

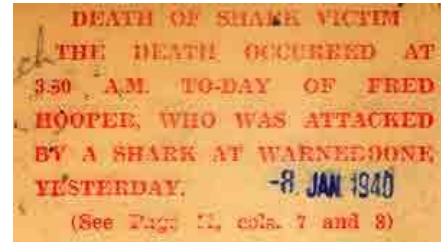
ACTIVITY: Swimming

CASE: GSAF 1940.01.07 / SA-061

DATE: Sunday January 7, 1940

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Warner Beach, 30 kilometres southwest of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

30°04,6'E, 30°52,4'S



NAME: Frederick Aubrey Hooper

DESCRIPTION: The swimmer, a 17-year-old male, was 1,73 metres tall. Fair-haired and deeply-tanned, he was a well-built rugby player and had no injuries before the incident. Hooper was clad in the full-length tangerine and black bathing costume of a Warnadoone Surf Life-saver.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: KwaZulu-Natal was experiencing its third heatwave of the summer and temperatures had been rising steadily for the past five days. It was a hot, clear and windless day according to the press, and at the time of the attack the temperature was 28,7°C, there was 1/8 cloud cover and a gentle eight-knot south-easterly breeze. However, a low pressure cell was moving up the coast and that evening KwaZulu-Natal experienced heavy showers; Durban recorded 4,8 millimetres of rain.

MOON PHASE: New Moon, January 9, 1940

SEA CONDITIONS: The surf was not large but the waves were well formed and broke in even sets. There was very little current and no channel had formed. The river mouth was not open and the water was clear; however, there were quantities of floating seaweed.

ENVIRONMENT: The wide, almost level stretch of sandy beach backed by low dunes is divided by the mouth of the Little Manzimtoti River, Doonside lies to the north, Warner Beach to the south. There is a considerable amount of sand movement in this area; throughout the year large groups of rocks become visible, then disappear beneath the sand in the surf zone. No dolphin activity was observed and no one was fishing in the vicinity.

DISTANCE FROM SHORE: The attack occurred 300 metres from shore. Hooper was about 45 metres from the reef and 125 metres from the rocks.

DEPTH: Three metres

TIME: 16h00

NARRATIVE: Frederick Hooper, Dennis Guy Nourse and life-saver Tommy Jukes swam some distance out, then returned to shallower water; the three men had been in the water about 25 minutes. They were in calm water behind the surf zone, about 50 metres beyond a crowd of 20 people. Hooper was swimming and Nourse was floating nearby on a Surf-O-Plane (air cushion). They were heading back inshore and were roughly two metres apart when Hooper shouted that he had seen a shark. Just then, a large shark broke the surface. As Hooper turned on his back the water reddened with blood. Nourse dived off the air cushion and swam to Hooper. "He seemed dazed, but was still swimming," said Nourse. "I helped him on to the (air cushion) and shouted for help." Tommy Jukes heard the shouts, saw the discoloured water and realised that something serious had happened. He joined Nourse and Hooper, signaled life-savers on the beach to send the beltman out and, together with Nourse, started towing Hooper to shore.

INJURY: Hooper's right knee and thigh were bitten; 38 centimetres of flesh was removed and about 12 centimetres of bone was fully exposed.

FIRST AID: Hooper remained conscious and was anxious about ever being able to play rugby again. A towel was wrapped round his leg and he was tied to a surfboard. First Aid was administered by Mr Strydom of Illovo River Station and two nursing sisters, Mrs Bagley and Mrs Laidler, tourists from Bloemfontein who happened to be on the beach. Dr Plowman arrived on the beach, gave Hooper an injection of morphine and called for an ambulance from Durban. It was more than an hour before the ambulance arrived.

TREATMENT: Hooper died after surgery at St Augustine's Hospital, then known as the sanatorium, at 03h50 on January 8, 1940. The Coroner's verdict was "death due to gross injury to right leg and haemorrhage through being bitten by a shark". Hooper was buried in West Street Cemetery, Durban.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The species of the shark is not known but, according to Juckes, the fish was about 2,4 metres in length.

COMMENT: Mrs George Bagley, one of the nursing sisters who took care of the patient on the beach, later discovered that her husband and the patient's father had once been close friends. Ex-sergeant Bagley came to South Africa on the *Tongariro* with Hooper's father, the late Sergeant F. Hooper, during the Anglo-Boer War. The two men served together at Harrismith until 1910, but afterwards they had lost touch with one another.

