

*thousands without incident. A few individuals have attempted to establish more via ferratas in the U.S., but most are opposed to this because of the level of destruction it causes to the rock. There are a lot of websites to go to, including [www.nelsonrocks.org](http://www.nelsonrocks.org), to learn about these. Also go to Google and just put in via ferrata.)*

## **FALL ON SNOW—SKI MOUNTAINEERING**

### **Wyoming, Grand Tetons**

On March 2, while ski-mountaineering, Ben Morley (23) was descending an area near the Southwest Couloir of the Middle Teton on skis. He hit a patch of ice on his skis, lost control, and fell 500 feet where he impacted a rocky area and stopped. Morley sustained injuries to his hip and leg.

At the time of the incident, Grand Teton National Park did not have a local helicopter resource on contract. The Teton County SAR helicopter was contacted and secured on an Aircraft Rental Agreement (ARA). Based on the initial report from Wright, the condition of the patient, and area resources, Rangers Jackson and Torres would initiate a response. They would fly to the area by helicopter, locate, evaluate, package, and lower the patient to an area where he would be transferred to the helicopter and flown to St. John's Hospital. Because of high winds, darkness, and deteriorating weather conditions, Jackson and Torres would need to spend the night with Morley. The plan also involved sending rangers up Garnet Canyon with support equipment to the rescue scene.

Jackson and Torres arrived on scene at 2205. They began to evaluate and treat the patient. McConnell arrived on scene at 0230. Guerrieri and Byerly arrived at 0415. At first light, Jackson was able to evaluate the weather conditions near the scene. He advised me that the wind was too high to safely land the helicopter nearby. Morley was lowered approximately 1000 feet to an area near the Ellingwood Couloir. Helicopter 9MA landed and Morley was loaded inside, attended by Torres, and transported to the hanger at 0954. Morley was transported from the helicopter to Medic 1, then taken to St. John's Hospital.

### **Analysis**

I interviewed the victim, Ben Morley, at his hospital room at 1430. Morley stated that he, Patrick Wright, and Josh Schear had left Taggart Lake parking lot between 10:00 and 10:30 a.m. on March 2. They had planned on climbing, then skiing the Southwest Couloir of the Middle Teton. About 200-300 feet from the summit, they encountered too much rock to ski, so they left their skis in the couloir and finished the climb. After reaching the summit, they returned to their skis and began their ski descent. They made it out the couloir and began to descend into the South Fork of Garnet Canyon. Shortly after 5:00 p.m., Wright and Schear stopped below Morley.

As Morely started to ski down the snowfield, he encountered a patch of ice. His skis lost their edging and came off, causing him to fall and begin to slide out of control. Wright started to move into Morley's path, thinking that he could maybe slow him down, but decided that Morley was moving too fast and abandoned the idea. Morley slid approximately 500 feet before hitting a rocky area where he came to rest. Morley had an ice ax in his pack, but he did not have self-arrest ski poles and was not wearing a helmet. Morley stated that he had grown up skiing, having skied since he was about two or three years old.

Morely is a young and fit individual and a very competent skier. Morley had an event occur to him that happens to all skiers sometime in their careers. Unfortunately, this did not happen at a ski area but instead occurred in the backcountry. Morley slid a long distance, hitting a rocky area. The impact with rocks caused his injury. It also saved him from sliding several hundred more feet and sustaining more serious injuries or death. The snow conditions they were skiing were considered to be fairly soft, so to ski with an ice ax may have been overly cumbersome. Though it is difficult to speculate, self-arrest ski poles that are made for ski-mountaineering may have had good results.

This rescue involved using specialized personnel who are competent at ascending and descending steep ice and snow on skis. The personnel and specialized equipment used for this rescue were exposed to a variety of hazardous terrain and weather conditions during the operation. Remarkably, there were no injuries sustained during the operation. (Source: Edited from a report by Chris Harder, Ranger and Incident Commander)

## **FALL ON ROCK**

### **Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Garnet Canyon**

On July 22 at 1445, Teton Dispatch forwarded a cellphone caller to me. John Coombs who told me that Eva Bell (22) a member of his party, had fallen and tumbled approximately 80 to 100 feet at the base of the Open Book route in Garnet Canyon. He told me that she fell on very steep ground for about 20 feet and then tumbled and cartwheeled another 60 to 80 feet on lower angle rocky terrain. He told me that she did not lose consciousness and that she was alert and oriented. He said that she had lower lumbar pain, left rib pain, an impact injury to her face and multiple abrasions and lacerations. He also said that there was a wilderness first responder on scene. Coombs had had to hike about 1.5 miles down canyon to make the cell call. I told him to return to the accident site where he could stay until help arrived, unless Bell's condition had worsened. If that were the case, he was to call me again. I had Ranger Visnovske, (park medic) take an additional medical