

The victim's body was flown out the next morning. The autopsy revealed skull fractures, massive spinal damage, broken ribs on both sides of the chest, and internal injuries.

Analysis

Paul Swanson was an experienced climber with ascents of Mount Hood, Granite Peak, the Grand and Middle Teton, and the Matterhorn in Switzerland.

Looking back I do not know how to prevent something like this from happening again, other than to stay home. Paul had a feeling that the rock in the area was loose, but I'm sure not a rock of that size, and not the one he was grabbing. The size of the rock probably gave him a false sense of security. It is uncertain whether or not he was hit by the rock that was pulled loose. (Source: From a report submitted by Don Schulze)

STRANDED, OFF ROUTE

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton

On July 24, 1993, at 2330, I received a phone call from NPS dispatch. The dispatcher told me that ranger Jim Woodmencey was at the Lower Saddle of the Grand Teton and reported repeatedly seeing the universal distress signal of three light flashes coming from high on the West Face of the Exum Ridge. I talked to Woodmencey by radio and confirmed the report.

It turned out that two climbers (46 and 39) were uninjured and just stuck in the middle of the face. They had become lost on the Exum Ridge route and traversed into the West Face of the Exum and then rappelled 75 feet into nowhere just before dark on June 23.

Additional climbing rangers were flown to the Lower Saddle at 0630 on July 25 and assisted Woodmencey in evacuating them to the Lower Saddle.

During the walk down to the Lower Saddle, one of them was very unsteady on his feet and had to be spotted on easy technical terrain. Ranger Randy Harrington described him as looking like he was going to fall any minute even after Harrington took his pack. This unsteadiness and the fact that both climbers moved very slowly and asked for a belay to rappel off the route led the climbing rangers to discourage them from continuing their proposed plan of climbing the Black Ice Couloir, a much more serious endeavor. Just the approach to the Black Ice is more serious than anything they had climbed.

Another interesting note was that one of them said they were not stuck and that he was shining the light to signal that they were OK. The other disagreed and repeatedly said they were stuck and were signaling that they needed help. (Source: Scott Berkenfield, SAR Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

STRANDED, CLIMBING ALONE, WEATHER

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton

A climber (35) signed out on August 29, 1992, to do a solo climb of the north ridge of the Grand Teton. He discussed the route and his plans extensively with the rangers on duty at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station.

He failed to return as scheduled on the night of the 31st and Ranger Dorward (on routine patrol at the lower saddle) determined that his camp on the Middle Teton Glacier moraine had not been occupied that night, so a search was started on the morning of September 1. Rangers Jackson and Springer went on a recon flight at 1110. They spotted Felber at 1130 on a ledge between the great west chimney and the north ridge, a rope