since both victims were physicians, Oaks began to treat Thompson, the more seriously injured. Oaks had lost his glasses and could only see at a distance. Evan Oaks (13) began assisting his father and Maura Oaks hiked to Honeymoon Meadows.

She failed to find park personnel at Honeymoon Meadows and continued down the trail to Dosewallips Ranger Station, where she contacted Ranger Gregory Schroer at 2010 hours.

The following report by Gregory Schroer describes the events of the rescue. On July 28, at 0130 hours, Schroer arrived at the accident scene on the Anderson Glacier. He evaluated the health of the three climbers who were near the lower bergschrund on Flypaper Pass. Thompson had multiple lacerations of head, arms and legs and exhibited possible fractures of both legs and the right collarbone. Schroer bandaged Thompson's lacerations, splinted his legs and immobilized his right shoulder. Thompson had been unconscious for five to ten minutes following the fall. When Schroer arrived on the scene, Thompson was conscious but delirious and did not recognize his surroundings. R. Oaks was weak with mild shock. E. Oaks was unhurt and in stable condition.

Schroer monitored vital signs throughout the night. At 0600, a U.S. Navy Sea King helicopter arrived and evacuated the victims to Hurricane Ridge, where they were transferred to an ambulance. (Source: George Bowen and Gregory Schroer, SAR Mission Reports)

Analysis

The report does not indicate whether the party was using ropes. In chutes, a rope may not be necessary but could be useful if people are fatigued and in keeping the party close together. In chutes, staying close together is the recommended practice. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL INTO CREVASSE

Washington, Mount Rainier

On Sunday morning, August 22, 1982, Daryl Beazer, Jim Ellefson and Philip Eslinger (20) left Paradise for Camp Muir and a summit climb the following day. On Monday morning early, they left Camp Muir en route to the summit. About 0500 while at a rest stop, Eslinger was accidentally pulled off balance and fell into a large crevasse at about 4200 meters. He fell approximately 15 meters, until he hit and stopped on top of a "false bottom" in the crevasse. RMI Guide Peter Whittaker, who was leading a climb to the summit, happened along; he extricated Eslinger, sledged him to the top of Disappointment Cleaver and waited for a NPS helicopter rescue. About 1130, Rangers Wilcox, Olson and Philips left Kautz Creek in a Chinook Army helicopter and flew to the top of Disappointment Cleaver. Eslinger was loaded into the helicopter and flown to Kautz Creek. He was then transported to Longmire where his right ankle was splinted for a possible boot-top fracture and transported to a Seattle hospital for further medical treatment. (Source: Bundy Philips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

Analysis

Shortly before 0500, the Beazer party coiled in their climbing rope to meet a party of friends who had stopped to rest near a large crevasse at 4300 meters on the Disappointment Cleaver route. The two groups were on different ropes but were just traveling together. Eslinger told Philips that Beaver was the "first" on his rope and that he had coiled most of the coils in their 50-meter rope. Eslinger, who was in the middle of the rope, took a few coils of rope between him and Beazer. The "third" on the route, Ellefson, took all of the coils between him and Eslinger. The order of the second rope was Beazer, Eslinger and Ellefson. There were approximately 20 meters of rope separating the three party members. Eslinger told Philips that he was unintentionally standing on the short section of rope which separated him and Beazer; when Beazer took off and began climbing again, he created tension on the rope and pulled Eslinger off balance. Apparently Beazer was going to walk until he felt tension on the rope, then either flake the rope out or drop it. When he did this, he caused a kind of "pulling the table cloth out from under the place setting" trick that pulled Eslinger off balance. Eslinger said he also fumbled and that one of his crampons caught in the straps of the other boot, causing him to further lose his balance.

Eslinger said he then fell sideways down a short section of ice at the steep angle. He attempted to self-arrest his fall but accidentally dug his front points into the hard ice which caused him to flip over backwards. He was sliding down the steep section of ice on his stomach (about four meters) when he flipped over backwards. He free fell 12 meters and landed on the false bottom. Beazer said later that the fall nearly pulled him and Ellefson off balance and into the crevasse. (Source: Bundy Philips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)