

Analysis

The forecast for the day was for a severe storm with lightning. Darkening skies by late morning confirmed the forecast and a heavy rain and lightening storm followed. The decision to carry on when the storm became obvious was questionable. The decision above the technical sections to carry on during the storm after one of the climbers was presumed dead is difficult to comprehend. This is particularly puzzling since none of the three had a rope at that point and they likely knew that getting down the steep sections would get increasingly difficult with the rain. (Source: Percy Woods, Yoho National Park Warden Service)

SLIP ON ROCK OR ICE, UNROPED

British Columbia, Yoho National Park, Mount Dennis, Carlsberg Column

On November 19, two climbers were approaching the base of Carlsberg Column (60 m. II WI5), a waterfall ice climb on Mount Dennis in Yoho National Park. B.R. (32) had started traversing on an exposed ledge that went over to the base of the ice climb. His partner J.D. was a short distance behind him adjusting his boots but had yet to start the traverse. Both climbers had put their helmets and crampons on before starting the traverse. J.D. heard a shout and looked up in time to see his partner slipping off the edge of the ledge and disappearing over a short cliff below. J.D. ran down slope to assist his partner, who had fallen over 35 metres. B.R. was seriously injured and unconscious. His partner stabilized him as best he could and went for help at the Yoho Park Information Centre close by in the town of Field. Park Wardens, Field Ambulance, Banff Ambulance and RCMP all attended the accident scene. B.R. was heli-slung out to an awaiting ambulance and later transferred to STARS air ambulance. He died of his injuries a short time later in hospital. (Source: Percy Woods, Yoho National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ICE—ICE TOOLS PULLED OUT, UNROPED

Quebec, Mont du Gros Bras

On February 22, J.S. (39) and M.L. (38) had finished the Gros Bras route at Weir and were packing up their gear when they decided to have a look at the rock climbs further along the cliff. On the way back J.S. decided to attempt an unroped mixed traverse across the ice shrouded base of the cliff. After one or two moves, he noticed the ice was very poor and was just beginning to step back down onto level ground when the ice supporting his left tool disintegrated and he fell heavily downward about half a metre, firmly planting his right crampon, unfortunately he also fell backwards on his planted foot and snapped his tibia, just above the boot top, and his fibula near the knee. He then proceeded to flip onto his back, fall about one more metre and luckily landed in between two large boulders which stopped him fall-