

"He was hurt pretty bad and bleeding and the emergency workers felt he had to be taken out by helicopter," the Chelan County Sheriff's Captain, Pete Peterson, said. He said it took just 24 minutes to fly from Wenatchee, pick up Sonnerup and deliver him directly to the hospital.

Peterson counted the rescue as one of his trickiest. He said there was only room on the rock where he landed for part of a skid. He said he had only about a six foot clearance for the blades.

He said the county's helicopter, which is often used in mountain rescues, was not large enough. He borrowed the DNR helicopter on loan to Chelan County Fire District 1. "It was just something the Jet Ranger couldn't do," he said. "It had to be a larger, platform helicopter, like the ones the (Chelan County) commissioners just denied (for purchase). There wasn't enough time to call for the Air Force or Army helicopters." (Source: From a report submitted by Fred Stanley)

(Editor's Note: We don't know how the rock was dislodged, but we do know that Sonnerup was able to belay his partner. Sonnerup's leg had to be amputated below the knee, but he is already skiing again. We also know that the rescue team was called in by cellular telephone, and time was of the essence in this case.)

FALLING ROCK/PITON PULLED OUT, PLACED INADEQUATE PROTECTION, FALL ON ROCK

Washington, Chair Peak

On October 9, 1993, Joel Blumhagen (43) and Darby Roach were climbing the standard route on Chair Peak. At 1245 Blumhagen clipped into an old piton behind a flake. The flake dislodged and fell on him, starting a small avalanche, and he fell. In the process of the fall, he lost his helmet, sustaining terminal head injuries. Several medical personnel were in the vicinity. He was reported deceased at 1330.

Analysis

We suspect he placed his weight on the piton. It was rusted and the flake cracked. One of our people commented, "We climb past that one!" (Source: Paul M. Williams, Seattle Mountain Rescue)

(Editor's Note: There were a number of other accidents from the State of Washington. The ones that were actual climbing accidents did not have enough detail to provide any good preventive information. Among them was an overdue solo climber, who deliberately separated from the rest of his party, on Mount Rainier. The entire party made it back without injury, but with considerable energy having been expended by guides and rangers. The solo climber was brought before a magistrate for his illegal action. Another was a 45 year old woman who fell to her death from the south face of Del Campo Peak.

Among the non-climbing incidents were: 1) a 15 year old who died around the 9500 foot level on Mount Adams, apparently from a pre-existing condition complicated by the altitude; 2) a 54 year old man who died of a heart attack on Mount Baker; 3) a man—age unknown—who slipped while going over a log on the trail approaching Sloan Peak, resulting in his death when he stabbed himself by falling on his ice axe; and 4) a man (33), hiking alone, who tumbled 1000 feet down Avalanche Glacier on Mount Adams and required a helicopter evacuation.)