

row (51) take a fall on the fixed lines around 16,000 feet. Morrow made it back to the 14,200-foot basecamp by 2300 cold and tired. His partner Michael Rodriguez reported that Morrow was so exhausted that he fell asleep until around 0700 the next morning. On the morning of May 19 Rodriguez helped Morrow to the NPS medical tent where it was determined by NPS personnel George Rodway and nurse Bob Mayer that Morrow had mild frostbite on his left little finger and full thickness frostbite on the four largest toes of his right foot. Since the foot of Morrow had thawed partially overnight, Rodway and Mayer helped to thaw his foot completely with a warm water lavage. After his foot was thawed, he was unable to walk. Typically an injury of this nature would not warrant immediate transport, but weather forecasts indicated a significant decline until May 24. At 0942 on May 20, Ranger Metcalfe spoke with acting South District Ranger Daryl Miller and other NPS personnel who decided it would be best to do a resupply of essential needs like propane for the 14,200-foot camp and most important, to get Ron Morrow off the mountain. About 1100 on May 20, the NPS Lama helicopter flew Morrow to the 7,200-foot basecamp where he was then flown to Talkeetna via a fixed wing provided by Doug Geeting Aviation. In Talkeetna Morrow took a taxi to Anchorage where he was treated by a frostbite specialist.

Analysis

Upon further investigation, it was determined that Morrow had not enough water to drink, nor had he eaten enough. He got his gloves wet digging his cache at 16,200 feet. Morrow admitted he showed up out of shape and said he was guilty of trying to keep up with a 28 year old! In addition, the weather was poor, he had no overboots and had a history of frostbite 23 years ago in the same foot.

FALL ON SNOW—CARRYING TOO MUCH

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On May 23 around 0800, Priska Landolt (30) of the Glaronia-Swiss Expedition was descending below the fixed lines around 15,000 feet when she hooked her left ski tip and heard a pop in her left knee. She packed the knee with snow and continued to descend with the three other members of her expedition. Around 1000 Landolt arrived at the NPS medical tent at 14,200 feet. Dr. Christian Bannwest, an orthopedic surgeon from Switzerland, assisted her to the tent where he, with VIP medical professionals Dan Cosgrove and Bob Mayer, examined her. Dr. Bannwest determined that Landolt had suffered a tear of her medial collateral ligament and/or her anterior cruciate ligament. Medical personnel considered an evacuation necessary because of the instability and inflammation in her knee.

Cloudy weather and a low-pressure system delayed an air evacuation until May 26. On May 26 at 2000 the NPS Lama helicopter landed at 14,200 camp to fly Landolt to the 7,200 basecamp. At basecamp Landolt was flown to Talkeetna by air taxi. In Talkeetna she stayed the night at the Swiss Alaska Inn, then departed for Anchorage and eventually Switzerland the next day on May 27. A letter of thanks to all involved was received by Ranger Metcalfe on

June 20. Landolt wrote that she had a complete tear of her anterior cruciate ligament.

Analysis

Landolt's expedition was doing a traverse from Wonder Lake on the Muldrow Glacier up and over Denali Pass. After waiting out weather near Denali Pass in hopes of a summit bid, they descended the fixed lines with heavy packs and two sleds. Landolt might have chosen to cache some weight at some point in order to decrease the risk of injury. The expedition had decided to descend to the 14,200-foot ranger camp in order to rest and wait for another summit day.

AMS, HAPE

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

On May 26, Mark Hall (42), a client of Mountain Trip, was brought to the Ranger Camp at 14,200 feet complaining of a severe headache and persistent cough. He was treated for Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) and High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and a possible respiratory infection. After being reevaluated on the morning of May 27th he was evacuated from the mountain via Lama helicopter to basecamp where he was transferred to Life Guard and taken to Providence Hospital.

Analysis

The rate of ascent over the course of the expedition remained within reasonable limits for proper acclimatization at 1000 feet per day. However, on Denali's West Buttress the large jumps in elevation that are generally undertaken within a single day to reach the established camps result in some individuals reacting adversely. The fact that Hall was already experiencing symptoms at 11,200 feet and yet he continued to ascend, and further, that his symptoms continued to worsen on that ascent to the point where he was no longer self-sufficient and still continued up to the 14,200-foot camp rather than descend, are cause for concern. The well-established prescription to descend at the onset of AMS symptoms or at least cease ascent until such symptoms resolve was not followed. And while the needs of the individual must be weighed against those of the group and it is often difficult to make a decision that adequately accommodates both, the decision to continue to 14,200 feet may have hampered this expedition's ability to remain self-sufficient and execute a self-evacuation.

FOOTHOLD GAVE WAY—FALL ON SNOW, PLACED NO PROTECTION

Alaska, Mount Hunter, Southwest Ridge

On May 26 at 1700, James Raitt (27), James Bonnie (27), Mark Paterson, Darren Swift, Richard Cantrill, and Peter Pollard flew to the Southeast Fork of the Kahiltna Glacier to attempt Mount Hunter's Southwest Ridge and the Sultana Ridge on Mount Foraker. Taking into consideration the current snow conditions and recent weather patterns the team decided to attempt Mount Hunter first. At 1900 the team departed Basecamp for the Southwest Ridge of Mount Hunter and camped at the base of the West Ridge.

On May 27 the team moved their camp to the Thunder Glacier at the base of the Southwest Ridge, arriving at 1400. On May 28 the team took a rest day