

were okay, but that their arms were quite sore, they were dehydrated and that they had bad vibes about the route. Hancock felt that their best option was to continue the climb up and over, but refused to go back down. Penn was unwilling to continue up or down even with additional supplies and gear the NPS offered to drop at their location. It was explained to Penn that another more urgent SAR was in progress and that they would need to remain where they were until more personnel and resources were available.

At 7:30 p.m. Penn again called the Park requesting a helicopter rescue. When told that their rescue would still require a belayed down-climb, Penn seemed unwilling to cooperate. He said, "I just want to be off the mountain."

On the sixth day, arrangements were made with the Oregon National Guard for a helicopter hoist of the pair as rescue and recovery efforts remained ongoing for Casady and Vizcaya. Rangers made two airdrops—food, fuel, and a cell phone—for Penn and Hancock at Thumb Rock.

On the seventh day, an Oregon National Guard Chinook helicopter flew to the scene with three climbing rangers aboard. Ranger David Gottlieb was lowered to Thumb Rock via hoist and assisted both climbers back into the helicopter. The climbers were successfully removed from the mountain that day.

Analysis

Penn and Hancock met on a guided climb of Mount McKinley the previous year. They had not climbed together before, but did discuss and research Mount Rainier and Liberty Ridge extensively. Some climbers often overlook the important aspect of climbing relationships and partner compatibility. The importance of a skills assessment, common goals and similar abilities are sometimes overshadowed by the excitement of summiting the mountain or doing a route.

A commendable aspect of this incident was that the team realized things were not going well and pulled back before getting injured. The NPS recognizes that people commit errors in judgment and make mistakes, but suggests that climbers not proceed when originally presented with questionable situations.

As a reminder, Liberty Ridge requires a substantial amount of physical strength, technical skill, effective communication and comfort with a heavy pack on steep ice for 6,000 feet of climbing. (Source: Mike Gauthier, SAR Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, INADEQUATE BELAY

Washington, Mount Baker, North Ridge

Elain Fu (33) and I (Stephen Ramsey, 33) were simul-climbing up the ice cliff on the North Ridge of Mount Baker. I was in the lead. At 6:30 a.m., I reached a slightly overhanging lip of ice, about five feet in height. The elevation was about 9,700 feet, and the angle of the face below the lip was

about 70 degrees. I placed a screw and traversed to the left about 20 feet, looking for a spot to climb over the lip. I stopped at a point where the lip had a crack in it, and inched up towards the lip on my front-points. During this time, Elain gained some ground on me, and we believe that some slack was generated in our rope system. Without stopping to place a screw or set a belay, I reached up and tried to test to see if I could reach the top of the lip with my ice tool.

At that time, a front-point skittered out of the ice and I fell backwards. I fell about 40 feet, penduluming to the climber's right, sliding down the ice face on my side. After much acceleration, I caught a crampon on an ice bulge, severely breaking my lower leg multiple fracture: tib/fib).

Analysis

I made a series of mistakes in rapid succession. I was feeling anxious about finding the best way to pass the ice lip, but instead of making me more careful, this anxiousness led me to rush and make mistakes. I neglected to place a screw immediately after executing the 20-foot traverse to protect myself from a pendulum fall. After seeing that the lip was slightly overhanging, I should have set up a belay before attempting to climb over the lip. Better communication with the second would have also helped to prevent the accident, because Elain would have cautioned me against attempting the lip without a solid belay from two screws.

My wife Elain, Bellingham Mountain Rescue, Naval Air Station Whidbey SAR, and Whatcom County SAR did a fantastic job of rescuing me from the mountain. Their timeliness and professionalism enabled me to be rescued the night of the accident, which directly improved my chances for recovering full joint function. (Source: Stephen Ramsey, who also wrote a long narrative account that he made available for several months on the web)

SLIP ON ICE—DISLOCATED SHOULDER

Washington, Mount Rainier, Kautz Glacier

On June 30, Dallas Baker (27) sustained a dislocated shoulder while descending the upper ice pitch of the Kautz Glacier near 11,800 feet. He was facing the glacier slope with his ice tools in the ice when his footing gave way. He was able to use one ax and catch the fall, but strained and dislocated his shoulder during the slip. Unable to reset the shoulder, his partner Alex Carroll called 911 seeking help from the NPS. The two slowly continued their descent to Camp Hazard.

A Hughes 500D helicopter was diverted from ongoing aviation operation to assist with the incident. Climbing ranger Stoney Richards was inserted at a small LZ on the cleaver separating the Turtle Snowfield from the Kautz Glacier around 11,000 feet. Richards climbed to the team and assessed Baker. By this time Baker's shoulder had reduced on its own. Despite