

the bed of the gully. He came to rest unburied in the tail of the avalanche, sustaining a broken ankle. The other climber descended the mountain in one and a half hours and notified the warden service.

Because of the danger of hypothermia to the victim, a helicopter sling rescue was carried out at night, something not usually attempted. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

Analysis

Steep, shallow snow over rock slabs should rarely be trusted in the Rockies, especially during the first half of the winter season. Since darkness falls at 1730 at this time of year, it would have been more prudent for the climbers to head down rather than go exploring.

The unhurt climber chose to go for help quickly because of the late hour, but he did not provide his partner with sufficient protection from the cold or immobilize his ankle. The victim was already hypothermic when rescued, and would have been in worse condition if a lengthy ground rescue had been necessary. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ICE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, near Lake Louise

On March 11, 1984, two ice climbers (26 and 25) attempted the falls near the Plain-of-Six-Glaciers Teahouse in the Lake Louise area of Banff National Park. They traveled to the falls on cross-country skis, carrying full climbing gear. On the waterfall, they climbed to where the leader was one rope length from the top. At this point, the leader slipped while making an overhead move. He fell approximately five meters, hitting his head on the way down, and came to rest on a ledge. His partner then lowered him half a rope length to a safe location. The victim was apparently unconscious for about five minutes. He had also injured his right ankle. Nevertheless, the climbers managed to get back down to the ski trail, and started toward Chateau Lake Louise. The Warden Office heard of the accident and a rescue crew went out to meet the climbers, and brought the victim to Chateau Lake Louise by snowmobile. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

Analysis

This was the victim's second accident of the season. Three months before, he had fallen and cracked his ankle. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

FALL INTO CREVASSE, UNROPED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Alberta, Rocky Mountain, Columbia Icefields

On March 17, 1984, a party of four (30-35) left the Icefields Parkway, Banff National Park, to ascend the Athabasca Glacier and spend several days ski mountaineering in the Columbia Icefields area. They had done a considerable amount of ski touring in the Colorado Rockies, but they were new to the Banff/Jasper area. They had been advised, by someone not local to the area, that any crevasses in the Columbia Icefields would be filled with snow.

They ascended the tongue of the Athabasca Glacier in a storm with poor visibility, and covered only four kilometers the first day. They moved farther the next day, stayed in camp two days, moved further up the icefield to the Mount Castleguard area, and spent another two days in camp during poor weather. The party realized it was off route. On March 23, two of the members went out scouting a short distance, and found that they were too far west. About 1300, as these two were skiing back to the others, the snow gave way under the lead skier, and he disappeared into a crevasse through a newly-formed 10 by 20 meter hole. The second skier, who had fallen close to the edge, called into the hole but received no reply. He rejoined the others, but they had no rope, and had no way of attempting a crevasse rescue.

The remaining party marked the site with a shovel, waited until the weather cleared a little, then skied to the toe of the glacier, arriving at 1700. The Jasper Park Warden Service sent in a rescue helicopter, which picked up one of the skiers to help find the accident site, and dropped a rescue crew just before dark. After searching through large blocks of ice and hard snow, the rescue crew dug out the victim's dead body about 2200, and had it on the surface of the glacier an hour later. The helicopter evacuated the party the next morning. (Source: Jasper Park Warden Service)

Analysis

The skiers apparently did not understand that crevasses should be expected, and were unprepared for them. All of the party were experienced ski tourists, but only one, the victim, had traveled on glaciers before. It is not known whether he had been exposed to the techniques of safe glacier travel. (Source: Jasper Park Warden Service)

AVALANCHE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Deltaform

On March 31, 1984, two climbers (in their 30s) planned an early-season ascent of the difficult couloir route on the north face of Mount Deltaform. They skied to Moraine Lake, bivouacked, and began the climb early on April 1. At the top of the main couloir, nearly 600 meters up the face, they were hit by an avalanche from higher on the face. Both men were swept to the foot of the mountain. Neither man was completely buried by the snow. One was killed, probably during the fall, and the other suffered a fractured arm, shoulder and nose, and a crushed spinal vertebra. He managed to struggle one kilometer back to the bivouac site and get into his sleeping bag before seizing up with pain.

The next day a passing ski party discovered him and sent for help. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

Analysis

The deceased climber had several years of climbing experience and was known to be ambitious and aggressive. He had some previous experience in the Canadian Rockies, mostly in the summer.

An ascent of this route is considered difficult even in good conditions. On this occasion, the area had been subjected to sporadic snowfalls during the previous week. The victim undertook the climb the day after arriving in the area against the advice offered by the Lake Louise Warden Office. The survivor was doubly lucky to