

Arrest
 Crime
 Non-Criminal

TETON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

180 South King Street, P.O. Box 1885, Jackson, WY 83001

WYO200000

CASE #
1202S-1417

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Supplemental Report

OFFENSE(S) SAR Search & Rescue		OFFENSE(S) cont'd.		
DATE, TIME AND DAY OF OCCURENCE 02/15/12 14:46 Wednesday		DATE AND TIME REPORTED 02/15/12 14:46		
LOCATION OF OCCURENCE 1 Teton County, Jackson	LOCATION NAME Teton County	TYPE OF LOCATION	BEAT	SECTOR

CASE SUMMARY

NARRATIVE

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY

On Wednesday, February 15, 2012, at approximately 1148 hours, Deputy Jason Husband and I were sent to a possible fatal collision involving a snowmobile in the Togwotee area. We gathered our gear and left for Togwotee Mountain Lodge (TML) to meet with Doug Meyer, the Teton County Search And Rescue (TCSAR) Coordinator. We were informed that the TCSAR helicopter was en route as well to search for the accident scene and advise on the injury status of the victim.

As we were traveling on North Highway 89 at approximately 1254 hours, we heard the helicopter pilot Ken Johnson say they were setting down in a meadow in the area of the collision to speak with some snowmobilers he believed to be the reporting party.

At approximately 1330 hours, we arrived at TML. At this time Meyer was attempting to contact Johnson on the radio without success.

At approximately 1340 hours, we met with TML staff member Beth (NFI) and advised her of the situation. She took us to the rental building and we began to gather some clothing and other gear for Deputy Husband and me to wear if we must snowmobile to the collision.

At approximately 1350 hours, I received a call from dispatch saying a snowmobiler called in and said they heard the helicopter engine lose power. They saw the helicopter begin to spin and lose altitude. They lost sight of it in the trees and believe it may have crashed.

I immediately relayed this information to Meyer, who began making phone calls to bring in additional resources. Togwotee staff prepared their search and rescue equipment. Meyer also sent out Joe Hutchison, a TML snowmobile guide, to search for the helicopter and/or the snowmobile collision.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

ADMINISTRATION

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BY OFFICER L. Gyetvai 247	DATE/TIME 02/23/2012 16:55	APPROVED BY Tripp Wilson 261	DATE APPROVED 02/24/12	
OFFICER	UNIT/SHIFT	ASSIGNED TO	CASE STATUS Closed	

Arrest <input type="checkbox"/> Crime <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Criminal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TETON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE 180 South King Street, P.O. Box 1885, Jackson, WY 83001 WYO200000 Supplemental Report	CASE # 1202S-1417 PAGE 2 OF 5
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OFFENSE(S) SAR Search & Rescue	OFFENSE(S) cont'd.
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At approximately 1415 hours, Johnson initiated a "Mayday" on the radio. He said they had a tail rotor malfunction, went into a spin and crashed in a heavily wooded area. He said the crash site was not far south of the V Trail where he landed and met with the snowmobilers. He also said all three people on board were badly hurt, but he was able to climb to a small clearing and radio for help. He was suffering from a sore leg, hip, and shoulder and was disoriented, TCSAR member Mike Moyer had a broken leg and TCSAR member Ray Shriver was severely injured.

At this time, Deputy Husband and I got dressed and left on snowmobiles to locate the helicopter crash. We were guided by TML guide Jack Fraune. Fraune took us to the area he believed the helicopter had crashed.

Once we arrived in this area, we saw a Civil Air Patrol (CAP) airplane circling the area. I turned on my radio and heard Moyer talking with the CAP pilot, Bill Jepsen. I then spoke with Moyer. He said he just heard some snowmobiles in the area to the north of him.

I then spoke with Jepsen. He said he was catching glimpses of the wreckage occasionally as he flow by. He said the crash was in a heavily wooded area. He gave me the best Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) coordinates he had for the crash N 4343.56 by W 11012.98.

We entered these coordinates into Jackson Hole Firefighter Christopher Betsinger's GPS. Betsinger and Will (NFI), a civilian, had just arrived at our location. I told Moyer we had the crash coordinates and were traveling to the location.

We drove closer to the GPS location and contacted Moyer. He said he could hear still hear snowmobiles to his north. We asked Moyer to blow his whistle to help us find him. We heard nothing. We moved locations several more times and continued this process, getting closer to the GPS location each time.

