

## **CORNICE COLLAPSE – FALL ON SNOW**

### **Washington, Mount St. Helens**

On February 15, Joseph Bohlig (52) from Kelso fell into the crater at about 1:00 p.m. A veteran climber on his 69th trek up the mountain, Bohlig was posing for a picture about five feet from the crater's edge when the snow beneath him collapsed.

His longtime climbing partner and best friend, Scott Salkovics, watched in horror as Bohlig slid about 1,500 feet along rock and ice and settled into the crater wall at a 70-degree angle. "He was just getting his picture taken, and all of the sudden I saw a crack and him grasping for the edge and a look of surprise and fear on his face," said Salkovics (49) of Longview. "And then he disappeared."

The pair reached the summit in four hours, Salkovics said. After taking off his backpack and jacket and handing a camera to another hiker, Bohlig was backing up toward the edge of the crater when the snow gave way, Salkovics said. The hiker with the camera threw himself toward the edge but was unable to catch Bohlig. "The first thing I did was start screaming, 'No, no!'" Salkovics said. "It was the hugest sense of helplessness I've ever had."

Salkovics said he tossed a backpack with supplies into the crater in hopes it would help his friend. It was determined later the backpack had landed out of Bohlig's reach.

A helicopter from Whidbey Island Naval Air Station removed Bohlig's body from the south crater wall at 2:45 p.m. It was the fourth attempt to reach Bohlig after weather halted two tries Monday and one Tuesday morning.

### **Analysis**

Climbing accidents are rare but not unprecedented on Mount St. Helens. There hasn't been a climbing death on the mountain since the 1970s, Skamania County Sheriff David Brown said.

Richard Bohlig said he hopes his son's death will serve as a reminder to other climbers. "I hope that they would learn to don't be so sure of the edge of the rim," he said. "It can break off almost any time, and that's what happened."

Dave Cox, Skamania County Undersheriff, said he wasn't sure whether the death would have any impact on safety procedures on the mountain. "I just think we're dealing with a very unfortunate accident today," he said. (Source: Edited from an article by Brian Rosenthal in the *Seattle Times*)

## **FALL INTO CREVASSE, WEATHER – WHITEOUT CONDITIONS AND HIGH WINDS, OFF ROUTE, INEXPERIENCE**

### **Washington, Mount Rainier, Camp Muir**

On April 27, park climbing rangers, assisted by guides from International Mountain Guides and Alpine Ascents International, successfully rescued two Canadian climbers, Simon Brunet (23) and Genivive Morund (early