

PRE-EXISTING INJURY

Washington, Mount Baker

On May 21, 1984, John Powell (34) was ice climbing as a member of the North Cascade Alpine School on the Coleman Glacier when he aggravated a previous back injury at the 1600 meter level. He was temporarily disabled and had to be carried out. (Source: G. R. Conway, Whatcom County Sheriff's Department)

(Editor's Note: This description is provided as an illustration of a common problem in guided groups. Old knee and back injuries constitute the majority of pre-existing conditions which often result in evacuation. More often than not, clients do not inform guides of their injuries, even when a medical information form asks them to do so.)

FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE, PARTY SEPARATED, SLIP ON SNOW, WEATHER

Washington, Mount Rainier

On May 29, 1984, at 0900 three groups of U. S. Army Rangers from the Huckleberry Creek Army Training Center just outside of the North Park Boundary left Paradise for a summit climb. There were approximately 20 Rangers divided into three groups. They had intended to do some climbing around Camp Muir, then possibly try for a summit climb and be back down to Paradise on May 31 or June 1.

On May 30, a group of five of them from different groups joined and chose to descend to Paradise from Camp Muir. The weather that day at Muir and above was very poor with high winds and blowing snow. During the descent the group lost their bearings around the 3000 meter level on the Muir Snowfield and became lost. During the descent, Stephen Long (22) reported twisting a previously injured and chronic right knee. Unable to continue on, the group holed up. The next morning three of the five reascended to approximately 3000 meters then descended the Muir Snowfield to Paradise—in poor weather—and summoned help from us. Long was found along with a buddy above the Paradise Ice Caves area. Long was evacuated via toboggan to Paradise. He was transported to Fort Lewis for further medical attention by Schumacher. (Source: Bundy Phillips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

Analysis

On the day the group left from Paradise to go to Camp Muir, I watched them for about three hours. They were strung out from below 2000 meters to about 2600 meters. The group split up at Camp Muir, and the five who became lost were actually headed down Paradise Glacier. There seemed to be no leadership in the group. (Source: Bundy Phillips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

EXPOSURE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, WEATHER, FROSTBITE, IN-EXPERIENCE

Washington, Mount Rainier

On June 17, 1984, at 0600 William Glenn (34) and Mark Dulapa (29) were dropped at White River Campground Wye to begin a climb of Liberty Ridge and descend the

Disappointment Cleaver Route to Paradise where they were to meet Glenn's wife. The party was due out on June 19.

They left the White River Campground Wye around 0600 enroute for a camp on the lower Curtis Ridge. They encountered route finding difficulty on the Carbon Glacier and camped on the middle of the Carbon Glacier below Liberty Ridge, their intended route. They stopped and camped around midnight. On June 18, they departed camp around 0800 and climbed to Thumb Rock where they camped. On June 19, they departed Thumb Rock around 0700 in worsening weather. The weather plus the fact that they did not get an early start caused them to not make the climb that day. They camped in a crevasse just below the bergschrund at 4000 meters.

During the next two days the weather was very poor. They did, however, climb a bit higher, to a point just above the bergschrund, where they camped in another crevasse.

On June 22, now three days overdue, they waited to get out of their crevasse until the sun came up and conditions warmed. Shortly after they had moved, we flew in by helicopter and the party was picked up. Glenn suffered frostbite on seven of his toes. (Source: Bundy Phillips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

Analysis

The climbers left the campground with a half liter of fuel and possibly a malfunctioning stove. Both wore single leather boots and carried no tent. The weather report for the mountain indicated storm conditions for the time they planned to be on the climb. (Source: Bundy Phillips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

FALLING ROCK, POOR POSITION

Washington, Sahale Mountain

On June 24, 1984, Rick Jali (50) was climbing the south side of Sahale and was 20 meters below the summit, watching another member of his party climbing directly above when a dislodged rock struck Jali's forearm. Injury was slight, and he walked out with no assistance. (Source: R. Beckenbaugh, The Mountaineers)

Analysis

Those watching climbers should be advised not to watch from directly below. (Source: R. Beckenbaugh, The Mountaineers)

FALLING ROCK, FAILURE TO TEST HOLDS

Washington, Chair Peak

On June 30, 1984, The Mountain School, a well-known climbing academy that has been operated by Ray Smutek out of Renton for the last 14 years, had just finished five intensive days of training in the Leavenworth area and had moved their operation to Snoqualmie Pass for some mixed alpine climbing. Ray split the group into three teams, each under a professional instructor, and they left base to climb the Northeast Buttress of Chair Peak and routes on the Tooth and Guye Peak. Bill Prittie, the instructor with the Chair Peak team, took his four clients in the Snow Lake trail at 0820. Prittie recalls:

"We reached the base of the technical part of the route at just before noon. I took