Dennis Guy Nourse was awarded the Silver Medal of the Surf Life-saving Association, the Royal Humane Society's Medal, M.O.T.H.'s Gallantry Star, The King's Medal for Gallantry and, on 13 August 1940 Nourse became the first man in KwaZulu-Natal to receive the South African Medal for Gallantry (He was the second person ever to receive this honour.)

Tommy Juckes, Chief Instructor of the South African Surf Life-saving Association and Captain of the Warnadoone Surf Life-saving Club, was also recommended for these awards, but refused to be nominated because he felt he was simply doing what was expected of him as a life-saver.

SOURCES: Interview with Tommy Juckes on October 6, 1986; interviews with Fuzzie Scott, Mickey Sadler & Jimmy Barrett; Natal Mercury, January 8, 9, 18, & 30, March 5, April 2 & 13, June 10, July 30, August 3 & 17, 1940.

OTHER ATTACKED BY SHARK

Beach swimming

HEROIC RESCUE BY FRIEND - 8 JAN 1940

AN 18-year-old Warner Beach lifesaver was attacked and gravely injured by a large shark while swimming off Warnadoone, Natal South Coast, yesterday afternoon.

He is Fred Hooper, a Durban High School old boy, who was shortly to undergo training in the South African Air Force at Roberts Heights.

DIVED TO RESCUE

Hooper was saved from drowning by the plucky action of a friend, Mr. Dennis Nourse, who, despite the presence of the shark, dived from his floating cushion and swam to the injured man's assistance and placed him on a raft.

Mr. Tommy Jukes, captain of the Warnadoone Surf Lifesaving Club and hon. instructor-in-chief of the Surf Lifesaving Association of South Africa, who also played an important part in the rescue, described Nourse's action as: "Gallant and deserving of recognition."



Mr. Hooper



Mr. Nourse

Flesh Torn From Leg

It appears that Hooper was swimming about half a mile from the beach. Nourse was nearby on a floating cushion. Suddenly Hooper was attacked by a shark, which tore flesh off his right leg from the knee to the thigh.

In an interview with a representative of "The Natal Mercury," Mr. Jukes said that he was on an air cushion about halfway between the two lifesavers and the beach. He heard Nourse shout, and, lifting himself up on his cushion, saw Hooper lying on Nourse's raft. He noticed that the water round the raft was discoloured by blood.

"I realised that something serious had happened so I signalled the lifesaving squad for a lifeline and then swam out to assist Nourse. When I reached him Nourse informed me that Hooper had been attacked by a shark. He was badly injured, but was still conscious."

Rescue Difficult

The two men propelled the raft towards the shore until the lifeline was reached. The sea was rough and a strong cross current made rescue work difficult, but the lifesavers managed to get Hooper ashore in quick time.

Hooper was carried on to the beach, where first-aid was rendered by Mr. Strydom, of Illovo River. He was removed by ambulance to the Sanatorium, Durban. His condition last night was reported to be critical.

Hooper played in the Durban High School fifteen last season and was also a promising athlete.

Mr. Jukes paid a high tribute to Nourse's gallantry in going to his friend's assistance. "He did not think of his own safety, but was far more concerned about Hooper's life."

and Fainted

Lifesavers immediately called Hooper out of the surf, but one man refused to leave the water. When he was finally brought out of the water, he told about the shark he

Natal Mercury 9 JAN 1940

A Heroic Act

Sir,—As an eye-witness of the tragedy at Warner Beach on Sunday, I would like to pay a tribute to an exhibition of heroism which I consider unparalleled in South African life saving.

The sight of the waves surrounding the victim, which were stained with blood, made watchers go cold with fear at the thought of the tragedy that was being enacted there.

In the face of this, and being close to Mr. Hooper, with the ghastly effect of the shark's attack so evident, and knowing that, excited by success, it would probably attack again, I consider Mr. Nourse's action in giving his surfplane to the victim and taking his place in the water to be heroic. He stayed alongside Mr. Hooper until the lifeline arrived, thrashing the water, and the commotion he made probably warded off a second attack.

The rest of the lifesavers, particularly Mr. Jukes, are also to be commended for the unselfish way they went to the assistance of the victim.

I hope that this will be taken up by the proper authorities with a view to giving Mr. Nourse some suitable recognition for his gallantry.

T. S. D. BROOKS.

AN ATTACK BY SHARK DESCRIBED

*Beach
Person
Swim*

30 JAN 1940

HOW LIFESAVER LOST LIFE

"Death due to gross injury to right leg and haemorrhage through being bitten by a shark," was the verdict returned by Mr. W. V. D. Cellarius at an inquest on Frederick Aubrey Hooper (17), a member of the Warner-Doone Surf Life Saving Club.

