

Analysis

Stawamus Chief has a local reputation for extremely sound rock; this may have led to overconfidence. This was the first serious rescue on the mountain, and it is fortunate that it occurred in perfect conditions and with a climber having relatively minor injuries. (Source: I Kay, A. Ourom)

FALL ON SNOW, INADEQUATE BELAY, WEATHER British Columbia, Selkirk Mountain, Hermit Mountain

A party of six students and instructors from the National Cadet Camp at Banff were attempting Hermit Mountain on August 14, 1983. About ten meters from the summit they were caught in a brief flurry of bad weather with poor visibility, and started a hurried descent down a snow couloir on the south face. They were travelling short roped with two on the first rope and four on the second.

One student (16), who was leading the second rope, slipped and pulled the other three off. As they tumbled past the rope of two, they loosened the snow causing these two to fall as well, and all six slid about 50 meters to the couloir fan. Attempts at self-arrest were unsuccessful. The student who first slipped suffered extensive body bruises and severe shock.

The Glacier Park Warden Office was notified and a helicopter dispatched. It arrived at 1740, two and a half hours after the accident, and was able to land on Tupper Glacier directly below the accident location. The injured student was carried by stretcher 180 meters down the steep slope to the helicopter by the warden and members of the climbing party. She was then flown directly to Revelstoke Hospital.

The next day, three other climbers in the party reported injuries that they had not previously mentioned to the warden. One of them (35), whose condition had deteriorated overnight, was suffering from a large contusion and extreme pain in the lower back and vomiting. Another had an inflamed left knee and the third had pain in both ankles. They were evacuated from their base camp by helicopter at 1330 on August 15. (Source: J. L. Turnbull, Glacier National Park)

Analysis

This is a case where use of a rope adds to, rather than diminishes, the danger, because adequate belays were not set up. More careful use of ice axes and less haste would have reduced the chances of this accident occurring.

The leaders of this group were qualified instructors and the students had had some previous experience during the summer. (Source: J. L. Turnbull, Glacier National Park)

FALLING ROCK British Columbia, Selkirk Mountains, Sir Donald Meadows

On August 22, 1983, seven climbers from an Alpine Club of Canada group based at the Wheeler Hut and a separate party of two Americans were camped in the meadows below the Sir Donald-Uto col. At approximately 2230, a massive section of the west face of Sir Donald broke loose near the summit, creating a rock slide that scoured 20 percent of the surface area of the face. Most of the debris landed on the