

part of the 200 meter ridge earlier, and even though the route was unknown to us, we were confident we could easily do it. The first 80 meters were easy, so neither of us felt any need to rope. There were several minor towers on the ridge. I climbed the first one before realizing the route traversed around it. Bob found an easy way around the tower and took off exploring the route. When I descended the tower, I caught up to him as he was three meters up a second minor tower on the ridge. His feet were even with my eye level and well planted on a boot-sized ledge. His hands were searching for and testing a variety of handholds. I looked at him closely and didn't sense any potential problems. A flat two meter ledge was immediately below him. I could have reached up and grabbed his boot. I asked him if he had checked the left side of the tower and he answered "Yes." But the tone of his voice implied that he only glanced. I said, "I'm going to check the left side," and passed him by. The left side was easy third class, so I had climbed four or so meters when Bob in a totally calm voice asked me how I was doing. I said, "Great, follow me!" Ten seconds later I heard a light sound of several small rocks falling. It wasn't an alarming sound, but I called Bob's name just to check if he knocked them off. No reply. Bob had fallen to his death. When he never answered, I was to the crest of the ridge in seconds. His body was sliding face down in soft snow 140 meters below. He fell 60 meters onto sloping rock ledges and died instantly of massive internal injuries plus a variety of other lesser injuries. God rest his soul. Bob was my steady climbing partner for six years, in which time we scaled over 30 North Cascade peaks, including several first ascents. (Source: Edited from a report written by Scott Schmidt)

Analysis

I am convinced that the rock he was climbing on simply gave way. The strata on the tower was horizontal with lots of dish size ledges protruding out. It did not appear difficult, yet when I saw him on the tower, I thought to myself that there had to be an easier way. We were both very experienced climbers; we had probably each scaled over 100 mountains. Our luck ran out. It was a very routine climb. We were no strangers to rotten rock either. Perhaps we had become insensitive to the dangers. Obviously we should have been roped up and belaying. We had all the right gear and enough of it to do any face in the North Cascades. (Source: Scott Schmidt)

FALL ON ROCK, PLACED NO PROTECTION, WEATHER, NO HARD HAT Washington, Northeast Cascades

On July 5, 1986, Dan Ferguson (31), Jeffrey Skinner (30), and Kevin Wood (30) set out for an ascent of Bonanza Peak from the Mary Green Glacier, which is a Class Three rock climb over primarily down sloping slabs. The rock is very broken and does not hold protection. On the night before our attempt, a light snow fell, coating the rock with a thick layer of snow and ice. About 80 meters above the glacier on the headwall, Dan fell. Dan was leading at the time. We assume he slipped on some ice covered slab rock. Jeff was next on the rope, about 14 meters below. Jeff arrested Dan's fall with a dynamic belay after a fall of approximately 30 meters.

Dan came to a stop approximately 18 meters below the ledge where Kevin and Jeff were standing. Dan was hanging head down. Kevin and Jeff were greatly relieved to hear Dan moaning, as they were afraid he was dead. A party from Seattle Mountaineers was behind us and witnessed the fall. A member of their party was belayed down to where Dan was to check on his condition. Meanwhile, two other members of their party started

down the mountain to go for help. It was reported up to us that Dan had suffered a serious head injury and was having difficulty with his right arm and shoulder. Jeff and Kevin were concerned that Dan could have a shoulder separation with a broken arm. After bandaging Dan's head wound, he was helped to climb up and over to where the Seattle Mountaineers party was. There he was anchored in. After Dan was taken off our rope, Kevin and Jeff climbed over to where he was. Together with the remaining two members of the Seattle Mountaineers party, we discussed what should be done next. It was decided that we should try to work Dan down the mountain to the Mary Green Glacier some 80 meters below. We felt that if help did come that night, they would only be able to take Dan out if he was down off the rock. It was also just as important that Kevin and Jeff be doing something rather than just sitting helplessly.

Dan was first placed in a bivy bag to help keep him warm, then Jeff's 50 meter rope was configured such that Kevin and Jeff could be lowered alongside Dan. Although Dan was incoherent, he was conscious and able to assist in his rescue by pushing off the rocks with his hands and feet. It should be noted that his ability to contribute to our efforts was a major factor in our success. It was a very difficult finding belay positions in the badly broken and fragmented rock. It took nearly seven hours to move Dan down to the glacier below. Once on the glacier, Dan was put in dry clothes. Just as we were finishing, a helicopter was noticed coming up the valley toward us. The helicopter pilot landed in a very precarious position on the glacier and said he could only stay a few minutes due to fuel considerations. We quickly loaded Dan onto a sled which they supplied and slid him up along the edge of a crevasse to where the helicopter lifted off. (Source: From a report submitted by Dan Ferguson)

Analysis

The conditions of Bonanza Peak on the day of our attempt were very poor and not conducive for climbing. Several other parties had come to make the attempt also. All but one other party turned back due to the conditions. The other party attempting the climb stopped and aided us in bringing Dan down off the peak after the accident. The climb should not have been attempted under the conditions.

For greater safety and ease on the descent or a possible rescue, two nine millimeter ropes should be used. This would have been very helpful on Bonanza because of the distance between suitable rappel anchors.

And, finally, the members agreed they would never attempt another alpine ascent without helmets. (Source: From reports submitted by Dan Ferguson and the Boeing Employees Alpine Society Bulletin, August 1986)

FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE, RAPID ASCENT, PARTY SEPARATED, CLIMBING UNROPED, WEATHER

Washington, Mount Rainier

On July 5, 1986, climbers Frank Amenta (24) and Philip Rosenthal (33) became disoriented in a white out and descended Willis Wall instead of their intended route of the Emmons Glacier following their successful ascent of Liberty Ridge on July 3. The climbing party bivouacked at 3680 meters on Willis Wall on July 4 and continued their descent of Willis Wall on July 5. Rosenthal fell behind Amenta due to altitude sickness and possible pulmonary edema, and they became separated on July 5 around 0900 near the 3520 meter level of the East Rib of Willis Wall. Amenta descended solo and suffered a broken