Dennis Guy Nourse, of Doonside, said that on January 7 he was on the beach at Doonside. Hooper was on duty there in his official capacity.

"I swam out from the beach for about half a mile seawards," said Nourse. "Hooper followed me about 10 minutes later. I was using an air cushion. When I was a little less than half a mile out and floating on the air cushion, he joined me. Shortly after we started to make our way toward the beach. We were swimming abreast about six feet apart.

TURNED ON BACK

"Suddenly Hooper shouted out to me, 'Look out; there's a shark.' I had not noticed anything, but turned to-

ward him when he shouted. He turned over on his back. I saw what I took to be a large sized shark break surface near him. Almost immediately it disappeared and the water became discoloured with blood. Hooper started swimming shoreward.

"I shouted for help to a Mr. Tommy Jukes, who was swimming half-way between us and the beach. He came toward us. I pushed the air cushion to Hooper and we both ~~clung to it~~ swimming. We made little progress.

SECOND ATTACK

"As I was afraid of a second attack by the shark, Hooper lay on the cushion. I swam alongside. Tommy Jukes, who had in the meantime summoned the other life savers on the beach, reached us and assisted me with Hooper.

"One of the life savers with a life line came out, took hold of Hooper and they were pulled to the beach. Jukes and I surfed in and reached the beach a couple of minutes before Hooper and the life saver arrived. We carried Hooper from the surf up on to the sand where he received first aid.

"Between Hooper's knee and thigh of the right leg there was a large portion of flesh missing over an area extending for about 15 inches. The bone was fully exposed on the outside of the leg. Hooper lost a great deal of blood.

STRANGE COINCIDENCE AS WOMAN AIDS INJURED LIFESAVER

HOW a Bloemfontein woman unwittingly helped the dying son of her husband's greatest friend—a lad she had never seen—was told to a representative of "The Natal Mercury" yesterday.

The story is an echo of the tragic Fred Hooper affair at Warnerdoone recently, when a shark attacked a lifesaver with fatal results.

Mrs. George Bagley, of Bloemfontein, at present holidaying in Durban, was on the beach during the shark's attack. She thought that someone was being rescued from drowning.

When the rescue party reached shore, the cries of "Shark" brought realisation of the wounded lad's plight, and with a friend, Sister Laid-

ler, of Bloemfontein, she helped bind up the gaping wound and wrapped young Hooper in her rugs and towels as a first-aid dressing.

She did not know who he was, but accompanied the party and helped to keep Hooper as cheerful as possible until the doctor came. This week she received a copy of her home newspaper telling how her husband, ex-Sergeant Bagley, knew Hooper's father very well indeed.

Mr. Bagley, it appears, came to South Africa on the Tongariro with Hooper's father, the late Sergeant F. W. Hooper, during the South African War. The two men were very great friends and were appointed together to the South African constabulary

post at Harrismith, working together in the South African Police after 1910.

Since those days, however, though Mr. Bagley has a lot to do with the S.A.C. and S.A.P. Association, the two men had not met and Mrs. Bagley was quite ignorant of the fact that they knew each other.

4

AWARDS WANTED FOR DENIS NOURSE

— 5. MAR 1940 —

TRIED TO SAVE SHARK VICTIM

From Our Political Correspondent

CAPETOWN, March 5

121 Endeavours are being made to obtain the Governor-General's sanction through the Prime Minister's department for recognition for Mr. Denis Nourse, who gallantly endeavoured to save the life of Fred Hooper, the young Natalian who was fatally injured by a shark on the South Coast some time ago.

The awards suggested are the King's Medal for Bravery—the new Union award—and the Royal Humane Society's medal and certificate.

The Administrator of Natal, Mr. Gordon Watson, has already given his approval to the proposal and has forwarded to interested parties a virtual recommendation for the award. When the necessary documents and affidavits of eye-witnesses are assembled they will be submitted by a deputation to the Prime Minister.

NOURSE'S BRAVE DEED MAY BE RECOGNISED

13. APR 1940

REQUEST FOR AWARD OF GALLANTRY

From Our Political Correspondent

CAPETOWN, April 12.

176 A request for the official recognition of the gallantry of Dennis Nourse on January 7 when he made a determined endeavour to save the life of a friend, Frederick Hooper, is to be made to General J. C. Smuts, the Prime Minister, to-morrow by Mr. Charles Neate (Dominion Party, South Coast). Frederick Hooper was attacked and fatally wounded by a shark.

