

15-meter cliff. He then rolled 50 meters down a steep scree slope where he was stopped by a rock. He received multiple injuries in the fall. One member of the party hiked out for help while the others stayed with the victim.

A Warden Service Rescue Team evacuated the victim by helicopter sling after initial treatment of injuries. He died September 21, 1981. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

Analysis

The party was in terrain that was difficult for them. The victim may have slipped on loose rocks at the top of the cliff or simply lost his balance. When working near the edge of a cliff, a belay is necessary. Far too many serious accidents occur because the consequences of a slip on moderate terrain are underestimated. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

(Editor's Note: While this is not a mountaineering accident, it is included to illustrate how backpackers and hikers can get into difficulties in mountainous terrain.)

FALLING ROCK

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Deltaform Mountain

At 6:30 a.m. on August 18, 1981, four men began an ascent of Deltaform Mountain via the north glacier route. By noon they had gained the rock rib above the most difficult ice. They left the ice and climbed right out onto a rock rib below a steep rock prow to have lunch. As they started to move back onto the ice, a massive rockfall occurred from approximately 1,000 feet above them. One climber was hit on the head by a falling rock and suffered head injuries. He complained of tingling and numbness in the head, neck and arms. He was evacuated by a rescue team using helicopter sling techniques. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

Analysis

The lives of the entire party were saved by stopping for lunch under a steep face that offered protection. Most of the rocks passed harmlessly overhead, with only a few of the smaller ones striking the climbers.

In the Canadian Rockies, gullies and ice chutes are prone to natural rockfall and should be avoided when possible. If such a route is chosen, all possible efforts should be made to use the terrain for protection from falling rocks. (Source: C. Israelson, Banff National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPE, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Cascade Mountain

On August 19, 1981, T. W. was hiking to the Cascade Amphitheatre, a hanging valley which is passed on a scrambling route to the summit of Cascade Mountain. En route he happened to meet R. S. (27) who suggested that T. W. accompany him and he would show him a bit of actual climbing. R. S. led them into the Amphitheatre and up a gully into cliffs leading back toward the ridge trail. R. S. began climbing up a shallow gully of compact rock; about 50 meters above the rock, he came off and fell down to T. W.'s position. Fortunately, he hung up before falling over another vertical 30-meter drop. R. S. sustained a broken hip, possible internal injuries and broken teeth. (Source: T. Auger, Banff National Park)