

survive the fall and also to be found the next day, as there is usually very little passing traffic at that time of year. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service, Western Region)

FALL ON SNOW, SKI MOUNTAINEERING

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Peyto Glacier

On April 15, 1984, in Banff National Park, a party of six ski mountaineers traveled from the Icefield Parkway, via Peyto Lake, to the Peter and Catherine Whyte hut at 2500 meters on the Peyto Glacier. The group was equipped with light touring skis, overnight camping gear, and glacier travel equipment. At 1830, after dinner, the group decided to go for one last ski. One member of the group (53) fell just below the hut and broke her ankle. The other members of the group administered first aid and took her up to the hut where they spent the night. The following morning two of them skied out and reported the accident to the Lake Louise warden office. The rescue team evacuated the victim by helicopter. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

Analysis

The victim was experienced, having been ski-mountaineering and touring in the Rockies for 15 years. A last ski run after dinner after a strenuous day may not be a good idea. Prudence is required in a place where rescue is possible only over difficult terrain or by air. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

RAPPEL ANCHOR FAILURE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Medicine Slabs

On June 10, 1984, two climbers (24 and 28) left Jacques Lake picnic area in Jasper National Park at 0500 intending to traverse the ridge of Medicine Slabs to its high point and then to descend the north side of the ridge to Summit Lake. They had both climbed for four or five years, sometimes together.

The descent began in mid-afternoon with a series of rope rappels. They found it difficult to find solid rock for conventional rappel anchors, and placed bolts on at least two occasions. Around 1900 they began their fourth rappel. The first man completed the rappel, set an ice screw into steep snow and ice for self-protection, and clipped in. When the second climber was half-way down, his rappel anchor failed. He fell onto the lower climber, knocking him off his stance, and pulling out the ice screw. Both climbers tumbled down 250 meters. On the way, they triggered an avalanche, but somehow did not become involved with the moving snow.

The climber whose rappel failed received head injuries, possibly a fractured cheek bone, and injuries to his left elbow, his ribs, and his left ankle. The other received bruises and scrapes and had lower back pain. Both men walked down the avalanche slope, but at 1600 meters elevation, the less injured climber continued alone to the parking lot and drove to Jasper to report the accident. (Source: Jasper Park Warden Service)

Analysis

The primary cause of the accident was rappel anchor failure. Back-up anchors were not used. The equipment and clothing carried by the climbers were adequate. (Source: Jasper Park Warden Service)