

One scenario involves the snow bridge collapsing on the climbers. A small amount of blood was evident in the snow. Other evidence included snow blocks, and obvious instability of the bridge. One climber was wedged in the bridge. The medical examiner found no major trauma to any of the victims to support this theory.

Another theory is the climbers succumbed to hypothermia. The post mortem examination showed their testicles had drawn up into the inguinal cavity, a possible sign of hypothermia according to the examiner. The weather is a strong factor in this theory. (Source: Kevin Moore, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

ATRIAL FIBRILLATION

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On May 26, at 2100, old Swiss climber Dr. Paul Robadey (55) was flown from the 14,200 foot Ranger camp by the NPS helicopter to the 7,200 foot base camp. Robadey was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation by NPS VIP doctors and a cardiologist from the Alaska Regional Hospital via a phone consultation. Robadey was transferred to a fixed wing aircraft and flown to Talkeetna. (Source: Daryl Miller, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

DEHYDRATION, HEAT EXHAUSTION

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On June 1, around 2330, Robert Paige (28) called 7,200 foot base camp, saying he was sick and could not stop vomiting. Base camp manager Anne Duquette told him that he should take fluids, if he could keep them down, and call back in the morning. The expedition called back in the morning and said that Paige was still vomiting and they would attempt to link up with an Army team that was at the 8,000 foot camp. On June 2 at 1200, NPS members Eric Martin and Amy Eilertsen were notified by Anne Duquette, and began skiing from the 7,200 camp to the 8,000 foot level. Ranger/medic Martin made contact with Paige at 7,800 feet at 1530 and began treatment for dehydration. He called for helicopter evacuation. Paige was evacuated to Anchorage, where he was found to be suffering from dehydration and heat exhaustion. It is believed this climber's condition was caused by lack of adequate fluids and hot weather. (Source: Daryl Miller, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

ACUTE ABDOMEN

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On June 2, at 2100, Tom Bohanon of the "Three Guys on Denali" expedition came to the ranger camp at 14,200 feet complaining of hematemesis (vomiting blood). Bohanon was examined and diagnosed as having an acute upper gastrointestinal bleed. VIP's Dr. Colin Grissom and Dr. Lada Kokan assessed Bohanon's medical condition and felt it was life threatening. Bohanon was evacuated at 2315 with the NPS helicopter to Talkeetna, and was transferred to a "Flight for Life" fixed wing aircraft and flown to an Anchorage Hospital. (Source: Daryl Miller, Mountaineering Ranger, Denali National Park)

Analyses

These three illnesses reported above, all of which required costly evacuation, demonstrate the spectrum that runs from preventable to unpredictable. The dehydration and