



ACTIVITY: Body Surfing

CASE: GSAF 1929.02.18

DATE: Monday February 18, 1929

LOCATION: Maroubra Bay, New South Wales, Australia.

33°57'S, 151°E

NAME: Allan Butcher

DESCRIPTION: He was a 20-year-old male.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: It was a cloudy, dull and overcast day and the air temperature was 76°F.

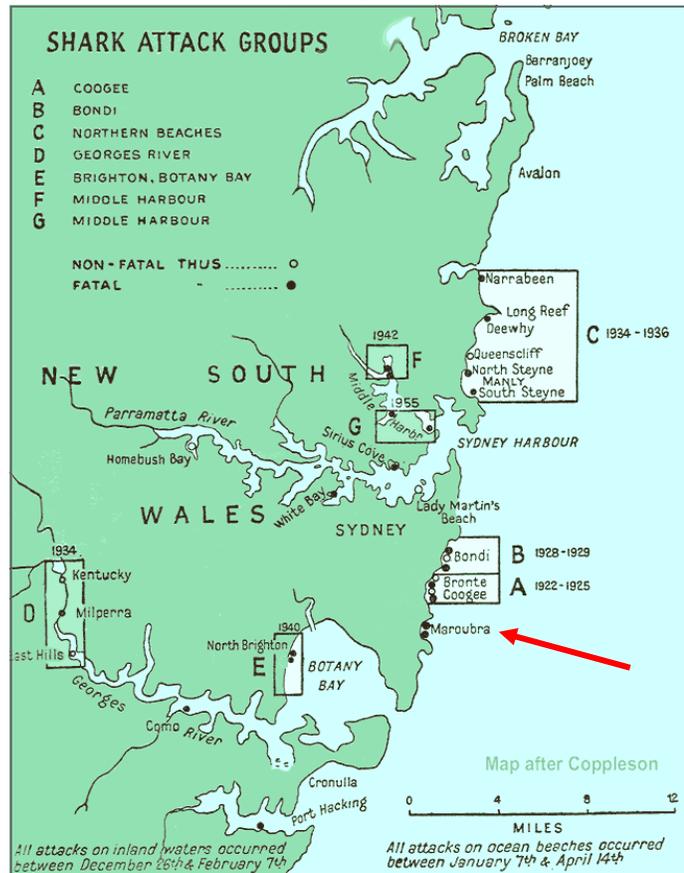
MOON PHASE: First Quarter, February 17, 1929

SEA CONDITIONS: There was heavy surf and the sea temperature was 72°F. Low tide was at 09h46, high tide at 15h39.

ENVIRONMENT: A shark was seen a few minutes before Butcher was bitten.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 75 yards

TIME: 15h30 — 16h00



NARRATIVE: There were about 70 people in the water but Allan Butcher was farther seaward than the others, waiting for “shoots”. When he called out “shark, shark” two people went to his assistance and brought him to shore.

INJURY: Fatal. There were extensive lacerations of the external aspect of his left thigh and the inner side of both thighs. Abrasions were also present on the right leg below the knee and the foot. The left hand and the second finger and thumb were deeply scarred and over the whole hand superficial abrasions were seen. He died of sepsis.

TREATMENT: When the patient reached the hospital 30 minutes after the attack, he was in

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extreme shock and all hemorrhage had ceased.. "He was admitted to the Coast Hospital (Prince Henry Hospital) at 16h30. His general condition was very bad. He was badly shocked and had lost a large quantity of blood. Bleeding was under control and he was given morphine and gas gangrene antiserum. On the following day his temperature was elevated and he was unable to pass his urine. On the next day (February 20) his condition was slightly improved but he was not quite rational at times. He sweated freely and the dressing gave him much pain. The wounds were gaping horribly, their surfaces being very dirty and sloughing. They were irrigated...on the next day his face was very drawn, but he was taking food well. The wounds appeared to be much better and their surfaces were clearing. On the next day the patient was very much worse, very restless and irrational; he was sweating freely and his pulse was irregular. There did not appear to be any evidence of gas gangrene. On the following day his condition was much worse, his face very pinched and worn. He died the next night. During the final two days his temperature rose to 103°F."

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCES: The Canberra Times, Tuesday February 19, 1929, page 3 and Wednesday February 20, 1929, page 1
Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, October 1930, page 288
V.M. Coppleson.N12.(1933); V.M. Coppleson (1958), pages 64 & 231
Sharpe, pages 63-64

ANOTHER SHARK VICTIM

YOUTH MAULED IN SURF

SHOCKING INJURIES AT MAROUBRA

SYDNEY, Monday.

Sydney was shocked by yet another shark attack which occurred at Maroubra shortly after 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The victim was Allan Butcher, 19, baker, of Kensington, who was dreadfully injured, his right buttock being torn off and his left wrist badly lacerated. His condition is critical.

Butcher was swimming about 50 yards from the shore when people on the beach heard him call for help. They saw him frantically beating the water with his hands. Then it was seen that the water was dyed red and immediately three surfers, who were swimming nearby, went to the young man's assistance. He was in a state of collapse and was brought ashore with some difficulty, with the help of a number of other surfers, who also went to his assistance.

Other witnesses state that after the attack, Butcher tried to push the monster away with his hands, one of which was badly bitten.

Beach-inspector Donaldson, who was one of those who assisted in the rescue, said that after Butcher was attacked, W. Harrison, H. Clay and D. Holman, who were swimming just be-

hind him, joined the unfortunate lad in his fight against the monster. They beat the water with their hands, and succeeded in driving the shark away. He was loud in his praise of their courage, and said it was undoubtedly due to their efforts that Butcher was not even more badly injured, as the monster made repeated attacks.

Butcher's injuries were of a shocking nature and he was taken to hospital in a critical condition.

There is no doubt that the coast of New South Wales is dangerous for surfers at the present time. There have been frequent shark alarms at most of the surf beaches, the monsters venturing right into shallow water. The daring of the sharks was amply demonstrated to-day when they attacked and tore to pieces a whale which had been dragged into shallow water at Dee Why.