

that the piton and attached sling remained with rope. For the rappel down, he was using a Figure-8 and prusik back-up. (Source: Bruce Magee and Patricia Doucette, Banff, Alberta)

FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE BELAY

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Victoria

On August 20, 1986, three climbers (28, 25, and 21) reached the North Peak of Mount Victoria around 1400. They then descended the north ridge toward the Victorian-Collier Col, the most experienced of the three at the rear. All were wearing crampons and carrying ice axes. A few hundred feet above the col, at elevation 3200 meters, the climber in front stopped on a moderately angled ice slope where the rear climber was going to establish a belay anchor to protect their descent. As the second and third climbers walked down to this point, they neglected to take up the rope between them, allowing 20 meters of slack to accumulate between each pair. As the second climber reached the proposed belay point, he tripped on his crampons and careened down the icy north face.

As he fell, he hooked his crampons several times, breaking his right leg and left ankle. The other two braced themselves and were able to stop the fall, saving the entire party from tragedy. The most experienced climber established ice screw anchors, tied the others to them, and then soloed down the north face and out to Lake O'Hara to get help. The other two were evacuated at dusk by a Parks Canada rescue team. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff Park Warden Service)

Analysis

Keeping a snug rope between party members at all times would have prevented the long skid which resulted in injury. Quick reaction by two of the climbers prevented all three from falling to their deaths down the face and into the crevasses below. The consequences of a slip on even moderately angled ice or hard snow should not be underestimated. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff Park Warden Service)

FALLING ROCK, IMPROPER TECHNIQUE, STRANDED

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Temple

On August 27, 1986, a party of two began climbing the Greenwood-Locke route on the north face of Mount Temple. They reached the top of the easy climbing and bivouacked on the traverse ledge at 3000 meters. They resumed climbing at 0630 the next day. About noon, one of the climbers was hit by a rock dislodged while hauling packs up the steep face and crack system. The resulting injury caused him to lose all feeling in his right arm and hand. They elected to continue rather than attempt the descent, and around 1600, the same climber as before was hit in the right shoulder by another rock dislodged by the haul packs. He had great difficulty continuing, as his right arm was now unusable. At 1900 they reached a small ledge and bivouacked.

It rained overnight. At 0630 on August 29, the uninjured climber attempted to lead the pitch above the bivouac ledge and took a 12 meter leader fall, escaping uninjured. He lowered himself to the bivouac ledge. He had planned to lead the four remaining pitches of the upper face, and the injured climber would follow on prusiks. Since this

proved impossible, they found themselves stranded, unable to go either up or down.

The party had registered out at the Lake Louise information bureau, specifying their return on the evening of August 28. As they had not returned, a search helicopter was dispatched the morning of August 29, and the stranded climbers were quickly located and evacuated at 1100 that day. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park Warden Service)

Analysis

While the injuries were caused by rockfall, the cause of this accident was the use of an inappropriate technique; that is, hauling packs on a route where loose rock is everywhere. Climbers not experienced with the loose rock common to alpine routes in the Rockies and in particular the heinous "Black Band" on this route should be aware that local climbers usually learn not to haul gear on this sort of route. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON SNOW, PLACED INADEQUATE PROTECTION, AVALANCHE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Baker

On August 28, 1986, a group was climbing the northeast ridge of Mount Baker (3190 meters) near Lake Louise, on the sixth day of a climbing school. There were four students and one instructor on a rope. Around 1430, they were descending a snow slope on the east face, when an ice anchor gave way. The five climbers fell into a snow gully and triggered an avalanche.

The instructor and two of the students were only partly buried, and managed to dig themselves out. Then they dug out the other two students (23 and 26) and performed artificial respiration, but the two had died of asphyxiation. (Source: Banff *Crag and Canyon*, September 3, 1986, and *Ottawa Citizen*, September 2, 1986)

AVALANCHE

British Columbia, Selkirk Mountains

A neurosurgeon from Mercer Island and a noted mountaineer from Spokane, Washington, were killed on February 4, 1986, when an avalanche buried them while they were helicopter skiing in British Columbia's Selkirk Mountains.

A third man, John Gunderson (32) of Seattle, survived the avalanche and was in good condition in Arrow Lakes Hospital in Naksup. He suffered numerous cuts and bruises but was released from the hospital a few days after the accident.

Killed were Dr. James Timothy Stuntz (47), a neurosurgeon at Children's Orthopedic Hospital, and Kim Momb (29) of Spokane. Momb, three years ago, helped pioneer a route up the East Face of Mount Everest.

The three skiers were dug from the avalanche by the crew of a helicopter on the afternoon of February 4. Momb, employed by Kootenay Helicopter Skiing Ltd., was the guide for the group. (Source: *The Seattle Times*, Wednesday, February 5, 1986)

(Editor's Note: While not a climbing accident, this report is included to remind readers that back country skiing puts one in a mountaineering situation.)