

the high camp at 9,450 feet, arriving at 1500. Climbing ranger David Gottlieb assessed the three climbers and contacted medical control. The party stayed at Camp Schurman for the night.

An MD 530 helicopter was ordered from Northwest Helicopters to assist in rescue and recovery operations the following day. The objectives of the operation were to evacuate the patient with a knee injury and insert rangers near the accident site and recover the body from the crevasse. It was planned for the remaining two climbers to be escorted off the mountain on foot.

Aviation operations began at 1130 on Wednesday. Climbing rangers David Gottlieb and Brian Scheele were dropped off by helicopter on the Winthrop saddle (13,600 feet) and made their way to the accident site. The retrieved body was airlifted off the mountain. The climber with the knee injury was also flown off the mountain. Ranger Ashby and the two uninjured climbers reached the White River Ranger Station at 1830. (Source: Nick Hall, edited by Climbing Ranger Cooper Self and ANAM editor)

### **Analysis**

When climbers are roped together for protection, all members of the team have to be comfortable with the terrain on which they are traveling and with their ability to arrest the fall of any of their team members. Many times climbers are able to navigate these types of features without any negative consequence, but sometimes climbers may be unaware of the consequences a small fall could have on the entire group.

In situations where any member of the group feels he or she would not be able to arrest the fall of teammates, alternatives should be considered, including quick belays over crevasses or through steep areas and finding alternative routes with less exposure.

Mr. Adams was a very competent and experienced climber who tried with all his strength to stop the fall of his team, but his experience and strength alone were not enough to stop his teammates and himself from taking this ultimately fatal fall. (Source: Edited from a report by Nick Hall, Climbing Ranger)

*(Editor's Note: In a post from KOMO TV and News Services, the following quote is noted: "Big shock... I'm just surprised it was Lee," said Fred Slater, a member of the Washington Alpine Club, where Adams helped teach for many years. "We all expected him to continue climbing well into his 60s. He was so fast. No one could ever keep up with Lee. He would out-climb and out-hike anybody.")*

## **FALL ON SNOW**

### **Washington, Mount Rainier, Disappointment Cleaver**

On July 30 at 1130, Rangers received a 911 call from an independent climbing party at approximately 12,000 feet on the Disappointment Cleaver. The report was that one member of their party, Gary Fredrickson (age unknown) had slipped while descending the route and tumbled over rock and snow,

injuring himself in the process. A response team of two guides left Camp Muir at 1200 with medical supplies to get an initial assessment of the patient. NPS climbing ranger Tom Payne, along with two guides, responded from Muir shortly after 1200 with more supplies and the plan of possibly flying the patient off of the mountain. Guides arrived on scene at 1311 and found the patient to have sustained injuries to his head and neck. Ranger Payne arrived on scene and packaged the patient on a backboard and into a litter capable of being hoisted into a helicopter. At 1555 an army reserve Chinook left Kautz heli-base with climbing rangers Scheele and Ashby on board. At 1612 the patient was hoisted into the aircraft and flown to Madigan Hospital where he was transferred to the emergency department.

### **Analysis**

It is unknown whether fatigue, lack of experience, or environmental conditions contributed to this incident. The climbing route where the injury happened was in good shape, although warm snow conditions could have played a role. The climber was wearing a helmet when he fell, which very possibly saved him from further injury, as the helmet was cracked during the fall. He did sustain a fractured C-7 vertebra, but it was repaired with no known loss of neuro-functions. (Source: Edited from a report by Cooper Self, Climbing Ranger)

*(Editor's Note: Ranger Cooper Self added the following: "In addition to the preceding reports, Climbing Rangers at Rainier responded to a number of other incidents during the 2010 season. Out of almost 10,000 climbers, there were 19 major SAR events involving climbers or day users above 8,000 feet on Rainier. These included eleven other rescues or assists. Four of these incidents involved broken bones and other less severe trauma. Rangers responded to seven medical calls where patients needed assistance from the NPS, including cardiac arrest, diabetic emergencies, and various respiratory and altitude related emergencies. There were also four searches conducted for overdue climbing parties that eventually showed up under their own power or were found with no injury. Climbing rangers also responded to numerous medical calls and rescues and visitor assists in the lower elevations of Mount Rainier National Park.")*

## **ROCK FOOTHOLD CAME LOOSE – FALL ON ROCK**

### **Washington, North Cascades, Vesper Peak**

(The following account is edited from a narrative submitted by Steph Abegg, 27.)

At 5:00 a.m. on September 14, I pulled up at my sister Jenny's house in Seattle. We were on our way to what we planned to be a fun and relatively mellow end-of-summer climb of the North Face of Vesper. We were at the trailhead by 7:00 a.m. and at the saddle looking at the north face of Vesper at 9:20 a.m. The moats did not look like they would be a problem on the