

**Analysis**

The victim had little experience in rappelling. He attempted a rappel on a rope he knew was too short. He had done the same rappel the day before and found he had to tie a short sling rope onto the end of his rappel rope in order to reach the ground. On the day of the accident he mistakenly thought if he went quickly, the friction of the single rope would be sufficient to slow his descent. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park)

**SLIP ON ROCK, AVALANCHE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, WEATHER****Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Whyte**

A party of three made a scrambling ascent to the Popes Peak-Mount Whyte col on June 24, 1983. On descent, one of the party (37) slipped on loose rock and tumbled into a snow gully. His fall started a wet snow avalanche which carried him down for about 100 meters, sometimes buried, sometimes above the snow. He was stopped at the edge of the snow slope by rock debris. Injuries included multiple lacerations, shock, a fractured clavicle and a fractured tibia. One companion went to summon help from park wardens, the other remained with the victim. The onset of a spring snow storm compounded the threat of hypothermia to the victim. Rescuers completed the evacuation by helicopter in marginal flight conditions. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park)

**Analysis**

The group had fairly extensive experience scrambling, but underestimated the length of the route and the hazards of loose rock. The victim's light weight clothing was insufficient to prevent the onset of hypothermia when the weather deteriorated after the accident occurred. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park)

**FALL ON SNOW OR ICE, CLIMBING ALONE****Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Bowlen**

On July 4, 1983, a call was received by the Lake Louise Warden Office to report that a friend of the caller was overdue from a solo climbing trip in the Moraine Lake area. A subsequent search found the climber's body at the bottom of the 3-3 ½ Couloir. The reason for his fall is unknown, but wet snow over ice or rockfall may have been a contributing cause. The victim had been climbing for several years, had made numerous solo ascents, and was well equipped for the climb. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park)

**Analysis**

This was the fifth fatality in as many years on this particular route with twice that number of accidents. This makes it by far the most consistently dangerous route in the Canadian Rockies. Highly visible from Moraine Lake, the snow and ice couloir was a popular route to the old Graham Cooper Hut. (This hut was removed in 1983 following construction of the Neil Colgan Hut at the Bowlen-Little col.)

With good conditions the route is viable, but safety depends on speed and judge-

ment. Subtle changes of the incline entice many climbers to use unsuitable equipment or techniques higher in the couloir. Sweeping up at a modest 33 degrees at 2100 meters, the slope reaches 40 degrees at 2360 meters, 44 degrees at 2500 meters, then just over 50 degrees at 2700 meters. By mid summer the last few pitches are normally ice. Objective hazards include frequent rock fall and wet snow avalanches.

Case histories show a variety of subjective and objective causes of accidents, with no single cause predominating. Given the rate of accidents for this particular route, it is very difficult to recommend it with a clear conscience except under ideal conditions. The nearby Perren route provides a much safer alternative to the icefields and hut site. Information about conditions and access via the Perren route should be obtained from Park Officers prior to climbing in this area. (Source: Clair Israelson, Banff National Park)

### **FALL ON SNOW, AVALANCHE, FATIGUE**

#### **Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Stanley Peak**

On July 23, 1983, three climbers were unable to make the summit of Stanley Peak via a route on the north face and turned back around noon. During the descent of a gully on the lower north face, Bob (50) slipped on wet snow. He arrested his fall but pulled M. and F. off. These two men slid past Bob in a small wet snow avalanche and yanked Bob out of his arrest. The three men then fell approximately 150 meters down the gully which included going over a small cliff band. Bob suffered a fractured leg and gashes to his head. M. descended for help, reaching the highway around 0700 the next morning. The party was discovered overdue by the new voluntary registration system during the night of July 23, and M. was met at the trailhead by Kootenay Wardens checking the overdue. Bob and F. were slung off the face by 0830 by a crew dispatched from Banff. (Source: Tim Auger, Banff National Park)

#### **Analysis**

Bob had 30 years of moderate mountaineering experience. Although it was not specifically stated in the report, it is likely that fatigue was the reason the party turned around on the climb, and it is also likely that it contributed to the slip on the relatively easy snow slope. (Source: Tim Auger, Banff National Park)

### **FALL ON ROCK, PARTY SEPARATED, INEXPERIENCE**

#### **Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Rundle**

On the evening of August 3, 1983, two strangers, Hugh (26) and Dan, met at a campsite near Banff and arranged to scramble up Mount Rundle together the next day. The easy route follows an excellent trail to treeline and then a scramble route up talus and slabs for several thousand meters to the summit.

The two men set out early on August 4. Eventually it was apparent that Hugh was holding Dan back to a slow pace, so at treeline they separated. Dan was able to scramble to the summit within a couple of hours and descended via a different route following a major gully system which intersects the main trail at treeline.

He did not see Hugh after leaving him behind, and expected he had given up the scramble in the heat. Hugh had said he would likely not bother trying to reach the