



AAC Publications

Punch Through Snow, Leg Stuck

California, Mt. Shasta, Green Butte/Sargents Ridge

On January 20, Ranger Nick Meyers was notified by Siskiyou County SAR of an injured solo climber, Aaron Pessah (25), on the Green Butte/Sargents Ridge route at 11,300 feet. He was apparently unable to walk or descend due to a knee and leg injury. Meyers responded to Bunny Flat with USFS snowmobiles and California Highway Patrol helicopter H-16. He arrived at 11,300 feet, placed the climber in a screamer suit, and commenced a hoist at 4:30 p.m. Meyers carried the climber's gear down the mountain and returned to Bunny Flat by sundown.

Analysis

Aaron Pessah had moderate mountaineering experience and was climbing solo with a pack that weighed approximately 60 to 70 pounds. While he had all the best and latest gear, he also had way too much of it. Even for an experienced climber, attempting the Green Butte/Sargents route with a pack that heavy and awkward would be very difficult. (His plan was to do a four-day climb of Shasta. Most folks, even novice climbers, take two days.)

Pessah's injury occurred when his leg punched through the snow and down into a hole between some rocks. His large pack then threw him off balance, and his leg was tweaked because it was stuck in the hole. The location of his accident was before much of the technical climbing on that route, which was probably a good thing. (Source: Nick Meyers, USFS Lead Climbing Ranger and Avalanche Specialist.)

Images

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