

### **Analysis**

S. said that the bolt looked good when he clipped it, and suspects that the rock surrounding the bolt may have failed. Climbers should be cognizant of the fact that poor rock or poorly placed or old bolts can be prone to pulling out or breaking. However, considering the number of bolts that are clipped every year by sport climbers in North America, this type of incident is relatively rare. (Source: Nancy Hansen)

### **FALLING ROCK-DISLODGED, FALL ON SNOW, NO BELAY OR PROTECTION Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Lefroy**

On August 18, four climbers were ascending the 45-degree snow-and-ice route on Mount Lefroy. They were traveling as two independent rope teams, moving together with short lengths of rope between the climbers. At 3400 meters, the route narrows into a gully bordered by rock. One of the lead climbers dislodged a rock which struck the lower climber, causing both members of the team to lose their balance and fall about 300 meters down the route. The other two climbers climbed down to assess and stabilize them. One climber descended to the Abbot Pass Hut to use the emergency phone. Upon discovering that the phone was not working, he began heading further down the mountain for help when he ran into another climber with a cell phone. Both climbers were evacuated via heli-sling by Warden Service rescue crews. They had sustained multiple fractures, bruising, and puncture wounds from crampons.

### **Analysis**

It is common practice for climbers to travel together with a short length of rope between them on straightforward terrain. Part of the challenge and risk in mountaineering includes assessing when the terrain and conditions dictate setting up anchors and pitching out the route. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

### **FALLING ROCK**

#### **Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Little**

On August 29, a party of four was ascending the normal route on Mount Little during an Association of Canadian Mountain Guides Assistant Alpine Guide exam. Two candidates were roped together and a third was roped to the examiner. As they were walking along the base of the ridge a large rock fell from the ridge crest about ten meters above them and struck the examiner on the head. The other climbers attempted resuscitation, but it appeared that the victim had died instantly. They attempted to call Park Dispatch by radio, but the radio was not functioning. Two of the climbers descended to Moraine Lake to report the accident. One stayed with the victim and continued resuscitation attempts. He had a cell phone with which he was eventually able to get a connection through to Warden Service dispatch. At this point, it was snowing heavily and the rescue helicopter was only able to land on the toe of the upper glacier. Warden Service rescue crews climbed to the scene and confirmed the fatality. The weather deteriorated further and the helicopter was unable to fly

down. The guide candidate descended to Moraine Lake and the pilot and two rescuers spent the night with the helicopter. By mid-morning the next day, the weather improved enough to allow the helicopter to complete the evacuation of the rescuers and the body.

### **Analysis**

All of the climbers were wearing helmets. This is a heavily traveled route, possibly the most popular in the Ten Peaks area. This section of the climb was not known for rockfall. There were no smaller rocks or debris which accompanied the large block and which may have provided some warning. This incident is a reminder that there are inherent risks in mountaineering that cannot be completely eliminated. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service, Helen Sovdat)

## **FALL ON ICE/SNOW, UNROPED, POOR ROUTE CHOICE, HASTE**

### **Alberta, Columbia Icefield, Mount Athabasca**

On August 29 at 0500, F.W. (43), S.C. (34), and U.T. (37) set out to climb the North Face of Mount Athabasca. They reached the summit at 1730 and started to descend by the normal route. The group found that their crampons were balling up with the wet snow, but a hard layer ten centimeters down made them decide to keep their crampons on. At the top of a snow-and-ice feature known as the Silverhorn, F.W. began to descend the steep snow slope instead of taking the easier shale trail to the left. S.C. suggested they follow the shale trail down, but F.W. felt that it would be quicker to go down the snow slope. F.W. started down the slope and then turned to face in, saying that it was getting icy. S.C. was about ten meters above F.W. and heard him shout and watched him fall down the steep slope and out of sight. F.W. did not respond when S.C. and U.T. called him. They descended the shale trail and short-roped down the standard route. Near the base of the Silverhorn, they saw F.W.'s ice ax above the bergschrund, 400 meters below where he had slipped.

At 1900, S.C. climbed to the bergschrund edge and found F.W. one meter down and lying on secure snow. He responded to his name but had obviously sustained multiple injuries. S.C. left F.W. lying on his side and put extra clothing around him to keep him warm and stabilize his neck. U.T. was a less experienced mountaineer, and S.C. did not want to leave U.T. with the victim in the worsening weather, nor allow U.T. to go down the crevassed glacier by herself. So S.C. descended with U.T. to get help.

At the toe of the glacier, they met two other climbers. D.R. went back up to the bergschrund and reached F.W. at 2030, while S.C. descended to get help from the Warden Service. F.W. was unresponsive and his airway was blocked with blood. D.R. did CPR for an hour with no response or signs of life and so left F.W. to hike down. D.R. met up with responding Park Wardens and a Medic on the moraine near the base of the mountain. With D.R.'s news, it was decided to wait until morning to recover F.W.'s body.

Heavy snowfall that night prevented the Park Wardens from flying to the site until 1100 the following day, at which time they did avalanche control with explosives to make the site safe for rescuers. Two size 1.5-2.0 slab avalanches