

sickness. Also, with a CB radio they possibility could have made contact when they first started having serious problems. This party was extremely fortunate that a high altitude helicopter was available to respond quickly. Without immediate rescue, their deteriorating condition would have forced a serious situation with a ground rescue. (Source: Daryl Miller, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

FALL ON SNOW, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Alaska, Mount McKinley

On May 10, 1992, at 1710, the "West Buttheads" expedition, Timothy Hagan (39) and Paul Kogelmann (33) were descending the headwall from the 16,200 foot camp. They were traveling roped and opted not to clip into the fixed lines. Kogelmann, leading, slipped and fell about 150 feet above the bergschrund. Timothy Hagan was unable to hold the fall, and the team fell 500-600 feet down the headwall. An American team performed first aid and placed Hagan's left arm into a sling. They then continued the descent at a slow rate.

At 1750, rangers reached Hagan and reported that he had suffered a broken left humerus and facial lacerations. At 1755 Hagan was flown in the Lama to the 14,200 foot camp, and then down to Kahiltna airstrip, where he was flown to Talkeetna, then to the Humana emergency room in Anchorage.

Analysis

There have been a number of falls contributed to not clipping into the fixed line on the "headwall" above the 14,200 foot camp. Most of the serious injuries could have been prevented by clipping in. The "West Buttheads" were no exception in this case. Climbers underestimate the angle of the headwall and the quickness required to self-arrest to prevent the team from sliding out of control. By clipping into the fixed line, this team could have avoided this serious climbing fall and a very expensive ride to the Humana ER in Anchorage. (Source: Daryl Miller, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

(Editor's Note: In a letter from Timothy Hagan, we learned that another team member, Kim Hood (37), developed pulmonary edema at 11,000 feet and had to return to Kahiltna Base Camp and was flown out on May 2. Hagan further indicated that the fall from the headwall on May 10 was initiated by Kogelmann, who pulled Hagan off in the process, as he could not effect an ice axe arrest.

Hagan also provided this analysis: "I have learned never to over-estimate the climbing ability of my partner. Also, there are definite cases where it is much safer to climb without a rope! I have no doubt that I could have descended the headwall safely by myself. For some unknown reason, we chose not to clip into the fixed line, probably thinking that it would be more bother than it was worth. (We had used mechanical ascenders during the ascent.) I had planned to clip into one of the fixed anchors if Paul felt that he needed a belay. Nice theory." We appreciate Hagan's candid account.)

STRANDED, FATIGUE, PARTY SEPARATED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, WEATHER

Alaska, Mount McKinley

"Expedition McKinley" a group from France, spent the night of May 10, 1992, at 17,000 feet on the West Buttress of Mount McKinley, without a stove. A stove had been cached