

ACTIVITY: Dived into the water
CASE: [GSAF 1934.08.26](#)
DATE: Sunday August 26, 1934
LOCATION: The attack took place in the Coral Sea off Eva Island, 20 miles from Cardwell, Queensland, Australia.
18°16'S, 146°7'E

NAME: Robert Steele
DESCRIPTION: He was a male.

BACKGROUND
MOON PHASE: Full Moon, August 25, 1934
DISTANCE FROM BOAT: 40 feet

NARRATIVE: He dived from a launch into the sea and was immediately bitten by a shark. The occupant of the boat, Benjamin Spurway, heard a muffled shout, saw a large fin break the surface and a swirl of blood.

INJURY: Fatal. His body was not recovered.

SPECIES INVOLVED: Not identified

SOURCES: Sydney Morning Herald, August 27, 1934; Sunday Mail (Brisbane) November 18, 1934; The Mercury (Hobart, Tasmania), Monday November 19, 1934, page 9; G.P. Whitley, page 262; Jack Green, page 33; Victor M. Coppleson (1958), page 238



GRUESOME STORY

Man Torn by Shark's

Mate's Evidence at Inquest

BRISBANE, November 18.

A terrible story of how he saw his mate torn to pieces by sharks was told by a witness on Saturday at Brisbane when an inquest was held into the death of Robert Steele, of Cardwell, off Eva Isand, on August 26. Benjamin Spurway (56) said he and Steele had frequently gone fishing together in Steele's motor boat. On the day of the tragedy they put into a small bay to cook a meal. While witness was in the cabin lighting a Primus stove Steele was cleaning fish, and also cleaning the punto. Steele pushed the punto over the side, but lost hold of the painter, and he took his shirt off and jumped in after it as the punto drifted away.

Spurway said he thought he heard a muffled shout, and came up from below just in time to see a large fin break the surface of the water. Steele was about 40 feet from the boat when he last saw him, and witness had no means of rescuing the body. He returned to Cardwell, and reported the tragedy.

The inquest was adjourned to a date to be fixed.

The Mercury (Hobart, Tasmania), Monday November 19, 1934, page 9

SHARKS' VICTIM.

Island Horror.

A Shocking Fate.

TULLY, August 26.

That he turned to see his friend, Mr. Robert Steele, literally torn to pieces by a number of sharks after the latter had dived from the launch to secure a flattie which had drifted from the launch in which they had travelled together to Eva Island, about 20 miles from Cardwell, is the story of Mr. Benjamin Spurway, formerly a well-known storekeeper of Cardwell, who returned to Cardwell this afternoon in the launch immediately after the tragic happening which has shocked the community, as deceased was held in high esteem.

THE ATTACK.

Mr. Spurway is of the opinion that Mr Steele was attacked by one shark as soon as he dived overboard. The blood-soaked sea attracted other sharks, one of which was of huge size.

Mr. Spurway was in the act of lighting a primus stove when he heard a piercing yell from Mr. Steele, but he was helpless to render him aid, as the sharks fought for the body.

LARGE FAMILY.

Steele was formerly a railway worker, having lived in Chartre's Towers, later residing at Tumoulin, and taking up his residence at Cardwell seven years ago. He leaves a widow and six sons—Herbert, Bramwell, Percy (Redlynch); Harry and Glen (Cardwell); Alf (Valley of Lagoons)—and four daughters—Mrs. F. Mesh (Cardwell); Mrs. Larkin (Brisbane) and Misses Davy and Ivy Steele (Cardwell).

Herbert ("Bert") Steele is a member of the Past Brothers Football Club, Cairns.

Cairns Post,
Monday August 27, 1934, page 6