

had learned to climb on indoor walls, and this was his first climb on real rock, so it's quite likely that his inexperience was a contributing factor. A helmet would likely have minimized or prevented the head wound. (Source: Kananaskis Country Alpine Specialist)

FALL ON ROCK—HAND HOLD CAME OFF, OFF ROUTE

Alberta, Castle Mountain, Goat Plateau Approach

On July 15, a party of two climbers scrambled up the standard approach for the Castle Mountain bivouac hut. During the approach, they lost the rough trail and ended up off route in a series of cliff bands and gullies. The climbers were aware that they were off route but elected to continue, as they were on easy 5th Class terrain. The lower climber fell when a handhold broke away, and she tumbled several hundred meters down the mountain, suffering fatal head injuries. The Warden Service was contacted and evacuated the victim by helicopter.

Analysis

Neither climber was wearing a helmet at the time and the rope was stowed in the pack. While a helmet may not have prevented the massive head injury, the use of a rope may have. The victim was wearing a heavy pack at the time and this may have contributed to the fall. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

FALL ON SNOW, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS

Alberta, Mount Andromeda

Two climbers had ascended Mount Andromeda and were descending via the Andromeda-Athabasca Col on July 31. Both climbers jumped across the bergschrund with crampons on. On the landing, one of the climbers caught her crampon and broke her ankle. The team was able to descend about 50 feet to more level ground. The uninjured climber descended the crevassed glacier and reported the incident. The climber was evacuated by helicopter and taken to EMS.

Analysis

This bergschrund poses many problems for climbers. Early in the season before the 'schrund opens up, many climbers try to jump across with crampons on, because it is less time consuming than setting up an anchor and rappelling. The consequence of jumping with crampons on is evident. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

STRANDED, DIFFICULT TERRAIN, INSUFFICIENT RESEARCH

Alberta, Clemenceau to Chaba River Trek

An experienced party of eleven climbers flew in to the Clemenceau Icefield in August, spent five days climbing and exploring, and then started hiking out north toward the Banff-Jasper Highway. They made excellent progress over glaciated terrain, ending up on the West Chaba Glacier.

Their intent was to follow the West branch of the Chaba river to its confluence with the East Chaba River and thence down to the Athabasca River and out to the highway at Sunwapta Falls resort. However, the West Chaba river cuts a deep gorge below the

glacier, and traveling beside or above this gorge is extremely treacherous.

The river was in flood, and crossing the river was out of the question. The group felt that to continue on their route would be unreasonably hazardous, and to backtrack would make any search efforts impossible. They therefore decided to stay put and wait for evacuation.

Due to the number of people in the party, the competent nature of the group, and the duration and complexity of the trip, it was felt by rescuers that being overdue by one day was not unreasonable. As a result, the party was given the better part of a day to hike out before a search was commenced. At 1700 on August 11, a search was started. With help from a detailed route plan provided to the searchers by the party prior to their departure, the rescue party was able to fly over the exact route the climbers intended to take, leading the searchers directly to the stranded group. The group was healthy and happy, but glad to see the helicopter, as they had been waiting at this campsite for three days and their food was getting low. The group was flown out to the highway.

Analysis

The group was experienced and the trip leader had done background research on the route. However the information he had received was from a winter perspective. The canyon which blocked their way would be hazardous but navigable in winter, but much more dangerous in summer.

Attempting to negotiate the gorge with this large group would have been unduly dangerous and difficult. Their decision to stop and wait for evacuation was the best they could have made in the circumstances. The group was so appreciative of the evacuation that they offered, and did pay for the helicopter evacuation. The money received from this group has gone directly into enhanced SAR training for public safety wardens. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

FALL ON ROCK—ROCK DISLODGED, CLIMBING UNROPED

Alberta, Mount Neptuak

On August 10, a party of two were ascending the normal Northwest Ridge route on Mount Neptuak. The route is mostly loose 3rd and 4th Class, but is an exposed ridge on certain sections. While climbing a short, easy 5th Class step unroped, N.T. dislodged a hold, causing him to fall approximately 50 feet to lower angled terrain, then fell another 100 feet. He was killed in the fall. His partner returned to the hiking trail at Wenkchemna Pass and sent nearby hikers for help. A Warden Service rescue crew responded, and the deceased was evacuated by heli-sling.

Analysis

The route is technically easy, but is typical of the area because of loose rock and exposed sections. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

STRANDED DUE TO SHOULDER DISLOCATION

Alberta, Mount Louis

On August 10, G.G. and G.B. were beginning the exit pitches on the summit tower of Mount Louis. They were attempting the classic Perren Variation (5.7). While starting to lead the first pitch, G.G. dislocated his shoulder and backed off the pitch. He was able to relocate the shoulder, but was unable to use the arm and continue.