

Analysis

The Yamnuska crag has been described by some as a “hopeless pile of garbage rock.” There is plenty of good rock to be found on the crag, but it is important to test holds before committing to them.

FALL ON ROCK, NUT/CHOCK PULLED OUT

Alberta, Banff National Park, Tunnel Mountain, The Shoe

On July 6, R. B. was part of an “Advanced Mountain Operations Course” being run by the Canadian Military out of CPC Trenton. The group consisted of 14 students and seven instructors. R. B. was part of a group that was learning to lead climb. He had done some top-roped leading practice and a “couple of other easy climbs on lead.” He was on the first pitch of “The Shoe” (I, 5.6) on Tunnel Mountain and had placed one tricam about five metres up from the belay. As he neared the traverse left into the crack, he slipped and fell. His gear pulled and he landed on his head on the belay ledge. He then tumbled down below the belay. His instructor called 911 on his cell phone and then began to lower the victim.

The patient was located by rescue on the scree below the climb, still tied in to the rope. He had suffered a severe blow to the head and was displaying wild aggression and thrashing around. There was no response to verbal or pain stimulus only incoherent verbiage and yelling. EMS administered IV and drugs and the patient was heli-slung directly from the scene to the hospital and shortly afterwards transferred to Calgary via STARS air ambulance.

Analysis

The leader was wearing a helmet which was crushed and broken. Dispatchers for 911 in the Banff / Lake Louise area are based in Calgary. Climbers in the National Parks should be aware of the lack of knowledge of the terrain that the 911 dispatchers have and be very clear of their location and the requirement for a mountain rescue response when reporting an incident. (Source: Bradford White, Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Banff National Park, Grotto Canyon, Paintings Wall

On July 18, a climber who fell roughly 30 feet off a wall near the pictographs at Grotto Canyon was rescued. J.G. (51) was leading a 5.9 climb at Grotto Canyon when he slipped and fell 30 feet. He hit a large boulder, bounced off it, then hit the ground, sustaining multiple injuries. A nurse who was nearby did initial first aid, then she ran to the road to call 911 on her cell phone, as there is no coverage in the canyon.

The man had head injuries and had been unconscious for at least one hour by the time that rescuers arrived. He also had irregular shallow breathing, accompanied by gurgling noises, so he was given oxygen. A tricky maneuver

executed by Alpine Helicopters pilot Paul Maloney helicopter allowed J.G to be slung out of the canyon. He was then stabilized and transferred to Calgary via the STARS air ambulance. Although he was in critical condition on July 18th, he was in stable condition the following day.

Analysis

Bystanders described the accident as being due to an inattentive or inexperienced belayer who had left too much slack in the rope. (Source: Burke Duncan)

STRANDED, EXCEEDING ABILITY

Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Rundle

On July 29, a solo climber was ascending the normal scramble/hiking route on Mount Rundle. He scrambled up a gully above trail into the steep technical rock slabs and could no longer go up or down. He eventually managed to attract attention by screaming and someone phoned in to report his location. A warden rescuer heli-slung to the site, placed the stranded individual into a screamer suit and evacuated him to the base of the mountain.

Analysis

While not a climbing incident (thus not included in the statistics), this is a very common occurrence. Inexperienced people often end up on stranded in terrain which exceeds their abilities. Terrain from below often looks easier than it is and it is easier to climb up than descend. Parks has developed detailed route descriptions of the popular scrambling/hiking ascents in the vicinity of Banff to try and prevent people getting off route. These brochures are in French and English and are made available to as many of the local staff and visitor centres as possible. This individual had not seen one, however. (Source: Bradford White, Banff National Park Warden Service)

STRANDED, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE

Alberta, Banff National Park, Mount Temple, Aemmer Couloir

On July 31, a group of four climbers set off to climb the Aemmer Couloir variation of the East Ridge of Mount Temple in Banff National Park near Lake Louise. The group bivvied below the couloir and took the whole second day to climb to the top of the couloir. After another night's bivy, two of the climbers decided they could not continue and the second two went to finish the climb. They would request assistance for their stranded friends. It took them 16 hours to reach the summit ridge after going off route through the Black Towers. Another party who started early that day met up with the two climbers stranded at the bivouac at 1000. They said that they would report the incident to the park wardens. They exited the correct Black Towers exit gully and in so doing bypassed the other two who were off route. The second party reported the incident to the Park Warden Service around 1800. The rescue crew was able to do a partial landing at