

hypothermia. However, the altitude and conditions precluded this kind of attempt. Also, resuscitation is considered futile if core temperature drops below 18 degrees C, which would have taken only a few hours to reach in that environment. The somewhat unusual nature of this case raises the unanswerable question of whether her preexisting medical condition may have contributed to her collapse and demise, in other than the psychological aspect mentioned above. (Source: Dr. Peter Hackett, Director, Denali Medical Research Project)

FALL ON SNOW, UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST

Alaska, Mount McKinley

On May 18, 1988, a nine member Genet Expeditions guided climbing team departed the 5200 meter high camp on the West Buttress of Mount McKinley and began their ascent toward the summit. Chief guide was Vern Tejas (35), and the assistant guide was John Schweider (29). At the 5900 meter level, the group split up. Schweider took two team members who would not continue on toward the summit and began to descend back to the high camp. During a portion of the descent, the party clipped into a short piece of fixed line that descended a steep step just above Denali Pass. Schweider was last on the rope. As Schweider unclipped from the fixed line and prepared to descend, he either caught his crampon points and/or was pulled off balance by one of the clients and fell forward. Schweider unsuccessfully tried to self-arrest on the icy slope and slid approximately 25 meters. His fall was stopped when he slid head first into rocks. He sustained head and forehead lacerations and possible neck injuries. Schweider was able to descend, with assistance, back to high camp. He was helicopter evacuated from the location the following day along with Mike Moss, another Genet party member, who was frostbitten during the summit bid. Hospital reports indicated Schweider had sustained a stable compression fracture of one of his cervical vertebrae and multiple lacerations to his head. Moss underwent treatment and surgery for frostbite. He eventually lost the first digit of his left thumb and a small portion of his left big toe. (Source: Bob Seibert, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analysis

This group was descending roped; however, the last person on the rope fell and slid into rocks before the slack in the rope tightened to provide an effective belay. The guide had just unclipped from a fixed line and he was preparing to resume his descent. His temporary inattention to his footing or the movement of his rope team partners probably contributed to the accident. (Source: Bob Seibert, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

ACUTE MOUNTAIN SICKNESS, ASCENDING TOO FAST, CLIMBING ALONE

Alaska, Mount McKinley

Sung Hyun Baek (29) flew in on May 5, 1988, to join the Korean Alpine Club expedition on a climb of the Cassin Ridge of Denali. The Korean Alpine Club expedition had flown in on April 28 and Baek was unable to catch up with them. He soloed the route to 5500 meters where he met members of the New York Alpine Club expe-