

## **AVALANCHE WEATHER, POOR POSITION**

### **Washington, Whitehorse Mountain**

On May 12, 1985, Denae Rideout (28), her cousin Jeff Tucker (27) and another cousin, Jeff Kollgaard set out to climb Whitehorse at 0800 as part of an annual Mother's Day family gathering. Rideout is reported to have climbed the mountain many times, and Tucker is said to have climbed throughout the world, including the Himalaya Range. They climbed the direct glacier route. About 1600, they were caught in an avalanche about 225 meters below the summit and two of them were partially buried but were able to extricate themselves. The party continued to climb in spite of the obvious avalanche hazard. Nearing the summit they were joined by two Seattle climbers, Edward Whalen and Brian Griffin. When the second avalanche occurred at 1630, one of the Seattle climbers was off the snow putting on his crampons. Kollgaard was covered to his neck, Tucker had only a hand sticking out, and the other two were completely buried. The climber not caught rushed to Kollgaard and freed him, the two then dug out Tucker. These three could hear the buried Seattle climber yelling, and quickly extricated him. A 45-minute to one hour search failed to locate Denae Rideout. The party marked the point where Denae had last been seen with a blue foam pad secured in the snow and started the descent for help.

The victim's body was located the next day at 1030, following over 200 hours of search time by the 18 rescue personnel from Seattle Mountain Rescue. (Source: *Bergtrage*, Seattle Mountain Rescue Council, 85-09, October 1985)

### **Analysis**

This is a popular climbing place, with three primary routes to the 2100 meter summit. The 500 people who make the climb each year usually do so during the summer months, according to U.S. Forest Service employee Howard Barstow, who further stated that this is one of the worst times of the year to climb the peak. A fresh snow had hit the day before, exacerbating the conditions.

Another factor here seems to have been that the desire to make the climb as part of an annual event perhaps clouded the otherwise good judgment these climbers would normally have followed. (Source: J. Williamson and *The Everett Herald*, May 13, 1985)

## **FALLING ROCK, RAPPEL ANCHOR FAILURE**

### **Washington, Mount Rainier**

Michael Maude (22) and Russell Ward (28) left Camp Muir for the Gibraltar ledge route in the early hours of May 26, 1985. They arrived at the Bee Hive around 0300 and began to cross the Cowlitz Cleaver. They came to a location where they could have either backed off or rappelled down. They decided to rappel. Maude lowered Ward down the edge. Part way down Ward was hit by a sliding rock, but was not injured. Maude then pulled the rope back up and set a webbing line around a rock to anchor a rappel. Maude was half way down when the rock gave way. Maude fell four to six meters and was also hit by the falling rock. Maude's climbing helmet had four large dents in it and his lower left leg was broken.

Ward then regained the ridge and headed for Camp Muir. The first people he met went to Maude's aid. Ward continued to Camp Muir where he contacted Ranger Henkle at 0500. Maude was rescued with the help of ten people. (Source: Mount Rainier National Park)

## **FALL ON SNOW, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, INEXPERIENCE**

### **Washington, Mount Washington**

On May 18, 1985, a group of 20 Boy Scouts, including six or seven leaders, were returning