

ACTIVITY: Standing
CASE: GSAF 1935.03.02
DATE: Saturday March 2, 1935
LOCATION: North Narrabeen Beach, New South Wales, Australia.
 33°42'35.07"S, 151°18'12.75"E

NAME: Herbert McFarlane
DESCRIPTION: He was a 22-year-old male, a football star of Rozelle.

BACKGROUND WEATHER: It had rained during the morning but the sky cleared by afternoon. It was a warm, sultry day; the air temperature was 79°F.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, March 5, 1935

SEA CONDITIONS: The water temperature was 74°F. The tide was rising, there was a strong cross current, and a slight undertow. The waves were breaking 60 to 70 yards offshore.

ENVIRONMENT: An inshore channel was present.

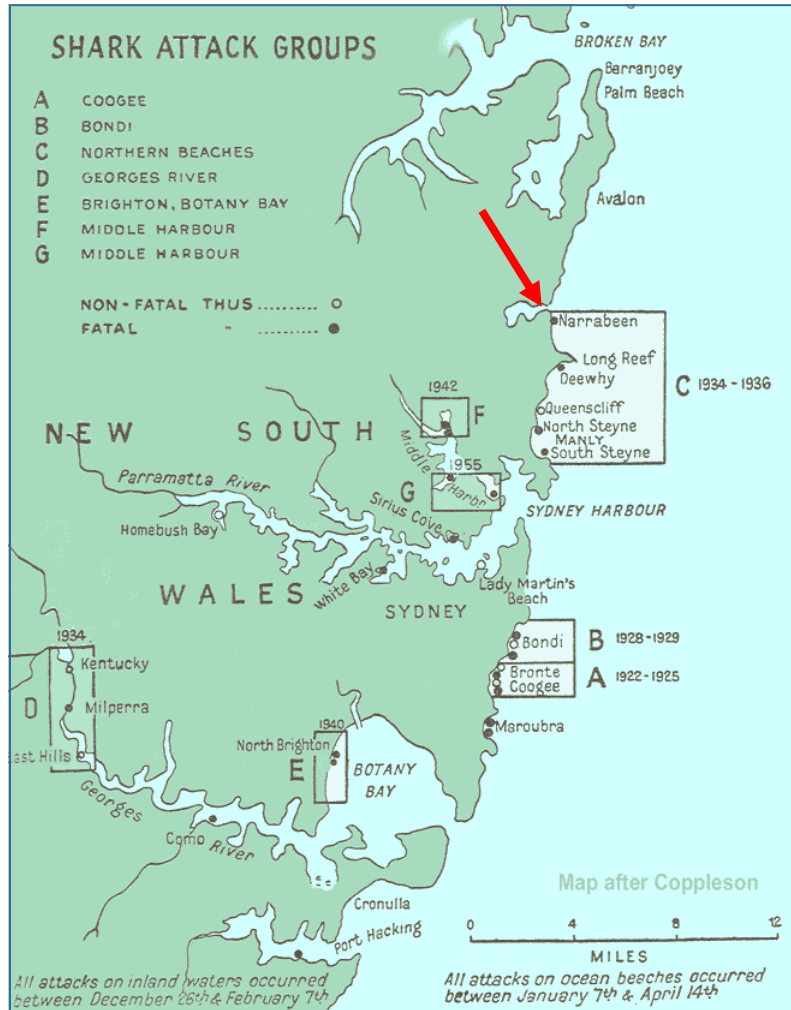
DISTANCE FROM SHORE: 10 yards

TIME: 17h30

NARRATIVE: About a dozen people were in the water but Herbert McFarlane was 100 yards from the crowd when he was bitten by a shark. The shark struck him repeatedly, and even when his rescuers, John Barrett and Carl Read, were carrying him out of the water, the shark followed to the shore.

INJURY: Fatal. There was a large wound on his thigh, and he died before reaching Manly Hospital.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The incident involved a white shark, 3.5 to 4 metres [11.5' to 13'] in length. Attempts to catch the shark were unsuccessful.



Shark Kills Man As He Swims Alone

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North Narrabeen

SOURCES: Reno Evening Gazette, Thursday May 2, 1935
The Canberra Times, Monday March 4, 1935, page 1
The Sydney Morning Herald, March 4, 1935, page 9
Reno Evening Gazette, Thursday May 2, 1935
Amarillo Globe, Friday June 21, 1935
Victor M. Coppleson (1958), pages 66-67 & 233
Alan Sharpe, page 68
John West, Australian Shark Attack File.

SHARK KILLS FOOTBALL STAR

While swimming alone at North Narrabeen, Australia, recently, Herbert McFarlane, aged 22, a football star of Rozelle, was attacked and fatally injured by a shark. Three lifeguards were attracted by his screams, raced into the water and took the body from the shark, but McFarlane died on the way to the hospital. This is the third fatal shark attack in Sydney waters this season.

SHARK ATTACK

NORTH NARRABEEN

Lone Surfer Killed.

Herbert McFarlane, 22, of Toelle-street, Roselle, a well-known footballer, was attacked by a shark and fatally injured while swimming alone at North Narrabeen beach at dusk on Saturday.

Immediately his agonised screams were heard three members of the local surf club raced into the water to his aid and dragged his mangled body ashore. McFarlane was rushed to Manly Hospital by ambulance, but he was dead upon arrival.

McFarlane's death brings the steadily-mounting number of shark attacks along the New South Wales coast since 1919 to 24.

This season alone five swimmers have died in the metropolitan area consequent upon attacks by sharks—the biggest number of tragedies in any one season.

