

1976 On McKinley Summit - We headed for the South (Main) Summit and moved quickly, arriving at the summit in a little over three hours in a stiff, cold wind. Air Force para-rescue Sergeant Bob Lapointe, a strong and well-trained climber, suddenly began exhibiting symptoms of High Altitude Cerebral Edema just as he arrived at the summit. He began to lose consciousness and the ability to speak coherently. We needed to get him down as fast as we possibly could. Putting one strong climber on each side, each one holding onto Bob's pack like a harness, we jogged down the slopes toward our high camp, dragging Bob between us when his strength faded. "Hang in there Bob, stay awake, stay with us," we would say to him to help him keep focused. Taking a moment to rest, Bob sat on the snow as Dr. Jim Sprott and I knelt nearby. As Bob went unconscious and fell backwards onto the snow I yelled, "Jim!" to get the doctor's attention. Springing to his side, Dr. Sprott forgot he was attached to his ice axe by a nylon webbing leash. The ice axe came flying in behind the doctor, and hit Bob on the side of the head with a loud, "Clang." Fortunately, the axe hit him with its side rather than the sharp point. Bob immediately woke up, saying, "Huh, What?" and stayed awake from then on. Later, I jokingly told the group, "I guess we can call that the pre-cranial thump resuscitation technique." Bob recovered quickly as we dropped altitude and was back to his old self, but tired, when we arrived back at our high camp in Denali Pass. He wanted to rest there, and as he was doing well, we relaxed.

"Sgt. Bob Lapointe and Ken Wynne approach Denali's summit in strong wind, 1976."

Hale, Jim (2012-12-11). *An Alaskan Life of High Adventure* (p. 120). Tate Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Hale, Jim (2012-12-11). *An Alaskan Life of High Adventure* (p. 120). Tate Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Hale, Jim (2012-12-11). *An Alaskan Life of High Adventure* (pp. 93-94). Tate Publishing. Kindle Edition.

January 1976 41 ARRW CC denied permission for PJ climb. He classified it as unnecessary risky training.

While I was disappointed at this denial, I wasted little time and decided to take leave and climb the mountain without USAF support. I would then use this ascent as evidence that it was a risky activity and resubmit a plan for a USAF pararescue ascent in 1977. It turned out that this is exactly what happened and the USAF PJ climb was approved for 1977.