

nearly 1500 by the time they reached the summit. They returned by approximately the same route by which they had ascended. The second rope team fell behind, and were descending Adamant Glacier when the first rope team reached camp. One member (37) of the second rope team had become tired to the point of nausea on reaching the snout of the glacier around 1930. For about 50 meters, the ice was very slippery, but crampons were not being worn.

The tired climber slipped and broke her ankle. Her companion returned to the camp for help, and a group quickly went up to apply first aid and carry her down to camp. Helicopter evacuation was arranged by radio. (Source: Fred Thiessen and Heather Chow, Kootenay Mountaineering Club)

Analysis

The accident was preventable by wearing crampons. After a long climb on a warm day, the victim was probably very tired and dehydrated and did not have the strength to correct herself when she slipped. She is a very experienced mountaineer. (Source: Fred Thiessen, Kootenay Mountaineering Club)

SLIP ON SNOW, FALL INTO BERGSCHRUND, CLIMBING UNROPED

British Columbia, Selkirk Mountains, Mount Thor

On August 10, 1986, a party of two left camp to attempt a new route on the southeast face of Mount Thor. After a rock climb estimated at 5.7 and 5.8 in places, they were stopped by a 5.9 crack about one and a half pitches from the summit. They rappelled back down. At the bottom of the last rappel, the first one down (40) found himself on a small ledge, about two meters above the iced-up bottom of a small bergschrund, and level with its lip about one meter away.

The choice was between downclimbing and stepping across. Across, the snow looked soft, and the slope beyond was steep, but not long, and apparently with a good runoff. He stepped across. It turned out that the snow was hard, and his feet slipped from under him, and he started to slide—into a second bergschrund that could not be seen from the bottom of the rappel. He hit the far side of the bergschrund feet first, then bounced back and fell into the bergschrund.

The second climber hurried down and got him out. The injured climber took pain medication and the other returned to camp for help. A helicopter was called by radio, a club rescue team got him down a snow slope and he was flown out. He was found to have a broken right heel and severely sprained right ankle. (Source: Steve Horvath and Fred Thiessen, Kootenay Mountaineering Club)

Analysis

A classic case of a rappel not going quite far enough. Beyond the protection of the rope, it really is necessary to check and know the terrain below. The injured climber was very experienced and physically fit. Fortunately, he was fully dressed with gaiters, big boots, hard hat, and full-sized climbing pack, all of which provided protection. (The hard hat had fresh scratches on it.) (Source: Fred Thiessen and Steve Horvath, Kootenay Mountaineering Club)