

**FALL ON SNOW, FALL INTO CREVASSE, CLIMBING UNROPED****British Columbia, Purcell Mountains, Bugaboos**

On August 17, 1981, Robert Howard (age about 25) and Bruce Kay were ascending the broad snow gully leading to the Snowpatch-Bugaboo Col. Near the top, Kay climbed off the snow onto rock, while Howard continued on the snow. About 20 feet from the top, he slipped out of the steps he was kicking, slid down a runnel while attempting to ice-ax arrest and was swallowed by the bergschrund they had passed on the way up. Kay descended to the bergschrund and called down to Howard, who replied that he had broken his leg. He was out of sight, 60–100 feet down, somewhat wedged under an overhang. As he had the rope, Kay couldn't get to him.

Kay ran to Boulder Camp where a rescue party was organized and a helicopter was summoned by radio. Approximately two and a half hours after the accident, rescue proceedings were started at the bergschrund. Two climbers, one with first-aid experience, descended to Howard and splinted his leg using an air splint from the hut; meanwhile, hauling anchors were established above.

Howard was hauled out by about six people on the rope. Once out, he was bundled up, given tea and tied into a stretcher which had arrived with the helicopter from CMH Lodge. He was then lowered by three 150-foot ropes tied together down the 45-degree snow slope to the waiting helicopter which took him to Golden Hospital. The rescue was completed approximately five hours after the accident. (Source: C. Sadleir, East Kootenay Park District; Bruce Kay, Pam Little)

**Analysis**

Less haste and more concentration on step kicking could have prevented the slip. Use of the rope and belays would have arrested the fall. Fortunately the victim remained conscious and was able to put on clothes which made the situation much less serious than it might have been. It was also very fortunate, considering how cold it was in the bergschrund, that competent people and rescue equipment were nearby. (Source: Bruce Kay, Pam Little)

**FALL ON SNOW****British Columbia, Rocky Mountains, Mount Assiniboine**

On August 18, 1981, after spending the night in the Hind Hut, Russell Reno and his son ascended Mount Assiniboine via the northwest face and north ridge. On the descent, they decided not to rope up for the snow slope on the northwest face, as they would be moving together and the slope was only 45–50°. They were wearing crampons.

About halfway down the snow slope, Reno, who was descending facing out, slipped. Although his ice ax was in the snow almost to the hilt, it pulled out. By the time he rolled onto his stomach, he was moving very fast and his self-arrest was not effective. He slid some 500 vertical feet, over the bergschrund and onto the glacier, bouncing over ice hummocks on the way. He broke several ribs and sustained a compression fracture of a vertebra.

His son assisted him to the hut and then descended to the Ranger Station at Lake Magog to radio for assistance. After being given first aid, Reno was helicoptered to Banff Hospital. (Source: C. Sadleir, East Kootenay Park District and V. R. Reno)

**Analysis**

If I had been descending the slope facing inwards, I am sure I would have been able to arrest the slip since I would have fallen on my stomach rather than on my back. On the other hand,