

adjust his pack, leaving his ice ax in the snow. He overbalanced, fell backward and began to slide down the slope. He managed to arrest his slide after approximately 700 feet but fractured his lower leg. An observer at Moraine Lake reported the accident and the victim was rescued by a Park Warden Service Rescue Team using the helicopter sling method. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

Analysis

Steep snow slopes are always potentially dangerous. There is a serious accident in this couloir at least once a year. Many climbers lose their concentration and seem to be caught off guard here. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, STRANDED, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Deltaform Mountain

On Monday, July 27, 1981, a party of two set out to climb the Lowe-Jones couloir on the north face of Deltaform Mountain. As the leader was attempting the exit pitch, about 75 feet from his belay, he fell, pulling out the two top runners (Friends) and dropping approximately 100 feet. He suffered a dislocated knee and a wrenched shoulder. His partner hauled him up to a three- by four-foot ice and snow platform he had prepared and placed him in bivouac gear.

The exit pitch is F8-F9 on poor rock. When the leader fell and hurt himself, the climbers were stranded, as the second could not climb to that standard and it was not possible to descend alone. As a result, they were stuck at 10,300 feet on a small ice platform hacked from a flute and exposed to rain, snow and high winds. Out of food and fuel, injured and hypothermic, they were in a serious predicament.

After four days, they were reported overdue by friends. Marginal weather, the steep face and the altitude made the helicopter sling rescue by a Warden Service Rescue Team quite dangerous but, eventually, both climbers were slung out to Moraine Lake. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

Analysis

The climbers were young, quite experienced rock climbers. They lived in New York but had spent "two summers" in the Canadian Rockies climbing respectable routes.

The phenomenon of "name" routes presents itself here. Many young climbers appear to be in awe of any route with a name preceding it. There are, however, far superior routes in the Rockies that receive much less traffic.

This climbing team started the route during poor weather because it was to be the "big route" of their climbing holiday. The party was simply not strong enough to climb the route safely. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, NO BELAY, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Thompson Creek Area

On August 14, 1981, a party of four backpackers were climbing through steep cliff bands when one member of the party experienced difficulty in climbing a section of rock. The victim went to the edge of the cliff to lower a polypropylene rope to his friend to assist him. As he leaned over to lower the rope, he fell headfirst onto a ledge below and over another