

Kelly Bush, Wilderness District Ranger, North Cascades National Park)
(Editor's Note: this was counted as two separate accidents in Tables II and III.)

FALL FROM A SNOW-COVERED BOULDER

Washington, North Cascades National Park, Eldorado Peak

On July 18th, a party of four mountaineers were on approach to Eldorado Peak on the lower snow slopes of the Eldorado Glacier. While pausing on the upper side of a large rock outcrop, three of the men noticed that the fourth, Bill Stikker (57) had disappeared. They did not see him fall, but quickly found him unconscious at the base of the short rock cliff, an approximate 25-foot fall. The injured mountaineer was in good company, as two of his party are ER physicians and the third made impressive time descending the nearly 5000 feet to the road and driving to the ranger station in Marblemount to request help.

Further good fortune persisted as the NPS' contracted SAR helicopter happened to be at the ranger station and despite notification coming late in the day about this accident, rangers departed within the hour. Stikker was still unconscious and deteriorating. He was helicopter short-hauled from the accident site to a lower flat spot in Roush Creek basin, suitable for an Airlift NW medical helicopter to land. Rangers transferred him to flight medics who departed en route to Harborview Trauma Center, Seattle, just before dark. Mr. Stikker spent two weeks in the Neuro-ICU and an additional four weeks in hospital recovery before beginning outpatient therapy.

Analysis

It is unknown how or why this climber fell from the snow-covered rock bluff that his partners had chosen as actually a good, safe spot to take a short rest stop. Again, the steep approaches to the routes of Cascade peaks can be the trouble spots. (Source: Kelly Bush, Wilderness District Ranger, North Cascades National Park)

FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING ALONE

Washington, Mount Adams

On October 18, Derek Mamoyac (27) fell as he was descending after reaching Piker's Peak at 11,657 feet, below the mountain's summit. He stepped in some snow he thought was solid, but it gave way.

Mamoyac started up the 12,277-foot mountain Sunday for a one-day climb. Family members reported him missing Monday when he failed to show up for work.

After a five-day search, he was located just below the 6,000-foot level. He was taken by helicopter to a hospital in Portland. He was listed in fair condition. In addition to his fractured ankle, he was dehydrated and had

swollen legs. He told rescuers he ate centipedes and drank water from creeks as he tried to crawl to safety.

Analysis

Jill Bartlett and other rescuers spoke glowingly of Mamoyac after he was found alive after five frigid days and nights on the mountain. “He was in very good shape for what he went through,” she told *The Oregonian*. As she and several other rescuers waited with him before he was flown from the mountain, he told them he ate centipedes and other bugs after running out of food early in the week. He drank water from creeks.

He was wearing water-resistant pants, insulated boots and gloves, but was still very cold. “We put all our coats on him, but he was still shivering,” Bartlett said. “We asked him, ‘Are you warm?’ and he said, ‘Yeah.’”

He spent nearly four days crawling and dragging his feet through the snow. When his knees hurt too much to crawl, he said he would turn around and scoot backward.

“We get happy endings, but not at the end of a five-day search,” rescuer Varney said. (Source: From an Associated Press posting.)

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT

West Virginia, Seneca Rocks

On October 11, Dr. Amy Ruth Stine (49) was killed in a fall at Seneca Rocks, a popular climbing spot in West Virginia. The climb she died on is a hard but short 5.9 that is G rated in the Barnes guide.

Analysis

Although the facts are not completely clear, from the posts (on a rock-climbing.com thread) it sounds as if Amy was about 30 feet up the climb and had placed her second piece. She then fell and the piece she had just placed blew out, and the first piece was too low to prevent a big fall. She fell upside down and impacted her head and died instantly. She was wearing a helmet. (Source: from an article by Dayeen Rae Kurutz in the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review*, October 14, and a posting by Mitch Hyman)

FALL ON ROCK

West Virginia, New River Gorge, Central Endless Buttress, Kaymoor Slab

Early on the afternoon of November 1st, rangers received a report that a climber had been injured in a fall on the popular rock-climbing cliffs at Central Endless Wall. Rangers, EMS personnel, and members of the Fayette County vertical rescue team responded and found the victim—Nicholas Smith (21)—within an hour. He was found to be suffering from an apparent compound fractured leg. He had been lead climbing the 5.12-rated and bolted sport route known as “Pud’s Pretty Dress” in the Kaymoor Slab area of the Central Endless Wall when he fell from a rock when about 60 feet up.