

ing techniques involved. It is presented as an example of how hiking situations can result in needing climbing tools and techniques, especially if one is not familiar with the terrain.)

RAPPEL ERROR – FALL TO GROUND, UNFAMILIAR WITH EQUIPMENT

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton

Around 1330 on August 7, Merry Carney (47) was unable to maintain her rappel, zipping down the rope approximately 50 feet to the ground. She had successfully climbed the Grand Teton by the Upper Exum Ridge with her husband, Pete, arriving at the summit at 1230. They then descended the Owen Spalding route, and she was on the lower 100-foot rappel to the Upper Saddle when she lost control.

Four rangers were flown to the Lower Saddle via a park contact helicopter, and two were inserted to the accident site just below the Upper Saddle (one at a time). M. Carney was medically assessed and fully immobilized onto a Benham backboard. She was then long-hauled back to Lupine Meadows with an attending ranger, arriving about 1645. She was transported to St. John's Hospital via park ambulance. As a result of her fall, M. Carney suffered five or six broken ribs and a tibia-fibula fracture of her lower right leg.

Analysis

M. Carney was not wearing a helmet and certainly could have sustained a significant head injury had she become detached from the rappel rope and/or not landed on her feet after plummeting about 50 feet.

The primary cause of this mishap is that for the first time in their mountaineering experiences, the Carneys were rappelling on two 8.2mm ropes using figure-eight devices. They had climbed the route previously (albeit some 25 years ago) and knew that the rappel involved about a 70-foot free-hanging section. A thicker rope, a better rappel setup, use of Prusiks or other self-belay setups on the rappel, or even preliminary practice rappelling with two 8.2-mm ropes, may have prevented this accident. (Source: From a report submitted by Chris Harder, GTNP Ranger)

FALL ON SNOW – UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, IMPROPER ICE AX TECHNIQUE

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Gilkey Tower

On August 9 about 1300, Chris Pazder (56) fell to his death while attempting to traverse from the South Teton to Cloudveil Dome. Pazder was in a climbing team of four who were traversing a snowfield on the south side of Gilkey Tower (about 12,320 feet), when the fall occurred. Pazder was the last climber in the party. When he slipped, he was unable to self-arrest, resulting in a fall of about 600-800 vertical feet. The climbing team was not roped at the time of the accident. All members were using an ice ax and wearing crampons.