

to the deck" ceiling would have probably kept helicopters from getting in. In any event, it would have been hours before any kind of organized rescue could have gotten to us, so onward and downward I plodded.

Around 2030 I arrived at the trailhead along with a sweep crew. We loaded up the van and a pick-up truck and drove down to Girdwood. By the time we hit town it was too late to go to "FirstCare." We grabbed dinner and headed back to Anchorage. About 2330 assistant instructor Karen Pzeitmair and I were dropped off at the emergency room at Providence Hospital. The knee had swollen considerably so diagnosis was apparently difficult. I was sent home some time after 0200, the doctor agreeing with my assumption that I had probably dislocated my patella.

Analysis

I believe the accident was the result of several contributing factors:

I am a poor, to at best mediocre, skier. One cannot learn if one does not fall. However, falling with a big pack in the back country does have risks.

I was having fun, perhaps too much fun. Contributing to this was my excitement at having gotten down the crux of the trip, the Headwall, and at being so close to the end of the trip. Hubris can be costly.

The binding was set too tight. We had exchanged bindings just before the trip and even though I knew my bindings had been tightened considerably, I did not take the time to re-loosen them. It is no wonder they did not release. This was the main contributing factor to the injury.

Perhaps I wouldn't have fallen if I hadn't been roped. (The rope was a distraction.) Maybe this is a case where going unroped would have been a safer alternative than roping through the very few crevasses. (Source: Todd A. Miner)

AVALANCHE, PARTY SEPARATED—NO RESCUE ATTEMPT

Alaska, Flattop Mountain

In October of 1992, four Anchorage climbers were ascending a gully on Flattop Mountain just outside of Anchorage when they were struck by an avalanche. Two were buried, one popped out, and one escaped being hit. The latter two descended.

When rescuers returned a few hours later, they found one victim quickly. He was wearing a beacon. The other was located after finding his ski pole just barely sticking out of the snow. Both victims had succumbed.

Analysis

It is not known why the two survivors made no attempt to locate the two victims. It is known that one of them, Dave Hart, was on Mount McKinley in the spring, and while descending from the summit, separated from his partner who was not doing well. Hart descended on his own, while his partner required rescue, which was accomplished by a guided party nearby. (Source: Alaskan climbers)

FALL ON ROCK, FOOTHOLD BROKE OFF, CLIMBING UNROPE

Arizona, Cochise Stronghold, Rockfellow Dome

On November 26, 1992, my friends and I (45) were checking out the climbs on Rockfellow Dome with the intention of climbing there the next day. At the base of the dome is a scree of large, smooth granite boulders. To return to camp, we had to climb over one such boul-

der. To the right of the rock on which I was standing and three feet up was a granite flake. I followed a friend, who used the flake as a foothold. Because I am much heavier than she, I first tried to test the flake by kicking it. It seemed stable, but when my full weight had shifted up and right, it broke. The crystals I gripped with my fingers were inadequate to keep me from falling. I missed the rock from which I had stepped up and landed in a crevasse (*sic*) 15 feet below. My pelvis and both arms were broken. The ulna of my right arm was protruding through the skin.

I don't remember landing or being extracted from the crevasse (*sic*). At first I was confused. Two rescue teams eventually arrived to help but they could not carry me over the rugged terrain, especially at night. Eventually an Air Force helicopter flew from the other end of the state, reaching us at 0130, ten hours after my fall. The helicopter had to hover within a few yards of the dome and winch me up. I was spinning wildly at the end of the cable. We flew to Tucson but landed at the wrong hospital. I completed the journey in an ambulance.

Analysis

I will never trust a flake. If I had been roped up and following I would not have been hurt. Lacking the rope, I would seek another route.

Always carry drugs! The medics who came to the rescue did not have any. If my friends had not brought codeine with them, I would have had to do without pain killers until I reached the hospital. (Source: Barbara Calef)

FALL ON ROCK, PLACED INADEQUATE PROTECTION

California, Joshua Tree National Monument

On January 31, 1992, at 1450, Laurie Lauer (32) fell near the top of White Lightning (5.7). Due to the stretch in the rope and the distance from her last piece of protection, the distance of the fall was 15 to 20 feet. She landed on a slab, resulting in a fractured lower right leg. She was evacuated by park rangers. (Source: David Trevino, Ranger, Joshua Tree National Monument)

FALL ON ROCK, PLACED INADEQUATE PROTECTION

California, Joshua Tree National Monument

On February 1, 1992, Michael Gardiner (31) fell while leading the Hobbit Roof (5.10). Gardiner's top piece of protection, a #2 Friend, pulled out, so he fell 30 feet to the ground. He landed on his feet, then fell to his side, hitting his head against the rock. He sustained a broken nose and sore jaw.

Analysis

Where Gardiner fell is 5.9. He was relying on only one piece of protection. He was very lucky not to have sustained greater injury, as the landing area is not good. (Source: Debbie Brenchley, Ranger, Joshua Tree National Monument)

FALL ON ROCK, OFF ROUTE, UNPLANNED BIVOUAC, MISUNDERSTANDING OF RATING SYSTEM, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Arizona, Canyon Spring Wall, De Grazia

The purpose of the trip (on December 2, 1992) was to complete a multi-pitch climb. De Grazia was selected because it provided good "exposure" with moderate difficulty. The