

plan is important as well, as it is easy to make errors in navigation in difficult conditions. (Source: Greg McDonnell, Parks Canada Warden Service, Gord Irwin, Edwina Podemski)

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION FAILED—ROCK BLOCK, FAILURE TO TEST HOLD

Alberta, Jasper National Park, Hidden Valley

On May 19, Peter R. (49) and Jack W. were climbing a single pitch route in Hidden Valley, a quiet climbing area east of Jasper. While leading, Peter decided to sling a large block to use as protection. When weighted, the block pulled out and Peter fell about 20 feet onto a scree slope, tumbling down to a point level with his belayer. His first piece of protection prevented him from falling any further; however, the large block fell on and crushed his right ankle. After making him as comfortable as he could, his partner ran down to the road, 40 minutes away, and phoned Parks emergency dispatch. Park Wardens responded on foot to the accident scene, where they stabilized the patient and splinted his foot. Another Warden and a Jasper Medic flew into the scene and evacuated the injured climber by helicopter sling rescue to an ambulance waiting at the road.

Analysis

Rock quality in this part of the world can be quite suspect at times, especially on climbs that do not receive a high traffic volume. There is ample shattered limestone at the bottom of a number of the routes in Hidden Valley to provide clues about the rock quality in the area. Climbers would do well to visually inspect chosen natural protection carefully before weighting it. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service, Jim Mamalis, Edwina Podemski)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Alberta, Jasper National Park, Morro Slabs

On June 22, a family group and friends were climbing at Morro Slabs, a low angle practice area near the road, east of Jasper, Alberta. The group was being supervised by the father of the accident victim. Some of the party were climbing on top-ropes, while others were practicing rappelling. One of the rappellers, Jacob (20), who was relatively inexperienced, was being belayed from the top of the climb on a separate line by a friend, who was using a figure 8 on his harness. The belayer was positioned between the cliff edge and the rappel anchor, but was not tied in to the anchor and did not have a helmet or shoes on. The rappeller was descending too quickly for the belayer to keep up, so he was pulled off the top of the slab and over the edge of the climb. He fell 60 feet to the base of the slabs.

The accident was witnessed by a passing motorist, who phoned into the Parks dispatch. Wardens quickly hiked into the site and stabilized the patient, who had suffered minor lumbar spine injuries and various scrapes and bruises. More wardens flew in by helicopter and evacuated the patient via helicopter sling rescue system to the road.

Analysis

The belayer should have been properly tied in to the anchor point, and should have been wearing a helmet and shoes. A belay directly off the anchor, or at least redirected through the anchor using the appropriate device, would be preferable to belaying directly off the harness in this case. Better communication between the rappeller and the belayer would also have helped. It is remarkable that the victim did not suffer more severe injuries given he was not wearing a helmet and the length of fall. The rappeller and especially the belayer were inexperienced. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service, Jim Mamalis)

STRANDED—OFF ROUTE, INADEQUATE RESEARCH, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Alberta, Waterton Lakes National Park, Crandell Mountain, Tick Ridge

A group of 25, including five teacher/leaders and 20 grade 10-11 students, were attempting the “moderately-difficult” scramble up Tick Ridge on Crandell Mountain. Several group members and leaders had difficulty with footing and exposure on the ascent. Upon reaching the Cockscomb Ridge, the leader decided to proceed directly down an easier-looking gully heading southwest toward the Cameron Lake Road. They continued downward through progressively steeper third and fourth class terrain until blocked by vertical cliff bands. They decided at this time (early evening) to send one stronger leader back up the mountain to gain cell phone coverage and call for help. The group was able to build a fire in a relatively safe spot, and stayed put for the evening. The stranded party was observed by rescuers just before dark, and as the reporting leader had indicated the party was safe and secure for the night, a dawn helicopter rescue response was planned. The entire party was slung off the mountain in the morning.

Analysis

While not strictly a mountaineering accident, this report demonstrates what happens when inexperienced people venture into mountaineering terrain. The route was beyond the abilities of several members and leaders within this large group, some of whom had no previous experience with exposure in the mountains. As well, the group leader had not been on the route before and had chosen to attempt an unknown descent line. (Source: Parks Canada Warden Service, Brent Kozachenko)

STRANDED—SOLO CLIMBING, CLIMBING UNROPED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT/CLOTHING, WEATHER

Alberta, Peter Lougheed Provincial Park, Mount Brock, Southwest Face

C.F., set out on July 2 around 1400 to do a solo, ropeless climb on Mount Brock, about 50 kilometers south of Canmore in Peter Lougheed Provincial Park. He told his roommate, J.S., he might head to Mount Brock and joked that if he wasn't back in two or three days, “to call someone.” It was hot and sunny. He carried a chocolate bar, two hard candies, two liters of water, a guidebook for the route, a topographical map, helmet, headlamp,