

the route. Most of the slides happen on the descent. We do not know whether Jones tried—or knew how—to self-arrest. Or if he had an ice ax. No matter. Skillet Glacier on Mount Moran = pay attention. (Source: Jed Williamson)

## **FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPED**

### **Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Mount Owen**

On July 15 at 1810, Rene Steque (65) fell 300 feet on snow at the base of the Koven Glacier while returning after a successful ascent of Mount Owen. He had fallen two previous times before that without injury, but on the third fall, he slid into a boulder field at the base of the snow. A. Popinchaulk, who was camped on the Teton Glacier with his son and another teenager, witnessed the fall, and immediately climbed to Steque's location to assist him. Popinchaulk rendered first aid, moved Steque out of the line of rockfall (Steque was unable to move on his own), provided him with warm clothing and a sleeping bag, secured his son and friend at their campsite on Teton Glacier, and ran to the valley to seek help.

On July 15 about 0130, Popinchaulk contacted Ranger T. Kimbrough at Lupine Meadows, who in turn contacted the rescue coordinator, Ranger G. Montopoli. Rangers D. Bywater and M. Vidak were immediately dispatched with first aid and rescue gear, while arrangements for a helicopter and additional Rangers were undertaken. Rangers Bywater and Vidak arrived on scene at 0645 and evaluated Steque. Lanny Johnson, P.A. (GTNP Medical Control), was contacted and advised of the situation. Because of his medical condition and location, the decision to short-haul Steque from his location to Lupine Meadows was finalized.

At 0740, the contract helicopter arrived at Lupine Meadows. Rangers T. Kimbrough, J. Springer, and R. Perch assisted with operations at Lupine Meadows. Ranger D. Burgette, S. Guenther, B. Weathermon, with emergency hire Lane Burgette, were flown to the Teton Glacier, along with USFS helicopter manager Holly Higgins, arriving about 0750 and 0805. Ranger L. Larson served as spotter for the operation. L. Burgette was assigned to A. Popinchaulk's son and friend, who were "noticeably affected" after witnessing the accident. As a result, the two were immediately flown to Lupine Meadows with their equipment.

After arriving at the scene (about 400 feet above the landing site on Teton Glacier), Burgette initiated an IV and administered Ancef as per L. Johnson's instructions. Ranger S. Guenther acted as on-scene incident commander. Along with spinal immobilization, Steque was immobilized in right lateral recumbent position onto the litter, and short-hauled directly to Lupine Meadows, arriving at 0936. He was then transferred to GTNP ambulance and taken to St. John's Hospital, where he was diagnosed with a fractured pelvis, fractured right thumb, and a significant laceration to his head that required sutures. (Source: George Montopoli, NPS Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

### **Analysis**

Mount Owen is a long climb, even if done over the course of two days. By the time one descends, unless in top physical condition, fatigue can play a significant role in what happens. (Source: Jed Williamson)