General Smuts will be presented with a number of affidavits from eye-witnesses of the tragedy. The Administrator of Natal, Mr. H. Gordon Watson, has written a glowing recommendation in support of the request, in which he refers to Mr. Nourse's "heroic loyalty" to his friend in a period of extreme danger.

The request is for consideration of the award of the new South African medal for gallantry and the Royal Humane Society's medal, for which application will be made in Great Britain.

General Smuts is to be asked to recommend to the Royal Humane Society that this medal be awarded to Mr. Nourse.

17 JUN 1940

LIFESAVER TO GET HIGH AWARD

*As
Boat*

The highest award for gallantry in reach of the South African Surf Life-saving Association will be made to Dennis Guy Nourse, who will be the first to receive the Association's Silver Award. Early this year Nourse went unhesitatingly to the assistance of a fellow lifesaver at Warner Beach, when the latter had been attacked by a shark.

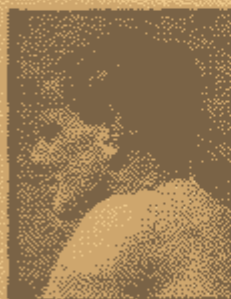
Nourse, who is a member of the Association and also a well known hockey player, has been recommended for other high awards for gallantry by the Prime Minister, General J. C. Smuts, and the Administrator of Natal, Mr. H. Gordon Watson.

30 JUL 1940

GALLANTRY TO BE MARKED

*Big
Bathing*

The meritorious silver medal, the first to be given by the Surf Life Saving Association of South Africa, has been awarded to Mr. Dennis G. Nourse for his gallantry in rescuing



Mr. D. G. Nourse

a bather who was attacked by a shark at Warnadoone on January 7. The victim, who died some time later from his injuries, was Mr. Fred Hooper. When the attack occurred, Mr. Nourse dived from his floating cushion into the sea, swam to the injured man's assistance and placed him on a raft. The medal is to be presented to Mr. Nourse by the Mayor of Durban, Mr. R. Ellis Brown, at Saturday night's municipal concert in the City Hall.

GALLANTRY
REWARDED



3 AUG 1940
MK. Dennis Guy Nourse, who is to be presented with the Silver Medal of the South African Surf Life Saving Association at the municipal concert in the Durban City Hall to-night. Mr. Nourse gallantly went to the rescue of the late Mr. F. Hooper when he was attacked by a shark at Wardenoone early in the year. The presentation will be made by the Mayor, Mr. R. Ellis Brown.

KING'S MEDAL
PRESENTED

17 AUG 1940
 HERO OF SHARK
 TRAGEDY

From Our Maritzburg Correspondent

Dennis G. Nourse, the young South Coast man who went to the aid of a bather attacked by a shark, was decorated with the King's Medal for Bravery yesterday. The presentation was made by the Administrator of Natal, Mr. H. Gordon Watson, on behalf of the Governor-General.

Mr. Gordon Watson said that the medal had been instituted last year for presentation to those who endangered their lives in saving or endeavouring to save the lives of others. The exact wording was: "Gallantry performed in the face of imminent and obvious peril by those who endanger their own lives in saving or endeavouring to save the lives of others."