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Finally, we had stopped in a clearing near the top of a ridge. Again we tried the whistle without success. Deputy Husband's snowmobile was parked approximately 100 feet away from the rest of us. We were joined by Joe Hutchison from TML. We were discussing our next move and Deputy Husband was walking to our location. Moyer got on the radio and excitedly said he just saw someone walking through the trees just up the hill from him. Realizing it was Deputy Husband, we quickly headed downhill.

ARRIVAL AT HELICOPTER CRASH

At approximately 1622 hours, we located the crash approximately 100 feet down from our previous location. The helicopter was half buried in the snow lying on its right side. It was facing a southeast direction. Debris was scattered throughout the area. Johnson was standing near the helicopter using a stick for a cane. Moyer was sitting next to the helicopter. Next to him Shriver was lying on the ground covered up.

I was able to contact Sgt. Combs at the Incident Command Post (IC) and informed him we were at the scene. Sgt. Combs asked me to establish a Landing Zone (LZ) for rescue helicopters to land near the crash site. Firefighter Betsinger began to get the inflatable toboggan from the helicopter ready to transport Shriver to the LZ. We loaded Shriver onto the toboggan and strapped him in. He showed no signs of life at this time.

Once we secured Shriver to the Toboggan, Fraune and I put Johnson on Fraune's snowmobile and rode out to establish the LZ. We chose a large clearing approximately 400 to 500 yards to the east of the crash at the bottom of the hill.

At approximately 1637 hours, I contacted Sgt. Combs and advised him that the LZ had been established and its location. He sent the first helicopter in, owned by Helicopter Express.

At approximately 1650 hours, Shriver was brought to the LZ on the toboggan by unknown

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CASE SUMMARY

NARRATIVE

persons on snowmobiles. Shriver still showed no signs of life and was not being medically treated. A few minutes later I notified Sgt. Combs that Shriver appeared to be deceased.

As the helicopter approached, Captain Slade Ross and Sgt. Kelly Wells arrived with some TCSAR units on snowmobiles. The helicopter came in too far to the west. I was not able to contact the pilot directly and despite my requests for it to come east to the LZ, it landed in a different location. I notified Sgt. Combs of this.

Near this time, National Forest Service Rangers Palen Whitehair and an unknown female arrived at the LZ on snowmobiles.

At approximately 1710 hours, the helicopter took off from its location and landed at the LZ. It dropped off two medics and left to go back to the IC. It would not transport any victims. Carol (NFI), the medic from the helicopter, began working on Shriver.

At approximately 1730 hours, the helicopter returned. It landed and Johnson was loaded. It took off with Johnson aboard heading for the IC.

About this time Moyer arrived at the LZ. He declined the helicopter and chose to ride out on a snowmobile. All ground units at the LZ began to pack up their gear.

At approximately 1735 hours, another helicopter, operated by Fremont County SAR, landed at the LZ. Shriver was loaded onto it and flown to the IC.

At approximately 1745 hours, Moyer was loaded onto a SAR snowmobile pulling a toboggan. This snowmobile was driven by an unknown individual. About this same time, the battery in my radio died. They, along with Fraune and myself, left the LZ and went back to the IC followed closely by all other units.

The party of the snowmobile victim, Steven Anderson, arrived at the IC at approximately

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CASE SUMMARY

NARRATIVE

1830 hours. Deputy Husband and I interviewed them in the rental building at TML. All filled out witness statements, see attachments.

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CASE SUMMARY
 Interviewed pilot and passenger.

NARRATIVE

(SOURCE OF ACTIVITY)

On Thursday, February 16, 2012, at approximately 0845 hours I contacted Kenneth Johnson, the helicopter pilot at St. Johns Medical Center, Jackson, Wyoming. I only interviewed Johnson and Moyer regarding the helicopter accident.

(INTERVIEW WITH JOHNSON)

Johnson was still in the hospital being treated for his injuries, one being a concussion. Johnson seemed alert and was able to provide information. Johnson essentially relayed the following: He was piloting the helicopter, sitting in the front right seat, SHRIVER was sitting in the front left seat and Moyer was sitting in the right rear seat, behind Johnson. Johnson was not wearing a helmet, Moyer and SHRIVER were. Johnson was flying to the Togwotee Mountain area in response to an injured/deceased snowmobiler, believed to be on the "V" Trail of Togwotee Mountain. The Search and Rescue (SAR) team located a group of snowmobilers, exact location unknown. Johnson landed near this group and SHRIVER exited the helicopter and contacted the group, seeking information on the location of the injured/ deceased snowmobiler. Please see event number 1202S-1407 for additional information on snowmobile incident.

