

I learned Glynda Miller had been into climbing and caving since the first of the year. I know nothing of Geoff Lyons' background. I also learned the two had been taking either a climbing or caving class at Boise State University and that they went climbing or caving almost every week end.

I got in touch with the instructor at the University who suggested they may have gone to Papoose Cave (west central Idaho) or to Mount Borah and that the two were planning to attempt a Mount McKinley climb, possibly in July.

Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue had a party on the mountain over that weekend so I got in touch with them to learn that on their way down they had seen a couple in their base camp around 0930 on May 26, getting ready for the climb. Our members noticed the "new" ice axes with price tags still on them.

As we prepared to get a team to go back to the mountain, Mr. Miller called to say the couple had called him from a place near the mountain. They were late getting up the mountain and took what they thought was a short cut back down. They traveled all night, "to avoid frostbite," and got off the mountain at 0500.

The two said they were okay except that Miller was suffering from snow blindness. I saw the two about a week later. Glynda Miller was apparently all right although she said her eyes were still a little sore. They did not comment on their climb. (Source: Larry Novak, Idaho Mountain Search and Rescue)

*(Editor's Note: Of the many overdue climber reports received, most of which did not result in injury, this one illustrates what happens when no itinerary is filed with anyone. At least in this case if a search had been necessary, some clues were in place as to where the couple had started their climb.)*

## **FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING UNROPED, PLACED NO PROTECTION**

### **Montana, Mount Reynolds**

On May 31, 1986, Charles Bauer (27) and his brother, Lary (18), were climbing a technical route on Mount Reynolds when they encountered a steep chute filled with snow. They attempted to climb above and around the chute but eventually decided they would have to cross the snow. With crampons and ice ax, Charles Bauer jumped out onto the snow field from a rock which was about two meters above the snow. Charles was unroped. On landing, he apparently lost his balance and slid uncontrolled for about 225 meters, sustaining fatal injuries in the incident. (Source: Charlie Logan, SAR Coordinator, Glacier National Park)

### **Analysis**

Besides not being protected for such a maneuver, very few situations would seem to call for jumping a vertical distance of two meters from rock onto a steep, snow-filled chute. Far too much is given to luck. (Source: Charlie Logan, SAR Coordinator, Glacier National Park)

## **FALL ON ICE, ICE SCREWS PULLED OUT**

### **New Hampshire, Mount Washington**

On the morning of February 14, 1986, after spending the night at the Harvard Mountaineering Cabin, Rhode Island climbers Peter Barlow (29) and Steven Cournoyer (28) left

the cabin for a day of ice climbing in Huntington Ravine on Mount Washington. Their objective was to climb the 180 meter waterfall called Pinnacle Gully. It was another bitter cold morning with a temperature of -24°C with winds above timberline of 30 knots gusting to 55 knots. The sky was mostly clear. Both climbers were well equipped for the weather, were familiar with the route, and were wearing Joe Brown helmets. This was Cournoyer's second season of ice climbing and Barlow's twelfth. Barlow is an ice climbing instructor with the Narragansett Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club.

Around 1100, Barlow began leading up the first pitch. There was an alarming amount of very brittle shell ice, but just enough patches of good blue ice to lure him upward. At the end of the pitch, Barlow rigged up a two screw belay and brought Cournoyer up. Cournoyer belayed Barlow using a Munter hitch on a "pearabiner" attached to his sit harness. Their belay consisted of a Snarg and Chouinard ice screw, both about 23 centimeters long, joined together with a sling. Attached to the sling was an Air Voyager and it was clipped directly to Cournoyer's sit harness. About six meters up from the belay, Barlow ran into a great deal of brittle ice. He was attempting to place some protection when the ice around him gave way causing him to fall. Cournoyer realized that Barlow was falling and made an attempt to haul in some rope. The rope went taut, Barlow seemed to be stopped for a second, then Cournoyer was ripped off his belay stance. Both climbers fell to the bottom of the gully and then tumbled an additional 180 meters down the steep rock studded snow slope called "the fan," finally coming to rest near the floor of the ravine.

Fortunately for Barlow and Cournoyer, there were several parties of climbers who witnessed their fall and immediately went to their aid. Among the climbers responding was M.R.S. member Kirt Winkler, an E.M.T., and John Jackson, the Harvard Cabin caretaker. Jackson was carrying an AMC radio and called over to Tom Liscord, Tuckerman Ravine caretaker, informing him of the accident. Liscord then radioed the information to U.S. Forest Service snow rangers Bray Ray and Stu Hoyt who were assessing avalanche conditions in Tuckerman Ravine at the time. Within 30 minutes Ranger Ray drove the Forest Service Thikol to the scene with Hoyt, Liscord and medical supplies. In the meantime, Barlow, who was unconscious, and Cournoyer who had a fractured ankle, facial lacerations and severe body contusions, were assessed and packaged for transport with rescue equipment stored in a nearby rescue cache. The injured climbers were transported by Thikol to Pinkham Notch arriving at 1335 and were taken by Gorham Ambulance to Memorial Hospital in North Conway for treatment. (Source: Michael Pelchat, Manager, Mount Washington State Park)

### Analysis

John Jackson reported that the ice screws, runner and Air Voyager were attached to Cournoyer's harness and that none of the tabs on the Air Voyager had parted. This means that the ice screws broke out of the ice under less than 400 kilograms of force. Cournoyer believes that both screws used on the belay were placed at the proper angle, and that they owe their lives to the Joe Brown helmets they were wearing.

This was the fifth consecutive day of a cold wave that dropped the average daily temperatures to -25°C. Pinnacle Gully is a constantly forming ice flow and the extreme cold temperatures may have caused even the apparently good layers of ice to be weakly bonded to the main ice flow. Chopping away at the layered surface ice until one finds the solid, core ice and then placing at least three long screws equally tensioned to the belayer may prevent this from occurring under brittle ice conditions. (Source: Michael Pelchat, Manager, Mount Washington State Park)