



AAC Publications

Fatal Fall into Crevasse — Climbing Alone

Oregon, Mt. Hood, Eliot Glacier

The body of Austin Mishler, 27, an experienced climber and wilderness guide, was found October 29 in a crevasse at about 9,400 feet on Mt. Hood's north side. The Bend resident likely fell while soloing in technical terrain, and he ended up in a crevasse in the upper Eliot Glacier icefall.

On October 28, Mishler was reported missing by family members. His tent on the Snow Dome was spotted by aerial searchers, and a team from the Hood River Crag Rats reached the tent at 9,000 feet at 2 a.m. on October 29. As multiple teams searched the Eliot and Coe glaciers, family members recalled that Mishler had a SPOT satellite beacon and were able to locate the serial number. The Hood River Sheriff's Office contacted SPOT and learned the unit had been continuously sending data from a single location since October 27. A team responded to the location and found the man's body. A complex all-day recovery mission was completed by volunteers from Portland Mountain Rescue and the Crag Rats several days later.

ANALYSIS

According to mission leader Christopher Van Tilburg of Hood River Crag Rats, the fatality was likely due to an unroped solo fall from the area of Anderson Rock, roughly 500 vertical feet above where the body was found. Always let someone know where you are headed, especially if you are venturing out on a highly technical solo adventure. If you use a satellite locator device, make sure a responsible party knows which brand you are using. In this case, the SPOT device had been continuously transmitting the person's location, and if rescuers had learned this sooner, they would have reached the victim earlier and exposed themselves to less risk. (Sources: Christopher Van Tilburg, Hood River Crag Rats, and news reports.)

Images



Recovery team works to haul a climber from dangerous terrain below the Snow Dome on Mt. Hood's north side.



Dangerous terrain on the Eliot Glacier where a fallen solo climber on Mt. Hood came to rest.

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