

routes on the mountain. Not far from the summit, they reached a long, steep snow slope where they began glissading, a standard mountaineering practice of sliding while using an ice ax to control speed. Buzzard went first.

"I was out ahead, nearly to the boulders. I looked up and he was doing a regular sitting glissade," Buzzard said.

But something caused Rieker to lose his ice ax. Unable to control his speed, he began an uncontrolled slide into the rocks.

"It happened so fast it's hard to picture," Buzzard said.

The impact broke Rieker's collarbone and several ribs, and caused severe head injuries. He appeared conscious but was unable to respond, Buzzard said. About ten minutes later, two other climbers discovered the Yakima men. They stayed with Rieker, and Buzzard began a long walk out for help.

Off the mountain, he still had to climb another smaller ridge before reaching the car. He then drove to a horse camp. But the camp's radio had been vandalized and wasn't working, Buzzard said. A woman at the camp had a cellular phone, but that required additional driving to reach a point where the phone's signal could be picked up.

Typically, U.S. Army MAST helicopters from Yakima Training Center are dispatched for back-country rescues. But this accident occurred at an elevation of 8,400 feet. That's considered too high for the standard single-engine MAST helicopter, which generally isn't used above 7,000 feet. Instead, a more powerful helicopter had to be dispatched from Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane.

Initially, doctors were optimistic about Rieker's condition. But he died at Yakima Valley Memorial Hospital seven days after the accident. (Source: *Yakima Herald*, from an article by Craig Torianello, July 23, 1995.)

RAPPEL ANCHOR FAILURE—ROCK BROKE LOOSE, FALL ON ROCK

Washington, Mount Stuart

On July 10, Kris Stout (30) and his climbing partner had waited out a storm on Mount Stuart before beginning their descent. Stout was preparing to descend by rope when he tied a line around a rock the size of a car.

As Stout leaned back to begin rappelling, the rock broke loose. It rolled over him and fell 150 feet. One climber said the rock should have been there for another 100,000 years.

Stout's partner was left alone on the ledge, where he waited five hours until he was rescued by other climbers. (Source: *Yakima Herald*, from an article by Craig Torianello, July 23, 1995)

FALL ON SNOW—UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, CLIMBING ALONE, HASTE—RESULTING IN WEARING ROCK SHOES ON SNOW

Washington, Mount Stuart

After summiting Mount Baker in the early morning of July 9, I drove about 3/4 of the way to Seattle and got a hotel room to dry out gear and repack for a solo attempt of Mount Stuart. On the 10th, I drove from the hotel to the parking area south of the mountain and hiked the four hour approach which brought me to the grassy slopes beneath the West Ridge (4,500 feet). The route planned on was the "West Ridge Route" as described in the Cascade Alpine Guide, Volume 1 by Fred Becky. I made camp and went to bed early. The weather was clear and the temperature dropped a little below freezing that night.