

Stenger found his partner semi-conscious, writhing and moaning. Blood was coming from Leech's nose and mouth. He had sustained an obvious serious head injury. Leech was clothed only in polypro tops and bottoms with a nylon shell. His climbing helmet was still on his head. Stenger spent a few brief minutes with Leech, before taking off at a run to summon help. He reached the valley floor and telephoned the sheriff's office at 2228.

The evacuation plan called for using the Lama to shorthaul Leech from his point of rest to a helispot on the lower end of the glacier. He was then to be transferred into the ship and flown to Lupine Meadows. A BK-117 helicopter, with medical flight crew, would then transport him directly to the Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center.

The Lama arrived at Lupine at 0620. At 0637, a sling load containing the shorthaul pre-rig litter was sling loaded to the accident site. At 0722, Leech was lifted from the accident site and shorthauled to the helispot on the lower portion of the glacier. He was then flown to Lupine Meadows, arriving at 0732. Leech was transferred to the BK-117 which departed for Idaho Falls at 0741.

Leech was admitted to Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center suffering from facial fractures, a pneumothorax, a concussion and numerous wounds to the skin. Due to the intervention the night before, his rectal temperature was 37.2 C. (Source: Peter Armington, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

### **Analysis**

It is extraordinary that Leech survived his fall. The fact that he lay on snow seriously injured with minimal clothing for about seven hours before the first rangers arrived on scene makes his survival even more remarkable.

He wore a climbing helmet, which remained on his head after the fall. The helmet was seriously damaged and no doubt contributed to his survival.

Leech had minimal experience in serious alpine climbing. The Grandstand was covered with snow broken with wet, slippery and loose rock. It is unknown what actually caused him to fall, although he was wearing a heavy pack. His and his partner's decision not to rope the descent almost proved to be fatal. (Source: Peter Armington, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

## **LOSS ON CONTROL—VOLUNTARY GLISSADE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT**

### **Wyoming, Tetons, Lower Saddle**

On July 27, Shawn Callahan (31) lost control during a voluntary glissade on the snow below the Lower Saddle, near the base of Middle Teton. An Exum Mountain Guide, Peter Krantz, reported the accident, indicating a possible broken leg.

At 1400 Rangers Carr and Dorward were flown to just above the accident site (southwest of Garnet Canyon Caves) at an elevation of 3200 meters by Kjerstad Helicopters. Ranger Irvine was also flown to the scene from Amphitheater Lake.

The Rangers arrived at the scene shortly thereafter and determined that Mr. Callahan had a 6-8 cm long head laceration and a possible open fracture with obvious deformity of the lower right leg.

At 1620, as the Yellowstone Helicopter was arriving at Lupine Meadows, a second accident occurred at the same location. John Schall, a hiker, had slid 60 meters on snow and slammed into some rocks.

At 1658 additional medical supplies were flown to the scene on the short haul line, during the hover check phase, by the Mountain Rotors helicopter for use in the evacuation of Mr. Schall.

Mr Callahan was short hauled, with Ranger Berkenfield as spotter, from the scene to the Garnet Canyon Meadows at 1710. Mr. Callahan was then transferred to the Kjerstad helicopter and flown directly to St. John's Hospital in Jackson, Wyoming, with Ranger Martin attending, arriving at 1724.

Mr. Callahan was diagnosed at St. John's Hospital as having a compound tibia/fibula fracture, which required surgery, and a scalp laceration. (Source: Jim Woodmencey, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

### **Analysis**

In a phone conversation with Mr. Callahan on July 28, I was told that he was descending from the Lower Saddle of the Grand Teton, after a failed solo attempt on the Exum Ridge, at 1030.

Mr. Callahan stated that he was glissading down the snow near the base of the Middle Teton, south and west of the trail near the caves in Garnet Canyon, when his right heel caught on hard snow or a submerged rock. His leg snapped, he lurched backward and hit his head on a rock.

Mr. Callahan also stated that he stopped in place and was able to drag himself to some nearby rocks. He then yelled for help and was soon met by other climbers in the area. Peter Krantz and Peter Lenz, M.D., administered first aid. Krantz descended to report the accident and Lenz remained with the victim until rangers arrived.

Mr. Callahan stated that he did not have an ice ax with him. (Source: Jim Woodmencey, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

## **FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED, PARTY SEPARATED, PROBABLE THOUGHT PROCESS IMPAIRMENT**

### **Wyoming, Tetons, Grand Teton**

On September 16 at 1100, Russ Soderlund (40) was climbing the Owen-Spalding route on the Grand Teton with a friend, Gretchen Rupp. Soderlund and Rupp left the Owen-Spalding route above the rappel station and traversed the southeast side of the mountain, near the Exum ridge, to continue to the summit from there. Soderlund continued down a 5.4 friction slab, then continued out on a more difficult face. About the 4100 meter level, he slipped and fell onto a ledge, landing on his heels, with his body leaning backward. He continued to fall approximately 20 meters to another ledge where witnesses saw him sustain fatal injuries. He continued to fall, hit another ledge, and continued into the Ford Couloir where he slid to a point approximately 60 meters above the top of the Petzoldt ridge on the west side of the couloir where he came to rest. He came to rest approximately 60 meters above the toe of the snow, falling approximately 180 meters total to about 3900 meters.

At least three other climbers were in the vicinity of Soderlund when he fell. Austin was next to Soderlund when he fell and Coletti was 30 meters below and to the west. After watching Soderlund fall, Coletti, who was soloing, continued to the summit of the Grand Teton, saw that Rupp was safe with another climber (Scott Cole, a Jackson Hole Mountain Guide), and from there ran down to Jenny Lake Ranger Station where