

In the morning, they continued their descent to Moraine Lake; meanwhile, a search for them was initiated late in the morning, after their registration became overdue. They were located, but opted to continue down on their own. Upon returning to the United States, further examinations revealed that the victim had suffered a dislocated left clavicle and a broken right clavicle. (Source: Banff National Park Warden Service)

Analysis

The quality of anchors while on rappel is paramount! Because of the geology of the Rocky Mountains, great care must be taken when choosing boulders for anchors. (Source: Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ICE, EQUIPMENT FAILURE, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, ROPED BUT NOT BELAYED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Andromeda

On October 7, 1991, Andrew H. and James H. climbed the east ridge of Mount Andromeda and reached the east peak at 1605. After a break, they started to descend the north bowl, at which time Andrew lost one of his crampons. They then had to move slower, and it was late in the day, so they decided to bivouac.

The following morning about 1000, Andrew tripped during the descent, and fell down the slope. James tried to hold him by self-arresting. As the rope came tight, Andrew, who was then sliding down with some speed, flew across a crevasse and against the icewall on the far side, and then fell to the bottom. At that time, the force on the rope dislodged James from his hold on the ice, and he was pulled into the same crevasse, falling on top of his partner. Andrew sustained a deep laceration to his forehead, complained of chest pains, and eventually became hypothermic. James was not injured. The following day, they were reported overdue. The Canadian Park Warden Service Search and Rescue located and evacuated them. (Source: Canadian Parks Service, Jasper)

Analysis

This team set out to climb an alpine route on steep snow and ice, traveling across glaciers with large crevasses and icefalls, with inadequate equipment and limited experience. They carried no ice screws or other protection for this type of terrain except for a 45 cm ice tool. Neither person had a helmet or repair kit. When Andrew lost a screw from his crampon, he was unable to fix it prior to losing it on the descent. (Source: Canadian Parks Service, Jasper)

FALL ON SNOW, UNROPED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

British Columbia, Coast Mountains, The Lions

Dan J. and Kris J. were descending crusty snow after a climb about midafternoon on January 20, 1991, when Dan fell, and slid about 100 meters before he struck a tree. He sustained back, leg, and neck injuries. Kris descended to Lions Bay, the nearest village, where rescue operations were started at 1650. Ground support was provided by Lions Bay SAR and the North Shore Rescue Team, and an Armed Forces helicopter summoned from Comox picked up the injured climber about 2230 by the light of flares dropped from a second aircraft. He was flown directly to a hospital in Vancouver, where he was released the following day after treatment. (Source: Ian Kay, Vancouver)