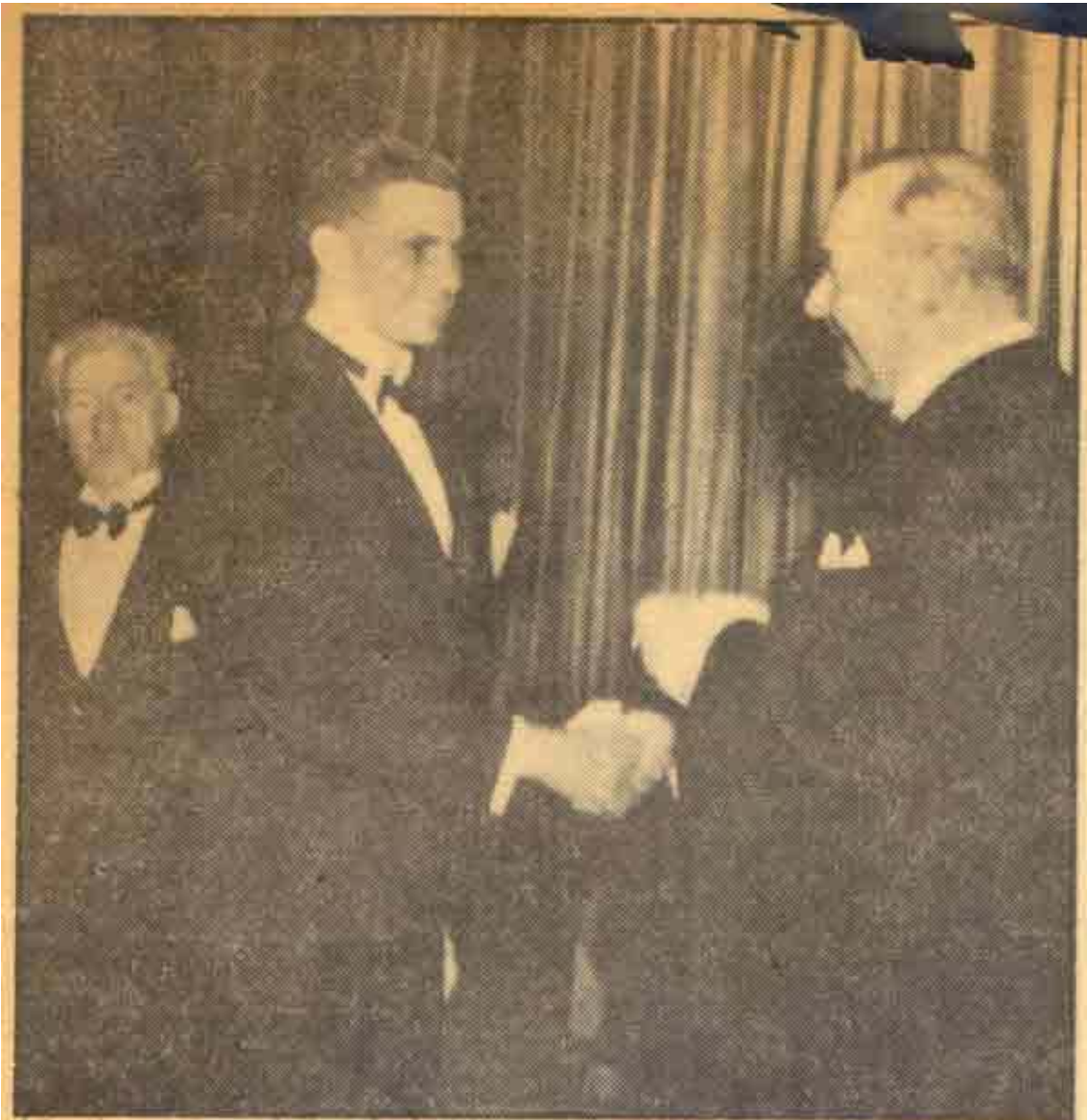
HEROIC LOYALTY

Such an act of gallantry had been performed by Dennis Nourse on January 1, 1940, when he had rendered courageous assistance to his friend, the late Frederick Hooper, when the latter had been attacked and seriously injured by a shark. Mr. Nourse, abandoning all thought of personal safety and at obvious risk to his own life, had released hold of the air cushion to which he had been holding, had swum to his friend's assistance, helped him on to the air cushion, signalled to the shore for assistance and had remained helping his unfortunate friend until it was possible to get him to land.

This act of heroic loyalty had been thoroughly well attested and had been adjudged to be one well worthy of the award of the medal which had now been presented.

Mr. J. S. Marwick, M.P., thanked Mr. Gordon Watson for the action he had taken in obtaining the medal for Mr. Nourse.

There was a small but representative attendance at the presentation, which included the Judge-President, Mr. Justice Hathorn; Mrs. H. Gordon Watson; the principal of the Natal University College, where Mr. Nourse is a student, Dr. R. B. Denison, and Mrs. Denison; Professor A. F. Hattersley; Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Marwick; Mr. C. H. Neate, M.P.; the Provincial Secretary, Mr. T. A. F. Rhodes; the Assistant Provincial Secretary, Mr. E. D. Davies, and Mrs. Davies; Senator P. H. Taylor and Mrs. Taylor; Col. W. D. Hearn, M.C.; Major J. Graham; Major D. F. Patterson and the Clerk to the Natal Provincial Council, Mr. C. A. E. Peck. Mr. Nourse was accompanied by two friends from the Natal University College.



Dir. Bath (ok)

-5. AUG 1941

AWARD FOR COURAGE: Mr. Dennis Guy Nourse receiving the congratulations of the Mayor of Durban, Mr. Rupert Ellis Brown, after being presented with the silver meritorious medal of the South African Surf Life-saving Association in the City Hall on Saturday night. Mr. Nourse was given this rare award for his fine courage when he went to the assistance of the late Fred Hooper who was fatally attacked by a shark at Warnerdoone in January. Mr. Nourse will receive the King's Medal for Gallantry on August 14.