

regulars often pick their sport routes of the day with sun or shade in mind. (Source: Robert Speik)

## **OVERDUE – DID NOT RETURN, UNKNOWN CAUSE OF FALL**

### **Oregon, Mount Hood, Sandy Glacier Headwall**

On early Friday morning, December 11, Luke Gullberg, (26), Anthony Vietti, (24), and Katie Nolan (29) left Timberline for a climb of the Sandy Glacier Headwall. Their climber registration stated an expected return of 1400 later that day. The form indicated that the party was carrying adequate equipment including a cellphone, but no radio distress beacon (neither PLB nor Mount Hood Mountain Locator Unit).

Concerned friends reported the party overdue on Friday afternoon and Clackamas County Sheriff's Office requested a ground search by Portland Mountain Rescue volunteers at first light on Saturday morning. Searchers were greeted by storm conditions with light snowfall, light winds and limited visibility on the approach to the Sandy Glacier. The first search team dropped down from Illumination Saddle onto the upper Reid Glacier and immediately discovered the body of Luke Gullberg at the 9,200-foot elevation. He appeared to have fallen (unroped) from the headwall above the glacier. An immediate search in the vicinity revealed a helmet, seat harness, glove, camera and two water bottles. Gullberg was clad with only light clothing and neither pack nor climbing tools were found. He was wearing crampons, one of which had apparently become detached during the fall. The searchers now focused their efforts on the headwall and upper glacier area, but were limited by 50-yard visibility and by potential avalanche hazards of soft slab.

The moderate storm continued throughout the day depositing several inches at Timberline Lodge and prevented air search operations. The storm continued and increasing avalanche hazard prevented ground searchers from deployment on Sunday. However, a local NOAA weather forecaster predicted the possibility of temporary clearing late Sunday morning, justifying a request for air search assets. A Blackhawk helicopter from Salem was manned with additional spotters and accumulated several hours of flight-time searching the upper Reid Glacier and headwall area. There was no sign of the remaining missing climbers.

Stormy conditions extended through Monday, but several hours of clear and low winds allowed renewed air searching. This effort included the upper section of the headwall, the summit area, and the Southside descent route. A ground team was able to perform some limited searching in the area around Illumination Saddle and west crater rim. A FLIR-equipped Jayhawk (USCG) was also used, but no signs were detected.

Due to the onset of the winter storm cycle, a thorough ground search

could not be conducted for the missing Vietti and Nolan. When the search effort resumes in the spring, it is likely that additional clues will be found. This accident received significant media coverage and brought to the public's mind [once again] two controversies: who should pay for mountain rescues and should (radio locator) beacons be required safety equipment for Mount Hood climbers. It is likely that county and state legislators will again be addressing these issues "for the benefit of the public".

### **Analysis**

The camera found with Gullberg provided some clues of the party's action on Friday morning. It appears that they descended to the 8,500-foot crossover point on Yokum Ridge. Here a decision was made to abandon the Sandy Glacier headwall. Instead the party ascended the lower Yokum ridge. Below the first gendarme, the party traversed to the right crossing Leuthold's Couloir below the hourglass. They continued southeast to the Reid Glacier headwall and ascended one of the gullies on the headwall.

For the steeper climbing the party was roped, with Gullberg in the lead. One of the last pictures showed Gullberg anchored with two self-equalized ice screws, presumably to belay his companions.

It is speculated that there was an accident with an injury to either Vietti or Nolan. As the stronger climber, Gullberg was likely descending the route to get help when he himself was injured during a fall. However, his injuries were severe enough to halt his travel and subsequently he succumbed to hypothermia.

A meaningful analysis cannot be conducted with the current unknowns of the accident. It does not appear that neither route conditions, weather, nor party experience should have an undue contribution to the cause of the accident. (Source: From a report submitted by Jeff Sheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue)

*(Editor's Note: A comment on an incident report from last year:*

"My name is Devin Lee, the son of Dr. Gary Lee, who was in the [Mount Hood] story [on page 64] in the 2009 ANAM. ... a few minor details: the rock hit my father in the head [not on the back].

"...the most important comment [is that] we knew the conditions. We had climbed late-season before. We knew it was dangerous as soon as we got to the Cooper Spur. My father has climbed that mountain more than 40 times, on all routes, and experience is not a question. Our choice of not wearing helmets was not because we did not fear rock fall. Not only that, we thought we would be out of the rockfall hazards much sooner than that, but the horrible conditions on the upper face of Cooper Spur slowed us down. We had gotten to the top of the snowfield and were very close to Tie-In Rock.

"...We were not ignorant, we were not careless. We went into it with our eyes open, fully aware, taking what precautions we could with conditions

that were worse than expected. I don't know what you can do to change anything, since the document is already in print, but I could not, in good conscience, let these thoughts go unsaid."

*As I pointed out to Mr. Lee, we are only as good as the information we receive, so sending in first-hand accounts is the best way to go.)*

## **FALL OR SLIP ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT**

### **Tennessee, Tennessee Wall, Blood-on-the-Rocks**

Fellow climbers and rescue crews evacuated an injured climber on January 25 at the Tennessee Wall after she took a serious leader fall.

Jesse (22) was leading Blood on the Rocks (5.10b/c) in the north section of T-Wall. Witnesses said three or four pieces of gear pulled when she fell, causing her to fall to the ground—about 30-35 feet. The route is an 85-foot, single-pitch.

She had previously fallen on a BD C3 #1 and it held fine. She attempted the move again and fell, this time with devastating results when the cams pulled out of the crack. However, there was enough tension on each piece to slow her down. Landing on her back resulted in a broken pelvis, wrist, and C2 vertebrae.

### **Analysis**

Always check your gear placements after a fall. Falls move gear and can weaken their position. (Source: From a post on Mountain Project and Aram Attarian)

## **FALL ON ROCK, LOWERING ERROR – ROPE (TOO SHORT) SLIPPED THROUGH BELAY DEVICE (GRIGRI)**

### **Utah, Pine Creek Canyon**

On May 9th, rescuers responded to a climbing accident near the Zion-Mount Carmel Tunnel. A 27-year-old man was on a route known as "Feast of Snakes," which is located on the Pine Creek Canyon wall directly below the Zion-Mount Carmel Tunnel, when the fall occurred.

He had placed an anchor at the top of the route and was cleaning gear while being lowered by his partner, who was using a Grigri, at the bottom of the climb. The rope was too short for the slingshot belay technique and the end of the rope went through the Grigri, dropping the climber 20 feet onto his neck and back on a ledge below the route.

Due to the steep terrain and loose footing, along with the mechanism of injury, rescuers called for a helicopter to perform a winch extrication. The rescuers had to do a technical lowering first to move the climber from the ledge. An additional low-angle technical raising, followed by a low-angle lowering, were performed before carrying the patient to an open area away from the canyon walls. A Blackhawk from Nellis Air Force Base extricated