

of Teewinot Mountain. Conditions were ideal. Snow was firm with some boot penetration, which was great for ascending but too firm for skiing. Stover stated that he felt his crampon was balled-up with snow as he stepped into the six to eight-foot deep steep snow runnel. This may have provoked his fall. He was using an ice ax and snow whippet (ski pole with ice ax head) and both were firmly placed in the snow when he fell. However, the snow was unconsolidated below the placements and the force of his fall caused the tools to slip through the snow with no purchase whatsoever. When his feet hit the bottom of the runnel, the snow was rock-hard, and the sudden crampon purchase caused him to tumble, head over heels. Stover sustained severe injuries to his lower extremities, especially his left lower leg (open fracture, significant deformity, and uncontrollable bleeding), along with generalized trauma to the rest of his body. He was wearing a helmet. He was quoted as saying, "If I hadn't had a helmet on, I'd be dead."

All members of the Stover's party were very experienced, local skiers, each with more than 15 years of ski mountaineering. All had beacons, shovels, probes, and at least one ice ax. They all had skied on Teewinot Mountain before, but not from that high an elevation. They were undertaking an adventure that was well within their capabilities.

Teewinot is often underestimated by both novices and experienced mountaineers. During early season, the Narrows can present various (often unexpected) conditions. In this case, substantial steepness with hidden, unconsolidated snow on the sides of the runnel, with solid snow/ice conditions in the bottom of the runnel, proved disastrous. Crampons balling with snow as the day warmed augmented the possibility of a slip on snow, and the conditions of the runnel made self-arrest near impossible.

It is hard to fault the Stover party for the accident. They were well prepared and well within their capabilities. A rope could have made a difference, providing that it was well anchored and members were on belay. But anchoring the rope in their location could have been challenging and time-consuming. Had the rope not been well anchored, all members of the party conceivably could have fallen. Finally, most climbers/skiers with their agenda would be more concerned with moving through the mountains expeditiously and being off the mountains before avalanches commenced late morning/ early afternoon.

Stover stated that his party was having an incredibly enjoyable experience, and the slip and resulting tumble was completely unexpected. A beautiful day became a disaster in a split second. In my opinion, an unfortunate set of circumstances provoked this disaster. (Source: Ranger George Montopoli –Incident Commander)

FALL ON ROCK, ROPE JAMMED – SO SLACK IN ROPE, FAILURE TO FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Guides Wall

In mid-June around 1400, Dagmar Rapp (47) was being guided up the Double Crack on guides Wall and was on the Flake Pitch. The guide had combined the last two pitches and was belaying from the top of the last pitch. The rope above Rapp had become jammed in a crack, so as she ascended, slack increased in the rope. The guide, feeling the rope tight, did not know the slack was developing and assumed Rapp was not moving. When Rapp was ten to 15 feet above the ledge she fell, landing on the ledge on her left flank. Another party informed the guide that she had an injured client. She lowered her second client to the ledge, and then belayed up a private (non-guided), good climber to her so that the pitch could be cleaned. The guide rappelled the normal descent route and walked back around the ledge to her clients

She then called park dispatch for assistance. SAR Coordinator James Springer received the call and paged out the Jenny Lake Rangers at 1445. Helicopter 25HX arrived at Lupine Meadows rescue cache at 1514. During this time rangers Vidak, Hays, and Armitage were directed to travel from their location at the base of Symmetry Spire to the start of technical climbing of Guides Wall. They arrived at the base of the wall at 1615.

Ranger Guenther was inserted by helicopter to the scene at 1620. Guenther evaluated the patient and determined she could be evacuated using the Screamer Suit. The patient and ranger Guenther were extracted from the ledge and landed on the ground at the Lupine Meadows Cache at 1705. Rapp was transported to St. Johns Hospital via park ambulance. (Source: Ranger Jim Springer – Incident Commander)

Analysis

Dagmar Rapp is an experienced climber who sometimes prefers to go with a guide. She was aware of the slack in the rope, but thought that she could complete the pitch without a mishap. She was not following the basic protocol of not climbing until the belay rope was snug. The guide's assumption that Rapp was not moving was logical. (Source: Jed Williamson)

FALL ON SNOW – SKI MOUNTAINEERING, UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST

Wyoming, Middle Teton, Ellingwood Couloir

At 0140 July 2, Ryan Redmond (32), Ben Johnson, Rob Backlund, and Kevin Salys departed the Lupine Meadows trailhead intending to climb and then ski the Ellingwood Couloir on the south side of the Middle Teton in Grand Teton National Park. After an uneventful approach to the bottom of the couloir, they began their ascent at dawn. Clear skies and cool nighttime temperatures created a firm, icy snow surface. The