

Corroone and Gallagher. The crevasse fall occurred roughly 100 yards from the main route taken by thousands of climbers in the summer.

Although Gallagher did a good job setting up snow anchors and lowering a rope, this accident demonstrates that more may be necessary to rescue your partner from a crevasse. Climbers who have fallen in a crevasse cannot always help themselves, and teams should always take this into consideration. If the partner falls, can the second member set up the anchors AND rappel into a foreboding crevasse to render assistance? Many teams elect to go with a minimum of three members (four in the winter) to alleviate some of this stress. Climbers turned rescuers need to be mentally prepared for this daunting task.

The pair was fortunate on many counts. One, that they both didn't fall all the way into the crevasse; two, that their cell phone worked (they don't always on Rainier), and three, that two rescuers happened to be on the mountain during the very early season.

Although it was clear when the helicopter landed, the landing zone did not remain as such after a few minutes of waiting. Weather conditions seemed to be improving. However a rogue cloud made the rescue much more interesting and stressful. It was also fortunate that the helicopter did not require more de-icing in harder to access places. Additionally, if the weather had not cleared, it would have been a long night for the pilot with only a flight suit and leather jacket, not to mention Corroone in his severely hypothermic condition.

Corrone, who is married with two teenage daughters and who has climbed for 22 years, said the accident raised his safety standards. "I'm thinking now I wouldn't go out with less than four guys and full battle gear. I made every possible mistake, and I could have paid dearly for this one." (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park and *The News Tribune*, April 14)

PARTY SEPARATED – ILLNESS, POOR PLANNING AND LOGISTICS, MISCOMMUNICATION

Washington, Mount Rainier, Muir Snowfield Paradise Glacier

John Repka was last seen alive descending the Muir Snowfield on May 16 during a planned day climb with the group One Step At a Time (OSAT). Repka fell behind the main group because he was feeling ill, vomiting and moving slowly. Near 9,000 feet, he turned around with other group members on their descent from Camp Muir. Repka followed the team but could not keep up. Near 8,000 feet in a whiteout, a member of the group warned Repka that he was heading too far west and possibly off route. That group continued to descend believing Repka was either behind them, or that he would be met by another part of the team still descending from Muir.

When the team regrouped in the parking lot and Repka had not arrived, they began communication with him over a two-way radio (which some members were using). Repka radioed that he was near Panorama Point, but he wasn't certain. They lost contact with him after 5:30 p.m. In that conversation, Repka

stated that he didn't know his location. A climbing ranger and a volunteer were notified at Camp Muir, and they descended the snowfield attempting to locate him that night. They ran into zero visibility and eventually had to give up.

Teams composed of rangers, mountain rescue volunteers, guides and friends of John Repka searched intensely for the following eight days. Poor visibility, heavy precipitation, high winds, and hazardous terrain hampered their work. Helicopters and air scent dogs greatly aided search efforts during two days of clear weather. The primary search area was thoroughly covered, although a significant amount of new snow fell during the week. The active search was called off on day nine after no clues were found. Rangers remained on alert for potentially emerging clues as the snow melted throughout the summer.

In September during a routine maintenance helicopter flight, pilot Jess Hagerman spotted a body matching the clothing description of Repka in an icefall. It was located near 8,100 feet on the Paradise Glacier (very near where Corroone had fallen). Climbing rangers were flown to the site where they descended to the body and confirmed the observation. Repka was found in his bivy sac next to his ice ax, backpack and two way radio. He had died from exposure, not traumatic injuries, and his remains were flown off the mountain.

Analysis

If one thing can be learned from this accident, it is to stay together and communicate when in teams, especially large ones where organization and management are problematic. Repka was part of a 50-plus person group that day. Somehow though, misunderstandings and assumptions led to his being left behind. The radio also provided a false security. Radios, cell phones, and other electronic devices are not substitutes for critical communication, navigation, and survival needs. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Ranier National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, MISCOMMUNICATION

Washington, Peshastin Pinnacles

While I have no memory of this accident, I have been able to reconstruct the event based upon the observations of my climbing partner, Lynn. On May 22, she and I climbed the Tunnel Route (5.6) on Orchard Rock at Peshastin Pinnacles in eastern Washington. Upon reaching the top, I tied into two bolts placed about 15 feet from the vertical edge on a 20-degree slope. Due to the distance of the bolts from the edge, I chose to tie into a long runner (a 20-ft. cordelette tied in half) to be closer for communication while belaying. About 20 ft. from the summit, Lynn was unable to reach a camming unit I had placed in a crack about 4 ft. from the route. She was able to unclip the climbing rope from the sling and proceed to the top. After a brief discussion, we decided to lower her back to the piece, giving her greater access to remove it, while allowing her to climb the most enjoyable part of the route once more.

After making the decision to lower, I turned away from Lynn for some unknown reason while she was standing, still on belay. She thought it was safe to lower and stepped back to weight the rope. Due to miscommunica-