

Parks Canada wardens hiked in to the site. They traversed very steep, rain-soaked terrain, and reached the victim at 0500 to find that she had not survived. A second Parks Canada team flew in to the scene by helicopter at first light and evacuated J.O.'s body and the other personnel already there.

The coroner's report indicates that J.O. survived no longer than 1.5 hours after the accident because of extensive internal bleeding. She also sustained a fractured pelvis and femur.

Analysis

The main issue is that no safety device, such as a short prussik sling on the ropes above the rappel brake, was used. Also, the ends of the rappel ropes were not knotted to prevent this exact type of accident, and the victim lost control of her rappel. Contributing factors were the lateness in the day, J.O.'s inexperience (this was reported to be her first multi-pitch rappel), and the difficulty of having to pendulum to the last rappel station, and weather. (Source: Yoho National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ICE, UNROPE, ICE COLLAPSE, WARM WEATHER

Quebec, Montreal, Mont Royal

On January 6, 1993, M.D. (29), an experienced ice climber and a member of the FQM, went out with a friend to practice climbing on an ice flow at Mont Royal. About 1405, while he was climbing unroped, the ice broke away under his crampons and he fell some 20 meters, sustaining a pelvis fracture and a dislocated hip. His friend went for help, and M.D. was taken, in shock and semi-conscious, to Montreal General Hospital. He remained there one month for treatment.

Analysis

High temperatures in the days before this mishap had caused the ice to deteriorate, and so it was not reliable. (Source: Quebec Mountain Federation)

STRANDED, FATIGUE, INEXPERIENCE, PARTY SEPARATED

Quebec, Old Stoneham Cliffs

Late on August 22, 1993, Benoit L. (24) and Stephan G. (25) decided to climb Old Stoneham bluff, and started up with minimal equipment that included a rope, flashlight, and first-aid kit. After the approach, they entered steeper terrain, which involved rock scrambling and became quite exposed. About 80 meters up, Stephan found the climb too difficult and decided to turn back. But Benoit wanted to continue to the top, so he took the rope and carried on. Meanwhile, Stephan soon found he could not get down alone, so he stayed there and began to signal for help with his flashlight about 2100.

A resident of Old Stoneham noticed the light flashing in the cliffs at 2135 and called the Surete du Quebec. They took details and notified the Military Intervention Group, who immediately initiated a ground rescue operation. Six men, including a group leader, a climbing leader, a rescue instructor, and three climbers, started up toward the cliff about 2310. They found that the darkness, the steepness and length of the trail, and the weight of the rescue equipment, made the ascent difficult.

At the foot of the cliff about 2335, the group decided to split up, with two members staying there to direct the others, who would continue up the trail and traverse to the

stranded climber's position. At 0030 August 23, the climbers reached a position about 30 meters left and 12 meters above him. With the help of the headlamps of the climbers and the flashlight of the subject, the spotters below directed rescue instructor G. Gauthier as he descended to Stephan. He found him in a precarious position, standing on a 15 cm ledge with no tie-in. After securing him to his main line with a sling, he called for climbing leader A. Paquin to join him at 0115, and they set up a lowering system, using a figure-eight descender. Then Paquin lowered Gauthier and the subject to the base of the cliff simultaneously; that way Gauthier was able to help and reassure Stephan, and control the descent rate by radio contact with Paquin. They were down safe at 0220, and group leader G. Canuel took charge of the rescued climber to usher him down the trail to the road.

Meanwhile, Paquin recovered the equipment used for anchoring the descent and rappelled twice from trees to reach the bottom, while the other climbers scrambled and walked back down the trail. All were back at the road at 0345, and the operation was complete at 0445.

Analysis

The second climber, Benoit L., abandoned his partner and never made contact with the rescue group. He returned home on his own about midday on August 23. His actions in this incident are described as reckless and negligent. (Source: Quebec Mountain Federation)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Quebec, Val David, Mount King

On September 25, 1993, F.C. (30), with seven years' climbing experience, and F.D. (33) with two years' experience, were attempting "The Crown," a medium difficult route on Mount King. F.C. was leading the final pitch when she fell. Although she had placed three pieces of protection, the last two pulled out, so she fell about ten meters. She struck the rocks on her right side, then her head, and was unconscious. Her belayer, F.D., lowered her at the end of the rope to the first belay station, where other climbers took charge of moving her to the ground, and then, with the help of Paul Lapegrière, Rescue Co-ordinator at Val David, to the parking lot. In hospital, she was found to have a basal skull fracture and bruises. (Source: Quebec Mountain Federation)

Analysis

The victim sustained head injuries in spite of wearing a climbing helmet, which indicates the importance of the helmet: she may not have survived without it. However, her protection placements were not sound enough to withstand the force of her fall. (Source: Orvel Miskiw)

AVALANCHE, ROCKFALL, WARM WEATHER

Yukon Territory, Mount Logan, Early Bird Buttress

On May 19, 1993, three German climbers, L.S., S.V., and S.W., were established at an advanced base camp for an attempt on the Early Bird Buttress of the south face of Mount Logan (6052 meters), after about a week of exploring and acclimatizing on Mounts Baird and Augusta. L.S. and S.V. left this camp at 0430, ascended on skis to the base of