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Fatal Falls — Inexperience, Off Route on Descent

Canada, Alberta, Jasper National Park, Mt. Edith Cavell

A 32-year-old male and a 25-year-old female attempted Mt. Edith Cavell via the third-class west ridge during the weekend of September 19 and 20. It is not known if they reached the summit, but there is evidence they got high on the ridge. During their descent, in darkness and poor weather, they apparently got off route while trying to find their way down into the West Bowl and they entered fifth-class terrain. Without a rope, one of the party members fell, and it is believed the second member fell while attempting to go for help. Their bodies were discovered during a helicopter search at 6 p.m. on September 20.

ANALYSIS

The party had less than one year of experience. They had inadequate clothing and equipment for this route, including running shoes that would have been slippery while downclimbing wet quartzite rock; the poor weather may have caused exposure and contributed to poor decision making. They had not informed anyone about the details of their outing, delaying a search. (Source: Jasper National Park.)

Images

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