SHRIVER returned to the helicopter and Johnson lifted off of the ground. The plan was to have the snowmobilers lead the helicopter crew/SAR to the location of the injured/deceased snowmobiler. Johnson estimated that he was 100 to 200 feet above the trees/ground. Johnson was starting to fly away from the snowmobilers and he slowed and turned the helicopter. Johnson stated that he, "yawed to the left and decreased throttle" according to Johnson to get a visual on their location. Johnson estimated his speed at approximately "10 knots", "close to a hover, but still moving." Johnson estimated the weight on board at approximately 800 lbs. having used approximately 150 lbs. of fuel during the flight time. Johnson believed that based on the way the helicopter acted that he thought the tail rotor had stopped operating.

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CASE SUMMARY
Interviewed pilot and passenger.

NARRATIVE

Johnson said he never heard anything to indicate there was a problem and the helicopter continued to spin, eventually crashing into the trees. Johnson said he was knocked out, exact time unknown, however it appears that it wasn't too long because he awoke and heard Moyer "hollering" at him. Johnson also heard SHRIVER yelling and SHRIVER seemed to be in obvious pain. Johnson could not recall what was being said at the time. Johnson believed Moyer pulled SHRIVER out over "top" of him (Johnson.) Johnson also believed the helicopter landed on its left side and he remembered that the dashboard area was covered in snow. Moyer cut the seatbelts and removed them from the helicopter. They were unable to communicate via radio so Johnson took Moyer's hand held radio and climbed approximately 100 yards uphill and was able to gain communications. I ended the interview with Johnson because his son and grandson came to see him. Also present during the interview was his wife. The interview lasted approximately 20 minutes.

(INTERVIEW WITH MIKE MOYER)

On Thursday, February 16, 2012, at approximately 1200 hours, I responded to Moyer's residence, Wilson, Wyoming. He had already been released from the hospital and was home with his wife and two additional adults that I did not attempt to identify. During the interview several additional people were arriving to see Moyer. My interview with him was brief, however Moyer was willing to talk about the incident and able to provide information.

Moyer essentially relayed the following: He explained the same seating positions and reason for their response and gave approximately the same 100 to 200 feet high estimate as Johnson had. Moyer said after lifting off from contacting the snowmobilers that the helicopter suddenly turned to the left. He had just enough time to think that maybe Johnson had turned the helicopter hard and then as it continued to spin, Moyer realized there was a problem and they were going to crash. Moyer stated that it was a hard impact, he never lost consciousness and he never heard anything to indicate there was a problem. Moyer said the helicopter landed on the right side and they exited out of the left side.

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OFFENSE(S) cont'd.

DATE, TIME AND DAY OF OCCURENCE
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02/15/12 14:46

LOCATION OF OCCURENCE
1 Teton County, Jackson

LOCATION NAME
Teton County

TYPE OF LOCATION

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CASE SUMMARY

Interviewed pilot and passenger.

NARRATIVE

Once the helicopter crashed, Moyer knew SHRIVER was hurt badly. He heard Johnson yelling but it was muffled due to the snow covering his face. Moyer wiped the snow away from Johnsons face and cut the seat belts to remove SHRIVER and Johnson. He removed SHRIVER first. He remembered SHRIVER saying, "Get me outta here." He said SHRIVER was able to "help a little bit" as Moyer was removing him from the helicopter. He then assisted Johnson in getting out and Johnson retrieved the survival gear from a storage compartment and climbed up the hill to make radio communication. Moyer said Johnson was complaining of a leg injury and he believed Johnson had a concussion because of repetitive statements Johnson was making.

He said SHRIVER was complaining of pain in the right side abdominal/ hip area. SHRIVER asked Moyer if, "they know where we are", essentially asking if rescuers knew of their location. Moyer also recalled that SHRIVER knew he was in a very bad condition and knew that he was not going to survive. Moyer recalled SHRIVER's last words as, " I'm not going to make it, I'm toast, please take care of my dog, I'm gonna pass out." Moyer stated SHRIVER did pass out after making the statement and had a very weak pulse. I ended the interview after these very emotional statements.

(EVIDENCE)

I recorded both interviews with Johnson and Moyer and the interviews were booked into evidence.

(ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

The helicopter did land on its right side. Several photos of the scene have been booked into evidence. For clarification, Johnson stated it landed on the left side, however; he did lose consciousness and based on the extreme emotional situation I believe it was just simply what he thought at the time I asked the question. From all interviews conducted

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1 Teton County, Jackson

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CASE SUMMARY
Interviewed pilot and passenger.

