

pinpoint, I didn't stop to figure out the obvious way down—going along the side of the snow, i.e., where it met the rocks. Haste made waste, and away I went. Shock then prevented my being rational enough to effect a successful rescue of the ski poles. Not having the ski poles added at least a week to the ordeal. The first three days after the loss, I had energy. With my ski poles, I'd have been able to walk, slowly and carefully, downhill, into the woods, and out onto a gravel road that I already knew came up to the mouth of the canyon. Few if any hallucinations would have happened, and I probably wouldn't have had to drink urine.

About my rescue, this should be said: I was about to move farther along when those three fellows came marching over the hilltop above me. After going over the route to safety and my car with them, I was going to make it, even had no one been there. I might have been crawling like a worm when I reached the car, but next day I would have reached it.

I couldn't possibly express the look of horror and sympathy on my rescuers' faces when I told them what I'd had to eat and drink.

I will need at least eight tries to reach the summit of Mount Borah. The late Tenzing only needed seven for Everest. Borah is certainly not Everest, but of course, Tenzing was not an amputee. (Source: Paul Kovatch)

LIGHTNING

Maine, Mount Katahdin, Baxter State Park

On August 27, 1990, David Passalacqua (13) was struck and killed by lightning while hiking the Knife Edge near Pamola Peak. He was with a Boy Scout troop consisting of ten Scouts and two leaders. Another Scout and a leader were injured, and all felt the strike, which occurred at 1600 in a brief, but severe, storm. Their location was such that there was no chance for cover for at least another 20 or 30 minutes. (Source: Baxter State Park—Search and Rescue Report)

Analysis

Park officials reported that the Scout troop was experienced, having backpacked many mountains since 1987. The weather report called for a 30 percent chance of showers in the afternoon. The Scouts did not go into the Knife Edge in bad weather. The storm came up suddenly, after they had hiked the Knife Edge Trail and were within 100 meters of Pamola Peak, which is where the strike occurred.

The park Director, Irwin "Buzz" Caverly, indicated that the last recorded lightning strike fatality was in 1968, at Chimney Pond—well below the summits and the timberline. Twenty-two people were marked or affected by that one strike. (Source: Baxter State Park—Search and Rescue Report)

(Editor's Note: While not a climbing accident, this report is included to remind high peaks hikers and climbers in New England of the potential for this hazard. While very few have been killed by lightning in Baxter State Park, the White Mountains, Green Mountains, or Adirondacks, those which have occurred are similar. For instance, in less than 12 months in 1984, an Outward Bound group was struck on Franconia Ridge—causing an instructor fatality—and a man was killed while sitting at a picnic table at the base of Mount Lafayette in Franconia Notch. Both events were during isolated, brief afternoon storms.)