

ing Abalokov (V-thread) in the ice. A V-thread anchor is created by threading and unthreading two ice screws at an angle to one another through the ice and then threading a cord through the channel. A knot is tied on the outside to create a hanging loop. In this case, the cord had iced over since its original installation and the climbers mistook the long tail end of the cord for the main, knotted part of the loop. When the first climber, D.J. (40) began to rappel, the loose tail pulled out of the ice and he fell 140 meters to the base of the climb, sustaining fatal injuries. The other two climbers hiked up to the ridge and traversed over to the gondola station at the summit of the mountain. Two hours after the fall, they were able to alert Warden Service dispatch. By then it was dark, but Warden Service rescue crews climbed up to the route prepared to do a stretcher evacuation. The climber was located at the base of the route. His body was evacuated the next morning by heli-sling.

Analysis

V-thread anchors are a common and reliable method for setting up rappels on waterfall ice. However, they should always be backed up with an ice screw anchor until the last climber descends. This is particularly important when using previously installed anchors. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service)

FALL ON ICE, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPED

Alberta, Roche a Perdix, Drambuie Deamon

On December 16, I.R. attempted to solo climb Drambuie Deamon, a 95-meter water ice Grade 3 or 4 route, depending on the chosen finish for the climb. He had been climbing for two years and had done the climb before. I.R. dropped his wife off in Hinton at 1200 and planned to pick her up by 1500. His wife called for assistance at 1745 when I.R. had not returned. Jasper National Park Wardens responded that night. I.R. was found dead near the base of the climb with ice tools attached to his wrists and his rope coiled and on his pack.

Analysis

It is difficult to conclude exactly what caused I.R. to fall, but ice quality was likely poor, as the week prior had been very cold with minimum temperatures of -30 degrees C. (Source: Lisa Paulson, Jasper National Park Warden Service)

AVALANCHE, FALL ON SNOW AND ROCK, POOR POSITION—UNSAFE CONDITIONS

British Columbia, Yoho National Park, Mount Burgess

On April 21, a party of two had ascended the south-facing, avalanche-prone slopes of Mount Burgess. The day was very warm, resulting in one of the first major isothermal avalanche cycles of the spring. The party was descending about ten minutes apart. When M.K. reached the first avalanche slope they had traversed while ascending, he saw that the slope had avalanched and realized that J.M. had been carried over the large cliff below. He retraced their ascent route but was unable to find his partner. He then returned to the highway to report the accident. The Park Warden Service was contacted just before dark at 2030. Due to the high avalanche risk, it was not possible to search