

a difficult 300-meter route. He was wearing a harness with some hardware, but no helmet. About 100 meters from the start, he came off and fell all the way to the ground, hitting a few ledges on the way down. After a brief search, other climbers found him in the woods about 12 meters below the start of the route. He was still breathing when found. First aid was applied to his numerous head wounds, and he was carried by stretcher to the road, where an ambulance picked him up and took him to hospital. He died the next morning of multiple skull fractures. (Source: Denis Gravel, Federation Quebecoise de la Montagne)

Analysis

We will never really know what caused Alain's fall. However, the morning of the same day, he had climbed another route on Mont du Gros Bras with a companion. His decision to make a solo climb of another route at the end of the day is probably an underlying cause of the accident. Fatigue from the previous ascent (another 300-meter route) as well as the short time until darkness (at 1845) were probably factors that contributed to his fall.

Alain was a good climber. He was also one of the new generation of climbers who disregard danger in the interest of performance. This was not his first solo, nor his first fall. Solo climbing always carries risks, and those who do it must realize that the smallest error can be fatal. (Source: Denis Gravel, Federation Quebecoise de la Montagne)

FALL ON ROCK, NO HELMET

Quebec, Gatineau Park, Western Cwm

On October 8, 1989, Steve Adcock (32) was leading an attempt on a new route. He had just completed the crux of the route, estimated at 5.10, and moved onto an easier section, about 5.4, when he fell. Since he had placed Friends just below, the fall was limited to about five meters. Nevertheless, his head hit against the rock, leaving him unconscious. His two climbing companions and the members of a climbing school carried him out, using a stretcher that was stored at a nearby farm for such an eventuality. (Source: Steve Adcock, Ottawa)

Analysis

The cause of the fall is not known, since neither of his climbing companions saw what happened, and the concussion wiped out Steve's memory of the event. One possibility, since the route was a new one, is that a hold came away. One of the ropes of the double-rope belay ran diagonally across his fall line. As it came taut, it may have flipped him into the rock. A helmet would have reduced the injury. (Source: Steve Adcock)