

medication—a tube of Ben-Gay. The result was severe pain for many hours. The good news is that there seemed to be no immediate side effects. In fact, the subject claims his hemorrhoids no longer trouble him. (Source: Subject wishes to remain anonymous.)

(Editor's Note: This accident has not been included in the statistical data, but is presented as a reminder to check your medication label. Also note that while the victim claims that his hemorrhoids no longer trouble him, this is not to be construed as an endorsement for Ben Gay as a remedy for this malady.)

STRANDED, INADEQUATE FOOD AND EQUIPMENT, WEATHER

Alaska, Mount McKinley

Jeff Hall (29) and Dick Jackson (35) were members of the “Jeff and Dick” expedition. They were flown in to the Southeast Fork of Kahiltna on May 24, 1985. On May 26 they began climbing the Kennedy-Lowe route on Mt. Hunter. They had six days of food and no radio. Late in the evening of May 27, a snowstorm started. They were bivouacked on the top of Triangle Face about 3500 meters.

On the 28th, they rappelled to the 3050 meter level and spent two nights in their tent. The snow continued to fall.

On May 30, they decided to rappel directly to the glacier, despite limited visibility. However, they lost their descent route. They stopped and set up camp in the lee of a serac, at 2800 meters. Snow continued falling on the 31st. Avalanches swept around their camp and they dug out their tent three times. At this point, their food and fuel were nearly gone. Dick assured Jeff, “It’s a waiting game,” although Jeff said he wanted to get off, “No matter what the cost.”

It had been clearing on June 1. In the afternoon, they began shouting for help. At 2130, climbers at the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna landing strip notified Ron Dunfey. At 2200 pilot Cliff Hudson overflew the route and located the pair. They signaled for a helicopter pickup (arms held straight up over their heads). Pilot Doug Geeting and Ranger Jon Waterman observed the same signals and dropped food, radio, and fuel at 2230. Everything missed except the food.

At 2300 Geeting set down on the landing strip to allow the two climbers to pick up the two food bags. Jackson decided they were in good shape with the food and reassured Jeff that now they could wait for the snow to settle, then descend.

At 2320 Waterman and Geeting flew by to see if they had changed their minds. Jackson kept his arms down, while Hall stood behind him, signaling for a pickup. Jackson was unaware of this final signal.

The next morning at 0600 Pilot Chris Soloy made the evacuation in a Hughes 500C helicopter at considerable risk. (Source: Jon Waterman, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analysis

Dick Jackson felt this problem could be avoided if the Park Service required climbers to carry radios. The climbers were definitely in a hazardous situation amidst the deep snow. However (as Jackson had decided), the food drop may have enabled them to wait out the bad snow conditions, then descend. The pair volunteered to pay for their rescue. (Source: Jon Waterman, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)