



AAC Publications

Fatal Fall on Mt. Tupper – Loose Rock, Climbing Unroped

Canada, British Columbia, Glacier National Park, Mt. Tupper

On July 25, while ascending the classic west ridge of Mt. Tupper, an unroped climber pulled on a loose block along the ridge top and fell down the south face. His two climbing partners witnessed him falling with the large block, then cartwheeling out of sight. They immediately called for help and a helicopter reconnaissance located the fallen climber approximately 200 meters below the ridge, showing signs of major trauma. A decision was made to extricate the two climbing partners before recovering the body. This would reduce the possibility of rockfall hitting rescuers, and it would remove the traumatized climbers from the scene. Both the climbers and, eventually, the victim were heli-slung from the mountain.

ANALYSIS

When climbing mountain routes, there will always be sections of loose rock. It is recommended to slow down, put on a rope, and belay through loose sections, if possible. The nature of this particular route lends itself well to short-roping and short-pitching—two techniques that allow mountaineers to move efficiently through terrain while protected by a rope and their partner.

Images



Schematic of Mt. Tupper accident scene.



Mt. Tupper's summit pyramid, showing the upper west ridge at left.

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