

off in the toboggan and taken to hospital. (Source: George Field, Alpine Specialist, Kananaskis Country)

Analysis

The fall was a long one. Protection placed more frequently would have resulted in a shorter fall. (Source: George Field, Alpine Specialist, Kananaskis Country)

FALL INTO CREVASSE, CLIMBING ALONE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Crowfoot Mountain

On August 13, 1989, F.E. (58) was hiking up Crowfoot Mountain. At 1100, he was ascending the small, relatively snow-free glacier on the West Face of the mountain. He stepped onto a snow bridge and fell about ten meters into a crevasse. His fall was stopped by a small snow bridge, which prevented him from landing in the water pooled at the bottom. Although uninjured, he did not have crampons, ice ax, or any other tool with which to extricate himself.

F.E. was located by helicopter 55 hours later by a Parks Service rescue team after a long ground and aerial search. Shortly after he was found, a major snow storm came in which would have made any further searching impossible. (Source: Banff National Park Warden Service)

Analysis

Traveling alone on any glacier, no matter how harmless in appearance, is a questionable practice. F.E. was an experienced mountain scrambler, whose practice of carrying lots of extra clothing and food undoubtedly saved his life. (Source: Banff National Park Warden Service)

STRANDED, CLIMBING ALONE, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Cascade Mountain

On September 21, 1989, a lone scrambler started climbing up the southeast face of Cascade Mountain. The terrain is complex and is third and fourth class. He turned around before reaching the summit, but could not retrace his steps on the way down. He started down a gully, and after a short fall, became stranded on a large chockstone in the gully. He spent two nights there before being reported overdue by friends who arrived at his house for a party which he was to be hosting. The next morning (September 24), Park Wardens found him, lowered him, and slung him out by helicopter. (Source: M. Ledwidge, Banff National Park Warden Service)

Analysis

The stranded climber did not leave any reliable information as to where he was going, and he did not take the standard route to the summit of Cascade. It took a lot of investigation as well as the location of the victim's bicycle at the base of the ascent route to determine his location.

Obtaining better route information could have prevented the accident. (Source: M. Ledwidge, Banff National Park Warden Service)

(Editor's Note: This is not an accident which happened to a climber. Cascade Mountain is a prominent peak close to the Trans-Canada Highway and close to the Banff townsite. It has often been the scene of hikers or scramblers wandering into rock climbing situations.)

FAILURE OF RAPPEL—FAILURE TO CHECK SYSTEM

British Columbia, Squamish, Smoke Bluffs

On May 28, 1989, Deborah Richards and I were finishing up three days of climbing in the Squamish area. I had just finished a lead on Cat's Crack (5.7 or 5.8, not sure). Deborah wanted to top rope Pink Flamingo which is easily accessed by rappelling off the ledge below. I set up the anchors for the rope. We had a bombproof tree to anchor to, but I decided to set up a safety anchor (just to keep practicing safe climbing techniques) and I *know* how dangerous rappelling is.

Anyway, Deborah went down first, after we checked her rappel set up. I agreed to go second as I had been climbing more than she that spring and was having a great day. After Deborah was through, I rechecked the anchors and put on the pack to bring down the gear. My helmet was hanging from the back of my pack. I decided at the last minute to put it on because I didn't want it flopping around, and rappelling *is* dangerous. I looped the rope through my figure-eight, locked my locking carabiner and began backing down the face. About two meters into the rappel, I noticed one strand of my rope being quickly pulled over my head. I grabbed for it to stop it, but I was already falling. I remember bouncing three times and being certain I would die, as people don't survive 20 meters plus free falls.

My helmet was seriously damaged. I have no doubt that it saved my life, while wearing the pack minimized the severity of my injuries. (They were severe enough with it.) Please tell people to wear their helmets. I kept mine in the hospital with me for a month on my IV stand and plan to have it bronzed! I just had put mine on at the last second. I regret to say I had done many rappels the weekend of the fall without it.

My shoulder, which received one of 13 total fractures, is permanently damaged, but I am still planning to climb. As of today, I have rappelled again and done a little top roping. I need to get the rod out of my leg before I lead again. Fortunately, my orthopedist climbs and has been most supportive during a tough rehabilitation period. Deborah does not want to climb again as a result of this accident. (Source: Shawn Kenderdine, 37)

Analysis

It was really difficult to figure out what happened. Rescue workers checked the anchors and they were fine; my harness was fine and the locking 'biner was locked, but the rope was pulled down and still connected to my 'biner. After talking to highly experienced climbers and setting up the system as it was that day, what appears to have happened is that I clipped only one of the rope loops through my my locking carabiner instead of both. This would account for the strand of rope moving very quickly above me and the fact that the rope was still attached to it after the fall. (It was completely pulled down with me.)

I have been climbing for seven years and am known to be careful and very safety conscious. I don't know how I could have changed it. I will always check three times to make sure both rope loops are in the locking 'biner. I checked twice and that wasn't enough. This was an easy error to make. I'm surprised it hasn't happened more.

One more thing: we could have scrambled down but the downclimbing has one