

UNITED STATES

AVALANCHE

Alaska, Glacier Bay National Park, Mount Orville

Three climbers found dead April 25, on Mount Orville (10,495 feet) have been identified as Phil Kaufman (c. 30) and Patrick Simmons (c. 30), both of Seattle, and Steve Carroll (32) of South Hampton, New Hampshire. Another group of climbers found the three roped together at the base of Mount Orville, a 10,495-foot peak in Glacier Bay National Park about 100 miles southeast of Yakutat, trooper spokesman Steve Wilhelmi said.

All three were experienced climbers. Two of them had past experience climbing in Alaska. The three told the pilot who flew them into the area April 18 that they had researched the mountain in climbing journals and with climbing clubs, and believed that if they succeeded, they would be the first to reach its summit. Apparently they reached their goal and were descending Monday morning when they got caught in an avalanche at the 7,000-foot level.

Their bodies were found at the 5,000 foot level partially buried in snow at the end of an avalanche runout zone. Trooper Chuck Lamica said it was possible they fell off the steep rock face and then were buried by an avalanche, but judging by the number of avalanches in the area—he saw over 30 while flying over the area Tuesday—and the route they took, he believes an avalanche was the most likely possibility.

“You can see the path of the avalanche where they came down,” he said.

The troopers knew the climbers’ whereabouts because the men had been staying in touch by radio with the group of climbers that eventually found their bodies. The two groups didn’t know each other but were dropped into the area around the same time, Wilhelmi said. (From an article in the *Anchorage Daily News*, April 27, 1995, by S. J. Komarnitsky)

FALL INTO CREVASSE WHILE SKI MOUNTAINEERING

Alaska, Mount Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, Mount Wrangell

A party of five skiers attempting a ski-traverse of Mount Wrangell in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park were rescued April 11 by pilot Harley McMahan after a full day aerial search by McMahan and the National Park Service. The group was found ten miles west of the Long Glacier. The leader of the party, Dave Cramer of Tok, had dislocated his shoulder after falling into a crevasse on Nabesna Glacier. After rescuing the 46-year-old Cramer from the crevasse, the group decided to take a “shortcut” down the Long Glacier, across the Copper River and out to the Edgerton Highway instead of their planned route over the top of Mount Wrangell and down the Sanford Glacier to Gakona.

The other members of the party included Cramer’s 19-year-old son Eric Cramer, his 16-year-old daughter Mara Cramer, both of Tok, Robert Rourke and Bob Groseclose of Fairbanks. Rourke, Groseclose and the older Cramer had all participated in the Alaska Wilderness Classic race when it traversed the Wrangell Mountains in 1988, 1989, and 1990. The three were experienced in ski-mountaineering and had completed previous trips in the area. (From an article in the *Mukluk News*, April 20, 1995.)

(Editor's Note: There is no indication as to whether the party was roped, which is a good idea in such terrain.)

FALL ON SNOW/ICE, PLACED NO PROTECTION, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On April 21, 1995, the "Angove-McKinley Expedition" departed from Talkeetna for the 7,200 foot base camp on Mount McKinley. United States Naval Officers Lt. Michael Angove (31) and Lt. Cmdr. Brian McKinley (37) were the third climbing team to land at the air strip on the South East Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier during the 1995 climbing season. Angove and McKinley arrived at the 14,200 foot camp on May 1. They spent the next several days acclimating and resting before moving their camp up to the 17,200 foot level on May 3. They spent the rest of the day at 17,200 feet resting before attempting the summit the following day.

At 0930 on May 4, Angove and McKinley departed for the summit with another climbing team, "Iced Triple Grande." The Grande climbing team consisted of Deborah Robertson and Rod Hancock who had been climbing the same timetable with the Angove-McKinley expedition since the 11,000 foot camp. The Iced Triple Grande expedition summited around 1900 with the Angove-McKinley expedition 30 minutes behind them. Hancock and Robertson descended and stopped at the bottom of the summit ridge to talk with Angove. Hancock and Robertson had wanded the entire route from 17,200 feet up to the summit ridge. Angove and McKinley had agreed to pull the wands on their way down. Hancock and Robertson arrived at 17,200 feet at 2330. They observed Angove and McKinley below Denali Pass several hundred feet at 2245. Angove and McKinley appeared okay and were descending without noticeable problems. Robertson described the conditions on Denali Pass as some soft snow mixed with ice at times, with a few sections at 40 to 45 degrees. The weather on summit day was nice with some broken clouds and good visibility. The temperature was estimated at 0° F, with light winds out of the west.

Angove and McKinley were descending roped together with Angove leading and ice axes in hand. Angove stated they didn't bring any pickets, ice screws or flukes with them on summit day. About 2330 at 17,800 feet, Angove felt the rope tighten and looked over his shoulder to see McKinley falling and attempting to self-arrest with his ice axe. Angove immediately attempted to self-arrest, but was pulled from his position by McKinley's body weight. McKinley at times was tumbling out of control. Angove and McKinley fell approximately 400 to 500 feet, with Angove landing in the bottom of a 30 to 40 foot crevasse at 17,400 feet. Angove remembers clipping his pack to the end of a slack rope which was tied off to McKinley. He began ascending the crevasse wall. Angove lost one of his crampons during the ascent. After reaching the lip of the crevasse, he followed the rope to McKinley. When Angove saw McKinley, he was not moving and appeared dead. He felt no pulse and there were no noticeable life signs. Angove remembers pulling his pack out of the crevasse and climbing back to 17,200 feet and getting into his tent to sleep. He awoke at 0900 and crawled into the tent of Robertson and Hancock. Angove was suffering from shock and internal chest pain. He explained to them the details of the accident and was given care for the next five days until his rescue. The Talkeetna Ranger Station had communication with Robertson and Hancock getting updates on weather and Angove's condition. The weather patterns at this time on Mount McKinley were unstable, with storms at all elevations preventing any expeditions from moving, including an NPS mountaineering patrol at 11,000 feet.