



AAC Publications

Fall on Snow – Ski Mountaineering

Oregon, Mt. Jefferson

Around 4:30 or 5 p.m. on July 21, after skiing down the Whitewater Glacier high on Mt. Jefferson, Miko Smilenski lost an edge during a steep turn and fell about 100 feet near treeline. The 56-year-old experienced skier hit many exposed rocks during the slide and suffered a broken femur and head trauma. After activating his personal locator beacon (PLB), the well-equipped ski mountaineer was able to shelter himself, surviving the night until a Blackhawk helicopter evacuation the next morning.

ANALYSIS

Solo mountaineering and skiing have inherent risks that some choose to accept. In this case, experience and equipment were instrumental in the survival of the subject. He was carrying a plastic bivouac sack and an inflatable sleeping pad that protected him from the snow overnight. It is not known if ski pole self-arresting devices were used. (Source: Jeff Scheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue.)

Images

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