About 5.30 p.m., McFarlane, accompanied by Colin Welsh, decided to go in surfing. A very poor surf was running at the time, and the rising tide had torn a deep channel along the beach, practically to the water's edge. Welsh urged his friend to go along to the rock pool, but McFarlane said that he would wait until he caught "one good shoot" before rejoining him.

A few minutes later William Hardie, of Crick-street, Chatswood, joined him. The two men waited patiently for a wave some 30 yards from the shore, and then McFarlane said he would try his luck further down the beach, and he swam towards the southern end, a distance of some 100 yards from Hardie. The beach was practically deserted at the time.

CRIES FOR HELP.

A few minutes later desperate screams and cries for help were heard from the lone surfer. The waves around him were suddenly stained crimson in a swirl of water, and he lashed out wildly with his arms. Then he commenced to struggle towards the shore, leaving a trail of blood in his wake.

Hardie heard the cries and struck out towards the struggling victim of the attack. The cross current, however, swept him back, and he decided to swim ashore first. A long breaker flung him on the beach, and he raced along the sand to a point opposite McFarlane before entering the water again and swimming to his aid.

In the meantime the frantic screams had been heard in the clubhouse, and John Barrett, 27, Ken Harding, of the surf club, and Carl Read, 27 of Perry-street, Leichhardt, dashed down to the beach. Barrett plunged straight into the channel and swam out to McFarlane, while Read donned the belt and Harding manned the reel.

McFarlane was floundering in the water about 30 yards from the shore and was slowly being washed towards the beach when Barrett reached him. "Get me in," he cried when he saw his rescuer. "I can't breathe," Barrett seized him by the shoulders and commenced to drag him to the shore. A few minutes later the beltman arrived and relieved Barrett. Hardie was also on the scene, and the three men assisted the victim to the shore. A trail of blood extending back for 30 yards followed them to the beach.

THE RACE TO HOSPITAL.

When McFarlane was carried to the beach the terrible nature of his injuries was revealed. The flesh had been torn from his knee to the thigh, baring the bone and severing the main arteries. The nature of the injury prevented a tourniquet from being applied, but towels were wrapped around the gaping wound to stanch the flow of blood.

While the rescue was in progress Dr. Bull and the Narrabeen waggon of the Manly Ambulance were summoned and the Manly Hospital was notified. After McFarlane had been given an injection he was taken quickly to hospital.

Although the driver of the ambulance rang his bell continuously and had his siren blaring to indicate that he had an urgent case on board, throughout the hurried trip to Manly vehicular traffic refused to give way to the ambulance, and consequently, although the waggon frequently travelled up to 60 miles an hour during the journey, a slight delay was caused.

When the ambulance arrived at the hospital all arrangements had been made for rushing the patient to the operating theatre, but it was found that he had died on the journey.

Throughout the evening members of the surf club called at the hospital, believing that McFarlane was still alive, to offer their blood if a transfusion had been decided upon. Doctors were amazed and impressed by the spontaneous action of the dead man's comrades.

RESCUERS INTERVIEWED.

"I was looking out of the window of the clubhouse when I heard McFarlane cry out," said Barrett. "I could see him struggling, and I shouted to the others as I was running down the stairs. I sprinted across the sand and dived in. When I reached him, McFarlane was practically done. He was gasping for breath and swimming almost automatically, but there was no strength in his strokes. He went limp as I grasped him, but kept muttering that he could not breathe. Blood was streaming from his terrible wound. Then the others arrived with the belt, and we got him ashore. He was conscious throughout.

"I did not think of sharks until I had been relieved of the patient, and then I realised that it might be still about and I kept a careful eye out for a possible return attack. It was a shocking sight, and has decided me definitely against surfing ever again."

"I think the shark must have come up the channel from behind McFarlane," declared Hardie, who assisted in the rescue. "I heard him scream out and tried to reach him by swimming across into the current, but was driven back. He was slowly being washed towards the shore and struggling impotently. I swam ashore and then went in again, but the others got there first, and I just helped to bring him in."

McFarlane was a well-known footballer, and played in the reserve and first grades of the District Rugby Union team.

Throughout Saturday night and yesterday baits were set for the monster, and fishermen went out, but with no success.

Yesterday sharks were reported at Avalon, Mona Vale, and Bondi, and the alarm bells ringing sent surfers hurrying for the shore.

MAULED BY SHARK

Youth Dies on Way to Hospital

NARRABEEN TRAGEDY

SYDNEY, Sunday.

With his right thigh and groin shockingly mangled by a shark which attacked him while surfing at North Narrabeen last Saturday afternoon, Herbert McFarlane, 22, of Rozelle, died in the ambulance on the way to hospital.

Amazing heroism was shown by John Barrett, 27, of the North Narrabeen Surf Club, who dashed into the surf and brought the injured man ashore, despite the fact that the monster was still in the vicinity.

The only other person in the water at the time was William Hardie, of Crick Street, Chatswood, who heard McFarlane screaming but was prevented by a cross-current from reaching him.

Barrett was in the Club House when the victim's cries for help were made. He immediately ran to the surf and swam out 30 yards to where McFarlane was struggling weakly in blood-stained water. A lifeline was sent out and the patient was soon brought in and carried to the surf shed, where he was attended by a doctor. It was found that McFarlane's leg was gashed from a few inches above the knee to the top of the hip joint. The whole groin was almost torn away and blood vessels and arteries were severed. He became unconscious almost immediately after being placed in the ambulance and died a few minutes before the vehicle reached Manly Hospital.

In an interview, John Barrett said he never thought he would have had the courage to rescue a man from a shark.

"I have always been fond of the surf," he said, "but this is the end. No more for me. I'll swim in the baths in future. This is the first shark attack I have seen, and my God it was terrible."

Hitherto Narrabeen has always been regarded as a safe beach, no shark attacks having been made.