NARRATIVE

and witnesses it appears the tail rotor may have malfunctioned causing the helicopter to spin and fall to the ground. Also for clarification I never responded to the scene. All photos I booked into evidence were taken by Captain Slade Ross. I looked at the photos and observed the rear tail rotor. I am not an expert in aircraft incidents, nor am I a helicopter mechanic, however; when looking at the photos I did not see any evidence of damage to the leading edge of the tail rotor. This leads me to believe the rotor was not spinning. There is damage to the end of the rotor that appears to be from hitting trees. This damage does not extend very far down the rotor.

(CASE STATUS)

Closed.

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Narrative Report

OFFENSE(S) Unatt Death Unattended Death		OFFENSE(S) cont'd.		
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LOCATION OF OCCURENCE 1 Teton County, Jackson	LOCATION NAME Teton County	TYPE OF LOCATION	BEAT	SECTOR

NARRATIVE

SYNOPSIS

An unattended death involving a snowmobile accident that resulted in a fatality. The deceased, Steven Anderson, was a tourist from Morris, Minnesota who was visiting the Togwotee Resort Lodge.

SOURCE OF ACTIVITY

On February 15, 2012 at approximately 1148 hours Deputy Geytvai and I were dispatched to a search and rescue up at the Togwotee Resort Lodge. The incident involved a tourist, Steven Anderson from Minnesota, who crashed his snowmobile into a tree and died as a result.

Deputy Geytvai and I arrived at Togwotee Resort Lodge at approximately 1330 hours and spoke to Beth, one of the managers at Togwotee, who was our contact person throughout the incident. She introduced us to Jack Fraune and Joe Hutchison, two Togwotee Resort guides, who would eventually lead us to the snowmobile accident, and help us retrieve the deceased and bring him back with us.

After that initial meeting took place, Geytvai and I spoke to Doug Meyer, who was a little concerned he had lost contact with the SAR helicopter. Doug stated it was very unusual for the helicopter to stay out of radio contact for this long. This was approximately 1340 hours. Doug Meyer requested a guide from Togwotee to start heading in the general direction of the last know location of the helicopter. Joe Hutchison was the one chosen to start heading in that direction.

At approximately 1350 hours we received information via the radio that a snowmobiler had witnessed the SAR helicopter crash. At this point the search and recovery of the deceased snowmobiler was delayed due to the crash. Our mission changed from a body recovery to an actual search and rescue of the downed helicopter crew.

Geytvai and I suited up for the snowmobile rescue and departed Togwotee Resort Lodge at approximately 1405. We were accompanied by Jack Fraune, who led the way looking for the

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downed helicopter. He led us east on the CD trail for about 5 miles, then turned south on the V trail. Approximately three miles south on the V trail the three of us were joined by Joe Hutchison and Christ Betsinger, an off duty Teton County Fireman. The five of us continued to look for the helicopter, locating the crash site approximately 1610 hours.

The helicopter crash is covered in more detail in another report 1202S-1417, so I will continue with the recovery of the deceased snowmobiler, Steven Anderson.

Once the three SAR crew members were evacuated from the crash site, Captain Ross, Chris Betsinger and I headed north to retrieve Steven Anderson. We left the crash site at approximately 1730 and met up with the snowmobile party associated with Steven Anderson about 10 minutes later, who pointed us in the direction of the deceased.

We spoke to Justin Anderson, son of the deceased, who stated a party of six people drove from Morris, Minnesota to Wyoming to go snowmobiling at the Togwotee Resort. The party consisted of Steven Anderson (the deceased), his two sons Justin and Ryan Anderson, Dean Erickson, David Kunde, and Jay Melberg.

SNOWMOBILE CRASH SITE

The location of the crash site was located at the top of a very steep hill. A groomed trail ran up the hill to the top, around a small group of trees and back down. Ross rode up the hill on the back of Betsinger's snowmobile and started the investigation. I arrived approximately five minutes later to assist in removing Steven Anderson from the crash site. Steven was laying on his back, with the bottom half of his legs under the snowmobile, buried almost up to his knees in the snow. He was wearing dark snowmobile pants and jacket, but was not wearing a helmet. It had been removed by Ryan, who tried to revive him. The snow around the crash site was disturbed due to the rival efforts of the family members from earlier in the day. The snowmobile was moved as well, lifted off Anderson by his two sons.

Anderson had no visible injuries, and was somewhat stiff. Ross had completed most of the investigation by the time I arrived so at this point I mainly assisted in getting Steven to the bottom of the hill. Once Steven was at the bottom, Betsinger, Ross and I secured Steven to

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