

for rapid rescue by the Park Service. We had taken a path somewhat south of the way I had gone on earlier trips and this led to the snow field. Obviously, without arresting gear a fall could lead to a serious accident, a possibility I had discussed prior to putting the skis on again. However, getting to the snow field on the way down, I was skiing easily and assumed I was low enough not to be taking much risk. Unwisely, I had left on my nylon wind pants and shirt, which markedly increased my acceleration upon falling, and contributed significantly to the seriousness of the injury. In doing a "hike" such as this in the winter, an ice ax should be taken along, and when warranted by the limit of one's skiing abilities, the snow should be traveled on foot with the ice ax in hand, since a few meters or so of slipping on even moderately steep hard pack can lead to a serious accident, especially when outer wear consists of slick material. (Source: Robert Kelman)

FALL ON ROCK, NUT/CAM PULLED OUT, INADEQUATE BELAY **Colorado, Boulder Canyon**

On June 4, 1984, Jay Kenney (28) and Doug Mallach (25) were climbing Bitty Buttress (5.8-) when Kenney fell. In Kenney's words, "We had completed three pitches without incident. Belayed at large ledge below crux pitch. At crux move approximately 12 meters above ledge, I fell off, and somehow imparted a horizontal vector to fall, thus causing last two pieces of protection (#6 stopper and small tricam) to pull. I fell just past the belay ledge and struck a small ledge one meter below, landing in an upright stance. Inexplicably, belayer had not tied in, and was dragged one or two meters across ledge, probably the difference between hitting a ledge and not. The belayer still managed to break fall somewhat. We treated each other for lacerations and abrasions, traversed off, hobbled down to the road, and drove to Denver for medical treatment, where it was discovered that I had also fractured my left hand." (Source: Jay Kenney)

Analysis

Belayer should have tied in. Costly mistake. Protection should have been placed to avoid horizontal as well as vertical pull. There was no deformation of stopper or tricam. Fall caught by wired Forrest copper wedge, which was badly deformed, unable to remove. (Source: Jay Kenney)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPE, INEXPERIENCE **Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park**

On June 12, 1984, Paul Ormsby (23) and Michael Doroff (24) hiked to the base of MacGregor Slab intending only to hike up and around the backside of the mountain to the summit. Instead, they decided to free solo a route on the west side of the face. Ormsby climbed the route the year before using ropes and anchors. About 100 meters up the face, Ormsby reached a point where he could climb no higher and decided to down-climb back to Doroff, about three meters below him. While repositioning his stance, Ormsby peeled off, slid and tumbled to the base of the wall sustaining fatal injuries in the fall. (Source: Charlie Logan, Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis

Ormsby apparently had logged just enough experience to foster a dangerous level of confidence yet not enough experience or instruction to recognize the hazards and possible consequences of an unprotected mistake. "Rock scrambling" by Park visitors with little or no experience seems often to go too far before realizing their tenuous position. They are then forced to fatal or near-fatal commitments. (Source: Charlie Logan, Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Notchtop Mountain

On July 1, 1984, after completing a successful ascent of the Spiral Route on Notchtop Mountain, Charles Sperry (20) and Lee Jamieson (19) unroped and began an unprotected traverse of the summit ridge (a narrow ledge system) to the top of the descent gully. About 0900 Jamieson was either hit by falling rock or his hand-hold failed, causing him to fall over 100 meters down the near-vertical gully wall sustaining fatal injuries in the fall. Rangers responded and carried out a helicopter recovery from the scene. (Source: Charlie Logan, Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis

It is not known for certain whether a hand-hold failed or Jamieson was hit from above. In either case, on that particular section of the traverse, it may have been better to protect the narrow and unforgiving ledge system. Many climbers, including Park Rangers, have successfully negotiated the traverse unroped with no error and, therefore, no problem. In retrospect the potential is unfortunately all too clear. The traverse should be protected if one would prefer a second chance. (Source: Charlie Logan, Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK Colorado, Mount Aeolus

On July 6, 1984, Joseph Stolla (37), an experienced climber and an attorney from Englewood, Colorado, fell to his death from Mount Aeolus when a large block of rock broke off. A month later, a hiker named Paul Rockwood (20) from California fell 200 meters to his death from the precipitous South Ridge. (Source: Peggy Parr, El Paso County Search and Rescue)

Analysis

The climbing victim, about whom we have few details, was experienced and using appropriate equipment when the accident occurred. The hiking victim had left his companion, continuing up a technical route on the 4300 meter mountain wearing tennis shoes and having left behind his pack containing warm clothes. There was a hail storm of several centimeters while he was likely near the summit.

The Chicago Basin, which is a rugged area, is accessible to everyone because of the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad. Experienced climbers call Chicago Basin "a Disneyland of tourists with a false sense of security." The mountain contains many places with extreme exposure, and is composed of eroding rock. (Source: Peggy Parr, El Paso County Search and Rescue)