

Accident Write-up from ACC Edmonton Website

<http://alpineclub-edm.org/accidents/index.asp>

CAC Accident Information

Date: 12/03/2003 Activity: Snowshoeing & Hiking Mtn Range: Rocky Mountains
Location: Lady Macdonald Province: AB
Loc. Descr.: near Canmore

ACC Accident Write-up

The body of an adult male was recovered by Canmore RCMP and conservation officers from near the summit of Mount Lady Macdonald on Saturday, June 7, 2003. Hikers reported finding the body the day before.

"Conservation officer Burke Duncan, an RCMP officer and myself were flown in by Alpine Helicopter," said George Field, mountain safety specialist with Alberta Environment. "We slung into the area and did an onsite investigation. We removed the body." RCMP said Monday the cause of the man's death was unknown, and that investigators were waiting for information from the medical examiner's office. A sling rescue is attempted when the victim is in a spot that cannot be approached safely on foot. A long rope is dangled from underneath the rescue helicopter and the rescuers are connected to the rope with a safety harness. They can safely pick up another adult with the same harness and move them to an area that offers easier access to medical attention.

"This person had been dead for about three months," Field said. "There is a gully that comes off of the main summit of Mount Lady Macdonald just slightly north and below the teahouse. That is where the body was located." Field would not give any indication of cause of death but his initial reaction was that it was not suspicious. "We cannot make any assumption until the medical examiner has looked at the body," Field said.

"We cannot release any names." UPDATE: On or about March 13, 2003 J.F (20) decided to make a solo scramble towards the summit of Mt. Lady MacDonald. He was not one to follow the regular path and likely ascended directly toward the summit on the left side of an obvious gully on the west face. Avalanche bulletins from around that date indicate that avalanche danger was considered extreme. On June 7, 2003, the body of J.F. was recovered by Canmore RCMP from the gully. Hikers in the area reported finding the body. The deceased was in a face down prone position lying across the fall line with his rubber boots still on. There was a column of snow around his upper arm and the remainder of the debris was flat with rocks embedded along the flanks. These visual clues lead investigators to believe that he had been involved in an avalanche accident. The medical examiner's office indicated that J.F. likely died from suffocation consistent with an avalanche. It is speculated that the victim left the summit ridge and crossed into a bowl area near the top of the gully, where he was caught in an avalanche, slid down the gully to below the teahouse level and was buried in avalanche debris until the warmer temperatures uncovered him.

NOTE: Write-ups originally copied from ACC website by Jeff Boyd during summer of 2007; extracted from CAA Accident database and converted into PDF format by Pascal Haegeli on May 19, 2009. Accident information (first section) comes from CAC avalanche accident database.