

Analysis

Had it not been for the helmet, the falling rock would have caused a serious, if not fatal, injury. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALLING ROCK**Wyoming, Tetons**

On July 17, 1981, Randy and Duane Taylor (24) were climbing the North Ridge of the Grand Teton. D. Taylor stopped on a ledge on the Grandstand about 200 feet above the Teton Glacier while R. Taylor scrambled on above. About 8:00 a.m., R. Taylor dislodged a loose rock about 150 feet above D. Taylor. Several more rocks then started down the mountainside, one of which struck D. Taylor on the back.

R. Taylor climbed down to D. Taylor, lowered him a short distance to a good ledge and then climbed off the Grandstand and returned to the valley. Ranger Rich Perch ran into R. Taylor at 9:50 a.m., about one mile from the Lupine Meadows parking area, and called Jenny Lake to report the accident.

Beginning at 10:45 a.m., seven rescuers and equipment were flown to the glacier in four separate flights in the Forest Service contract Bell 206B helicopter piloted by Phil Fillingham. Craig Patterson, Barb Eastman, Jim Dorward, John Carr, Rich Perch, Steve Rickert, and Chuck Harris participated in the ensuing rescue.

The victim was reached at 12:20 p.m., an IV of Normosal R was started at 12:25 p.m., and lowering began at 2:50 p.m. D. Taylor was lowered 200 feet to the glacier and then lowered another 1,300 feet across and down the glacier to the helicopter landing site on the lower glacier which was reached at 4:30 p.m. He was then flown directly to St. John's Hospital in Jackson, arriving there at 4:45 p.m. It was determined that his injuries consisted of fractures of the three lowest ribs on the left side.

The members of the rescue team were then flown out in three more flights to Lupine Meadows. The rescue operation was completed at 5:30 p.m. (Source: Bob Irvine, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

Most climbers have accidentally knocked off rocks at one time or another. This accident reminds us that the consequences may be serious, if not tragic. We need to be especially alert and cautious about loose rocks when someone is climbing below us. (Source: Bob Irvine, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

RAPPEL FAILURE**Wyoming, Tetons**

On the morning of July 17, 1981, Marvin McDonald (25) and Eric Breitenberger, both experienced climbers, signed out for a climb of the North Ridge of the Grand Teton. They planned to bivouac on the Grandstand that night, then complete the climb the following day.

They hiked up Valhalla Canyon and then climbed the Gunsight Couloir and Notch to the north shoulder of the Grand Teton. About 6:00 p.m., a storm developed. The pair decided to abandon their climbing plans and descend. About 7:00 p.m. they set up a rappel into the Gunsight Notch. McDonald started down first while Breitenberger watched.