

from the weight of his partner. He solved this problem by cutting the rope. JC used a second rope to body rappel down to his partner. As he crossed the bergschrund, he retrieved his pack (lost in the accident), only to lose it again and have it roll into a crevasse. (This must have been a depressing moment, as the pack contained all the bivouac gear for both men.) Because of their injuries, they were unable to move much further, and spent 24 hours waiting for help. Both climbers suffered concussions and had been unconscious for a period of time after the accident. In addition, DK severely damaged both knees and suffered back injuries from falling ice and crampon wounds.

The next day a rescue was initiated through a routine check of climbing registrations. The climbers were found and flown off the mountain at 1830. (Source: D. Norcross, Banff National Park)

### **Analysis**

The climbers were on this route too late in the day. Both men were experienced climbers and knew the cornice hanging above was a significant hazard, but they were anxious to finish the climb. A bivouac and an early start the next morning would have been safer. The climbers were lucky to be rescued the day after the accident. In their condition, a second night at below-freezing temperatures would have greatly reduced their chances for survival. An additional point is that this accident shows the enormous forces the human body can withstand and survive. (Source: D. Norcross, Banff National Park)

## **BENIGHTED IN (1) RAIN AND (2) SNOWSTORM, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Cory**

On August 11, 1985, two climbers ascended Cory Crack, a popular gully/chimney route on a limestone face near Banff. They were stopped by darkness one pitch from the top. The weather had been deteriorating all day: the temperature dropped and it rained all night. The climbers were soaked and hypothermic by the time they reached their car at noon the next day, just as a helicopter search was getting underway. (Source: Banff Warden Park Service)

On September 23, 1985, two climbers started up Cory Crack at 1100. Part way up, they found icy conditions. It began to snow, but they persisted, and ended up spending a freezing night in the chimney with no bivouac gear. In the morning they scratched their way up a couple of short pitches to the top, with a few falls en route. At noon they were found at the top by park wardens, and slung off by helicopter to the valley. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

### **Analysis**

This is a popular local route, but climbers underestimate it and every year some are forced to spend the night out. It is basically a moderate rock climb, but a bad place to be in a storm. Rock climbers should carry at least the basic survival gear on routes like this, and should back off when time or conditions dictate. (Source: Banff Park Warden Service)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INEXPERIENCE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Fryatt**

On August 18, 1985, two men (35 and 15) left their high camp and climbed all day on the southwest face of Mt. Fryatt. They had only climbing boots and day packs for equipment. At 1730, the older climber reached the peak, while the other waited 100 meters below. On

the return they decided to descend a snow and ice gully. Without ice axes, crampons, or rope, they stepped onto the slope and fell about 50 meters before stopping. The younger climber suffered a deep laceration in his left knee. The other one bandaged the wound to prevent blood loss, and they struggled back to camp with frequent short rests, arriving about an hour after sundown.

The following day, the uninjured climber walked out and reported the accident to the Warden Service at Jasper. A helicopter picked up the injured climber at 1630. (Source: Jasper Park Warden Service)

### **Analysis**

The climbers' objective was beyond their skill and experience level. They did not register or attempt to get route information from Park Offices. (Source: Jasper Park Warden Service)

## **FALL ON ROCK, DESCENDING UNROPED, OFF ROUTE** **British Columbia, Selkirk Mountains, Mount Sir Donald**

At 0500 on August 24, 1985, a party of two (31 and 27) set out from the Illecillewaet Campground (1220 meters) to attempt a light, rapid ascent of Mt. Sir Donald. They short-cut to the northwest arete via a prominent corner south of the Uto Col. They then climbed the arete unroped to the summit, reaching it around 1420. The descent was begun at 1500, with a solo climber who had joined the party on the ascent.

At a prominent band at 2900 meters, the party left the normal Northeast Arete route and followed a ledge system across the West Face. The reason for this was that they were catching up to another descending party, and did not want to be held up. After some discussion of the appropriateness of the improvised route, the third member left the group and went back to the arete.

The ledge system ran out at the south end of the West Face, offering no reasonable line to the South Face descent route. The party continued down-climbing unroped through a series of short rock bands above an area of smooth and downsloping slabs. Near the top of the slabs, one of the climbers (27) appeared to be losing his footing, and froze in a "spidered-out" position (arms and legs extended, facing out). His partner offered his leg as a hold. The lower climber was unable to reach up, and most likely lost friction as he leaned back into the wall. The result was a rapid fall over a series of slightly stepping slabs sloping about 60 degrees into a gully of about 25 degrees, and a final vertical plunge into the moat between the wall and the Vaux Glacier. The total vertical distance was about 3000 meters.

The remaining climber rappelled off the face onto the Vaux Glacier. Unable to locate his friend, he completed the descent and reported the accident to the Warden Service in Rogers Pass at 2100. The next morning, the body was raised with a Z-pulley and flown out. (Source: E. Dafoe, Mount Revelstoke/Glacier National Park)

### **Analysis**

These men had climbed together regularly for four years, and had climbed numerous routes more difficult than this one. However, on this occasion they were attempting a descent route without knowing where it would lead, and though the climber who fell was wearing a harness, he was not using the proper rope or wearing a hard hat. (Source: E. Dafoe, Mount Revelstoke/Glacier National Park)