

panions were comfortable with, so they proceeded back down the route of ascent. Mr. Gorman elected to continue to the summit alone. While on the west face of the mountain in one of several large, exposed, and unstable gullies, a large (500-800 pound) boulder slid out from under him. He said he then “rode” the rock a short distance before he was ejected off it and went end over end several times. He came to rest in a gully several hundred feet below the summit. His two friends heard him yelling for help and called 911 via cell phone.

The response was from Lane County (Eugene Mountain Rescue), with an assist from Deschutes Co. SAR. Due to the fact that we did not know the extent of the subject’s injuries and that he was seven to eight hours away from ground search personnel, we elected to send in a helicopter for extraction.

Matt Gorman was wearing a climbing helmet, and that may have saved his life. Injuries were a broken finger, strained knee with various bruises, and lacerations. He also lost his backpack during the accident. This left him with no survival gear if he had had to spend the night.

Analysis

A need to be aware of the loose volcanic rock of the Cascade Mountains and the consequences of climbing solo and within your abilities are only a couple of the lessons that can be learned from incident. (Source: John K. Miller, Search and Rescue Coordinator—Police Services Division, Lane County Sheriff’s Office)

HIKER DISAPPEARED

Oregon, Broken Top

On August 10, Danny Curran (24) left his younger brother at their Green Lakes pack-in campsite late in the day, saying he was going to climb Broken Top, the snow capped mountain summit just one and a half miles due east. The elevation gain is 2,670 feet, over friable volcanic rock, snow, and ice.

Several climbers’ trails lead to the prominent north west ridge, which in turn leads to a very exposed summit block with a 1,000-foot drop to the Crook Glacier. Permanent snow fields and the Bend Glacier buttress the north side of this summit ridge. At the end of the summer, the snow fields and glacier ice had pulled back from the rock of the knife edged ridge leaving crevasses and bergschrunds of great depth.

Search and Rescue teams and local climbers searched for Danny Curran until November 18, when the weather deteriorated and more snow began to fall.

Analysis

Danny Curran had little mountaineering experience. He was dressed in blue jeans, a black down jacket, hiking boots, a knit cap and gloves. He had no pack with back-up gear, even though he was climbing late in the afternoon in weather that dropped below freezing at night. The five-inch snow pack of the previous week had turned to two inches of hard snow, making footing treacherous.

The obvious recommendation is that it is best to climb with others. If people choose to go alone, they should learn to be prepared. “A lot of people hike alone,” said SAR spokesman Chris Nolte. “We were up at the trail-head today, and it was raining, and we watched people heading up there solo or in pairs,

wearing fleece and blue jeans—not prepared. It just doesn't make sense to me.”
(Source: Robert Speik and Jeff Scheetz)

(Editor's Note: On June 17, Corwin Osborne, an older and more experienced climber, also disappeared in the Three Sisters Wilderness, prompting a search that ultimately involved about 250 people, 28 agencies, and more than 6,000 hours. Corwin Osborne, a Washington resident, without ice ax or crampons, had planned to traverse the summits of South, Middle, and North Sister—an elevation gain of more than 10,000 feet, and hike almost 40 miles across country in one day.

Again, we present these cases of hikers who get into mountaineering situations in the hope that there will be some educational value.)

FALL ON FROZEN SCREE, FALL INTO CREVASSE, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE, CLIMBING ALONE, INADEQUATE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT, INEXPERIENCE

Oregon, Mount Hood, South Side and Cathedral Ridge

In late August, Bob Considine (38) was visiting Oregon from Missouri. He had a guidebook and intended to climb the “Sunshine” route on Mount Hood. He parked his truck at Cooper Spur Ski Area and hiked up to the stone hut above Cloud Cap, spending two nights there waiting for the weather to clear.

On Saturday morning he crossed the Elliot Glacier and headed up the Snow Dome until he got stuck in the crevasses below Anderson Rock. He then descended back to the top of Snow Dome and spent the night. On Sunday he traversed and ascended until he made Cathedral Ridge, using a “big Bowie knife” to cut steps in the ice, then followed the ridge to the summit where he set up camp.

On the summit he used his guidebook to discern a route down the Southside of the mountain. Unfortunately he picked the wrong gully for his descent, instead doing a variation of the Steel Cliff that comes out just above the Devils Kitchen. He stated he thought he had “messed up” when he saw the Devils Kitchen, but he did not want to ascend back to the summit, so he kept descending off of the snow and on to a scree slope where he fell, ending up in a small crevasse above the Devils Kitchen. He explained he was able to crawl out of the crevasse and from there it looked best to him if he descended the east side of the White River Glacier. He then hobbled and slid from about 10,200 feet down to 8,900 feet.

Upon hearing voices on the west rim of the glacier, he called up for help. A passing hiker/skier made the initial contact and then contacted a ski resort groomer who was able to get a call out for a mountain rescue.

Analysis

Mr. Considine had some experience climbing in the Rockies, but never on a glacier. He attempted the climb without the use of crampons, an ice ax, mountaineering boots, or a helmet. He was climbing on a glacier and steep ice without the proper tools or knowledge for a safe ascent.

Mount Hood is notorious for poor rock and is extremely prone to rock fall during the summer months. In fact, Mr. Considine stated that at one point during his ascent, a microwave-sized boulder went flying by. It is for this rea-