

Fortunately all members of the group wore helmets and their cell phone worked to initiate a rescue response. The group was lucky, however, that a couple of other climbing practices did not result in a greater tragedy. The anchor C. Summers was utilizing at the top of the Friction Pitch was not equalized. All of Rodrigo Liberal's (27) weight and much of Clinton Summers' (27) weight relied on a single .75 Camalot after the strike. Given Team 4's anchor failure, had they fallen further and weighted their rope, which was tied to Liberal's harness, the anchor at the top of the Friction Pitch would have sustained a significant force.

Had the lightning strike occurred when Clinton Summers was passing the knot of the middle climber, Erica Summers, it may have resulted in a much longer fall for Liberal. This potential problem could have been mitigated had E. Summers clipped into the anchor at the top of Friction Pitch and Liberal been tied off short prior to passing the knot.

Fortunately a successful rescue was instrumental in saving lives following this lightning strike. Had weather conditions not improved and rescue resources not been so readily available, more life certainly would have been lost. (Source: Brandon Torres, Grand Teton National Park)

(Editor's Note: The front cover for this years ANAM provides a visual glimpse into the complexity of this rescue. For a full story on the rescue, get a copy of the Jackson Hole News and Guide, July 30, 2003. Two quotes summarize the situation and the expertise of pilots and rangers. First, from Ranger Renny Jackson: "It was something you would expect to see back in the old days—horror stories from the Alps." And from 30-year veteran Ranger Tom Kimbrough, "This might be the most spectacular rescue in the history of American mountaineering in terms of numbers of people being extricated and the way the helicopters worked and how fast the boys did it.")

HAPE/HACE

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton

On August 8 about 0400, Ranger McPherson contacted Rangers Holm, Larson, and Montopoli at the Lower Saddle hut. On August 7, Dan and Selanta McPherson (25 and 22) had successfully ascended the Grand Teton by the Complete Exum Route and had returned late that day. During the return, Dan became ill, exhibiting symptoms of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE) and possibly High Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE). He had been unable to sleep and was experiencing violent coughing episodes that resulted in spitting out sputum containing pink phlegm especially after he had lain in a horizontal position. His past medical history included three previous bouts of HACE at altitudes above 14,000 feet, but none was as intense as he was currently experiencing.

Ranger Holm medically evaluated Dan McPherson and made a decision to await daylight hours to escort him down the dangerous terrain to the valley floor. He was instructed to rest in a sitting position and to inform the rangers immediately if his medical condition deteriorated. At 0600 Ranger

Montopoli contacted McPherson and they began to prepare for the descent. His condition had not changed during the night. After Holm reevaluated him medically about 0700, the McPhersons began their descent to the valley floor. Ranger Montopoli escorted them and assisted them by carrying about 20-25 pounds of their equipment.

During the descent, Dan McPherson's condition did not improve. He required several breaks, especially after ascending—which is sometimes required on the descent—any distance. Coughing bouts were especially pronounced when he started to hike after the rest stops. When the group reached the Lupine Meadows Parking Area, D. McPherson stated that he would seek further medical assistance at his home in Cedar City, for which he departed immediately. (Source: Ranger George Montopoli)

(Editor's Note: This is an unusual case of high altitude illness because of its severity at moderate elevation.)

FALL ON ROCK, WEATHER

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton

On August 31 at 1855, Exum Guide Jim Williams called via cell phone from the Lower Saddle stating that he could hear yells for help coming from the area by the "Eye of the Needle." Williams stated he was willing to hike up to the scene, estimating it would take him approximately 30 minutes to get there. I told Williams I would request a helicopter so that Rangers could be flown up to the Lower Saddle in the event that Williams encountered injured climbers.

At 1925 Williams was able to talk to Beth Hestick (48) while climbing to the scene. She said that her husband Joe Hestick (47) fell 30 to 60 feet just below the "Eye of the Needle," possibly dislocating his hip. He reportedly was unable to stand and was in significant pain. Williams relayed this information via cell phone and reported he was about 15 minutes from the scene.

By 1932, the helicopter landed at Lupine Meadows and rigged a short-haul with Ranger Scott Guenther as spotter. At 2007 Ranger Vidak was inserted at the scene and began assessing Joe Hestick with help from Williams. At 2019, Ranger Vidak and Joe Hestick were extricated and brought to Lupine Meadows, where Hestick was packaged carefully for ambulance transport to the hospital. (Source: Brandon Torres, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

On September 2, after flying Beth Hestick, who had frostbite on both feet, from the Lower Saddle to Lupine Meadows, she told me the following about their accident.

They set out to climb the Grand Teton from their campsite on the Lower Saddle at 0515 on August 29. They intended to climb the Upper Exum route. On the climb, they passed through the feature known as the Eye of the Needle. The Hesticks joined the Exum Ridge at Wall Street and continued the climb. There were two other parties climbing near them for